



European
Commission
Delegation
to BiH

EU Newsletter

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CARDS 2006

43.8 Million Euro for BiH

- Financing Agreement signed
- Funding to assist BiH in its reform and modernisation process.
- Since 2001, BiH has received € 419.1 million from CARDS.



EC Recommends Visa Facilitation

- EC recommended Council open negotiations with BiH, Montenegro, and Serbia.
- Visa facilitation would create simplified travelling conditions to and within the EU for specific categories.
- EC proposing to Member States simplification of supporting documentation submitted with visa application.



Finland's six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union began on 1 July 2006.

During the Presidency, Finland will chair over 3,000 Council meetings in Brussels and around 130 in Finland. The most important meetings will be the informal meeting of Heads of State or Government in Lahti in October, the December European Council in Brussels, and the EU-Asian ASEM summit in Helsinki, in September.

During its Presidency, Finland wants to address the Union's core problem: its diminished legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens. In Finland's view, the best way of demonstrating the need for the EU is through effective legislative work and efficient management of the Union's other business.

Accordingly, Finland will focus on transparency and effectiveness in the way the Union functions. Greater transparency will be achieved above all through open sessions of the Council, which citizens will be able to follow via the Internet.

Finland's Presidency of the Council

There are four priority areas for Finland's Presidency: the future of the EU, competitiveness, external relations, and justice and home affairs.

The future of the EU encompasses the fate of the Constitutional Treaty and enlargement: Finland will bring the passive period of reflection on the Constitutional Treaty to a close and start active discussions on the future of the Treaty with the Member States and EU Institutions.

Enlargement will be discussed in December, with a view to reaching a new consensus on the accession timetable for Bulgaria and Romania, membership negotiations with Turkey and Croatia, and the overall situation in the Western Balkans.

In line with its longstanding environmental protection, Finland aims to build on the "Greening of the Presidency" initiative previously adopted by the UK and Austria during their recent presidencies. In the handbook "Responsible Meetings", all event-organisers are urged to promote sustainable CO² consumption, and choose environmentally friendly and locally produced goods and services.



Fostering Education Sector Reforms

Reform of the education sector is a part of the European Partnership document and is also followed by the Reform Progress Monitoring Group. It is watched and analysed by the negotiation team responsible for the process for EU integration although education reform has never been part of any other negotiation process. This is because many people believe that the current status of education in BiH represents a violation of human rights and a lack of fulfilment of international obligations.

To address this, on 12 July, the EC Delegation and the Ministers of Education signed a Memorandum of Understanding, committing to co-operate and further develop joint efforts to reform the education system in BiH. The signing ceremony was also the kick-off meeting of the Institutional and Capacity Building of BiH Education System project (EU-ICBE), which brought together educational authorities and other relevant stakeholders in the sector. The Project aims at strengthening the administrative and service functions of the BiH education sector, its Ministries and affiliated institutes and agencies.

Ambassador Michael B. Humphreys stressed the encouraging fact that the recommendations provided by the Functional Review of

the Education System -which clearly identified strengths and weaknesses of the current administrative structures - are not radical but, rather, reasonable, and are based on two major principles:

- full respect of the country's specific cultural and historical developments;
- focus on fulfilling the basic reforms required by a country on its way to the establishment and development of an equitable, high-quality education system comparable with those of other European countries.

Ambassador Humphreys reminded the participants about the importance of quality of education and standards in education, which should be defined, implemented and monitored in a modern manner. This necessitates the establishment of a minimum of State level institutions or agencies.

The new project should establish an efficient and functional "architecture" of an education system, with a clear definition of mechanisms for co-operation and a well defined decision-making process.



CARDS 2006

43.8 Million Euro for BiH

On 4 August, the CARDS 2006 Financing Agreement, worth € 43.8 million, was signed by Adnan Terzic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of BiH, and Renzo Daviddi, Deputy Head of Delegation of the European Commission to BiH.

The funding will assist BiH in its reform and modernization process. The priorities are:

- to build the capacity of BiH State institutions to serve their country effectively and act as reliable counterparts for the international community;
- to support good governance and institution building, economic and social development and democratic stabilization.

Since 1991, the EU has been the largest donor for the Western Balkans. The CARDS programme was established in 2001 and since then, BiH has benefited from € 419.1 million assistance, including the new allocation of € 43.8 million for 2006.



**Farewell
Renzo!**

Dr. Renzo Daviddi - Head of the Economic and Political Section and Deputy Head of Delegation of the EC to BiH from 2001 to 2006 - recently left to take up his new post in the EC Liaison Office to Kosovo.

EC Recommends Visa Facilitation

On 20 July, the EC recommended that the Council open negotiations with BiH, Montenegro, and Serbia on agreements to facilitate the procedures for issuing short-stay visas and on readmission. Albania has a Community Readmission Agreement which is in force since May 2006, hence for this case only a draft mandate for a visa facilitation agreement was proposed.

When adopting the Commission's proposal, Vice-President Franco Frattini, Commissioner responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security, said: "These agreements are crucially important; on the one hand visa facilitation will create simplified travelling conditions to and within the EU for specific categories of citizens of the countries involved whilst, on the other hand, ensuring the return of those who are illegally residing in the EU to their home countries. The EU and these countries will strongly benefit from increased co-operation in the fight against organised crime,

corruption, and illegal immigration, improvement of border control and security of documents. Therefore, I encourage the Member States to follow our proposal and adopt these mandates without delay."

The Commission is proposing to the Member States a list of facilitations which relate to the simplification of documentary evidence to be submitted in support of the visa application, issuing multiple-entry visas with a long period of validity, waiving/reducing the handling fees for categories to be defined, setting deadlines for processing visa applications, in addition to possible exemption of the visa obligation for holders of diplomatic passports.

It is now up to the Council and Member States to take the recommendations forward.

EU Integration Strategy Launched

On 26 July, the Directorate for European Integration (DEI) publicly presented the "EU Integration Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina", a comprehensive document which reviews the situation in BiH, the situation in the EU and necessary measures, sector by sector.

Seven consultative working groups composed of 124 civil servants from State and entity Ministries and institutions, as well as external national experts, developed this Strategy, which is a comprehensive document covering the period right up until full membership in the Union.

The fact that BiH opted for developing an EU Integration Strategy at such an early stage reflects its intention to accelerate - and assume full ownership of - the integration process.

The "EU Integration Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina" is available at www.dei.gov.ba



Negotiators Bond in Herzegovina's Vineyards

Following the third technical round of SAA negotiations held on 27-28 July, in Sarajevo, the DEI organised a visit to the vineyards of Herzegovina for members of both negotiating teams. They visited plantations and production facilities in Mostar, Citluk and Trebinje on 28-29 July.

Since vine and other agricultural products were a topic in this round of negotiations, the visit was a chance for the European Commission experts to get acquainted with some of the production facilities and the negotiating teams to get to know each other in a different, more relaxed atmosphere.



Photos: Sead Memić

Draft BiH Law on Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

In the framework of the EU project "Support for Establishment of the State Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development", on 26 July 2006 the "Draft BiH Law on Agriculture, Food and Rural Development" was presented to a range of relevant stakeholders.

The draft law was prepared by a government-appointed working group and defines the framework for institutional structures and competencies at all levels of government, including the proposed new State Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. If adopted, this law will provide the basis for concrete services and measures to be taken to benefit farmers and rural communities. The draft law also introduces modern concepts linked explicitly to the European integration process and adoption of the *Acquis Communautaire*.

The draft law provides for the establishment of a wide range of new institutional structures and mechanisms which can ensure

effective co-ordination and communication between all stakeholders. Many of them are essential foundations to attract future EU pre-accession and structural funds, and include:

- BiH Agriculture Market Information Service
- BiH Administration for Harmonisation of Payment Systems
- BiH Farm Registry and Land Parcel Identification System
- BiH Agricultural Report
- A range of mechanisms co-ordinated by the new State Ministry

It is estimated that over 70% of informal employment in BiH is linked to the agri-food sector. Increasing prosperity and the quality of life in rural areas is, therefore, essential to the country's overall process of economic, political and social stabilisation.

Genesis - Educating Through Television

"Genesis Project" is a local humanitarian organisation founded in Banja Luka in 1996. It aims to educate both children and grown-ups regarding ecology and environmental protection, gender equality, mine-awareness, and other key messages, and to promote peaceful coexistence in a democratic society. Genesis Project has received support and implemented projects for a range of donors, including ECHO - the European Community Humanitarian Office, UNICEF and the Open Society Fund, among others.

In 2005 Genesis applied for a grant from the EIDHR - European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights - to produce eight episodes of an educational television programme for children. The project was implemented between September and December 2005. The EU provided € 24,376 of the total budget of € 27,085, with co-funding ensured by the City of Banja Luka and other donors.

The series of eight children's programmes had the following themes:

- Education on the origins, habits, customs and lifestyle of the Roma people, with emphasis on eliminating prejudices and stereotypes.
- Disseminating knowledge on the need to protect minorities (Roma children).
- Fostering coexistence between different ethnic groups.
- Raising awareness on children's' rights.

The programmes first aired between November 2005 and January 2006 on four television stations throughout the country: RTRS, Hayat, Oscar C and BN. They were subsequently transmitted on FTV, K3 from Prnjavor and RT Una-Sana Canton. These stations gave their full support to the project and broadcast the programmes free of charge.

Genesis Project also distributed video cassettes of the series to forty primary schools throughout the North-western part of the country.

A parallel independent evaluation - carried out with the participation of pedagogues and primary school teachers - examined a sample of two hundred children aged between nine and twelve, to determine the effect the series had on their perceptions of the chosen themes. It determined that the level of tolerance of minorities and Roma children increased by 31.67%, while the level of prejudice and stereotyping was reduced by 11.61%.

These results speak for themselves on the importance of reaching out to children today, to foster a better society tomorrow. Genesis is currently implementing another EU-funded project, to continue disseminating such key messages.



Economic Development - New Call for Proposals

A new call for proposals was launched on 4 August, under CARDS 2006 - "EU Support to SME and Regional Economic Development in BiH". The immediate objectives are to:

- support the development of tourism by covering BiH with a coherent network of signposts for tourism attractions,
- support the development of successful tourism products in BiH by promoting the creation/reinforcement of competitive tourism products, by strengthening tourist service delivery,

tourist personnel skills, the quality of tourist infrastructures and tourism marketing and commercial activities,

- support the SME sector by increasing the quality, quantity and affordability of the business infrastructure supply.

The call is divided into three lots, each addressing one of the above objectives, and has a total value of € 3.8 million. The deadline to submit applications is 6 November 2006.

For detailed information, please see: www.delbih.ec.europa.eu/en/tandv/tandv.htm

OVERVIEW



Integrated Border Management

Background

BiH has a border of approximately 1,600 km and over four hundred locations where it is possible to cross, eighty-nine of which are recognised border crossings. Safeguarding these borders helps in the fight against illegal migration, organised crime, smuggling and trafficking. Different national agencies must co-operate with each other and their counterparts in neighbouring countries to foster trade and combat crime.

Integrated Border Management (IBM) is a priority in the European Partnership. In 2004 the EU submitted "Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in the Western Balkans" to the governments

of Western Balkan countries. In accordance with these guidelines, on 4 July 2005, BiH adopted the "National Integrated Border Management Strategy Paper" and members of an Inter-ministerial Working Group were nominated. The BiH Ministry of Security is responsible for overall co-ordination of the implementation of IBM.

What is IBM?

The aim of IBM is to create open borders for the movement of people and goods, while at the same time ensuring that these borders are closed for illicit trafficking and criminal activities.



ITA Code of Conduct

On 14 July, the Indirect Taxation Authority (ITA) publicly launched its Code of Conduct. It provides clear and unambiguous standards based upon the key principles of honesty, integrity, professionalism and impartiality. Managers and staff will receive training in the standards expected.

An accompanying publicity campaign is planned, to provide information to the customers of the ITA - tax-payers, traders and travellers - on the conduct and behavioural standards that they should expect from ITA staff, and how to complain if they are dissatisfied.

At the launch, Ambassador Michael B. Humphreys highlighted that the Code of Conduct for the ITA itself is a good example of BiH beginning to introduce Good Governance and transparency, adding that the first thing people see when visiting a country is the border police and customs officials. Facilitating legitimate trade and travel is a critical precondition to encouraging inward investment in BiH and making it an attractive tourist destination. Introducing and implementing such a comprehensive Code of Conduct is an important step towards this goal.

The legal basis for the Code of Conduct is the ITA Law, which was drafted with EU-CAFAO support and adopted by the Parliament last year.



Karakaj border crossing



State Border Service Building - in construction

Efficient border management enables businesses to operate more easily across borders, which is a key pre-requisite for economic growth and attracting foreign direct investment.

Co-ordination and co-operation between the various services is necessary to reduce bottlenecks at the borders, notably between the State Border Service (SBS), the Indirect Taxation Authority (ITA) and the Veterinary, Phytosanitary, Sanitary and Market Inspectorates.

Multi-faceted Support to Border Management

Infrastructure - Border management requires considerable investment in appropriate infrastructure. The EU has provided over € 34 million since 2001, to build new border facilities and improve existing ones at: Kamensko, Klobuk, Zupci, Gorica, Vardiste, Bosanski Brod, Bosanski Samac and Gradina. The EU is also aiming to provide assistance to block illegal border crossings, a key step in BiH's fight against organised crime.

State Border Service - The SBS was established in 2000, to provide police surveillance of BiH's borders. To date, the EU has invested approximately € 5.5 million to provide IT equipment, vehicles, surveillance equipment, furniture, etc. for the SBS, including € 2.4 million for a new headquarters building in Sarajevo which is currently under construction.

Veterinary Inspection - A Twinning project implemented by the State Veterinary Office of BiH and the Administration of Germany will be addressing veterinary inspections. The project started in July 2006 and will last 27 months. Among other activities, it will work on improving the co-ordination and command line mechanisms of veterinary inspections, including that of veterinary border inspections. The BiH authorities will have the opportunity to gain practical experience and exchange best practice in veterinary inspections with their German counterparts.

Integrated Border Management - The CARDS Regional Programme committed € 2 million to help Western Balkan countries draft their IBM Strategy Paper and Action Plans, while the CARDS national envelope for BiH provided another € 2 million to support implementation.

A new project, launched in April 2006, will provide assistance throughout the three pillars of IBM: Intra-Service, Inter-Agency and International Co-operation. It will provide training and workshops, draft legislation and set up a joint analysis centre where the different services will work together on the necessary risk analysis to combat fraud and corruption, while simplifying administrative procedures at the border. The EU has provided a grant worth € 1 million while the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) provided co-funding worth € 18,016.

An additional € 1 million has been ear-marked by the EU for IT equipment, to provide a network installation to connect the different institutions involved.

EU-CAFAO - The EU Customs and Fiscal Assistance Office, CAFAO, started work in BiH in 1996: five similar offices now operate in other Western Balkan countries.

In BiH - EU customs and tax experts work with their local counterparts on customs and tax reform, and modernisation projects aimed at building the administrative capacity of the ITA. Significant past achievements of EU-CAFAO include:

- Helping the entities to stabilise and improve revenue collection.
- Assisting in the establishment of the ITA at State level in 2004, including the creation of the Single Account as an element of a Single Economic Space.
- Introducing computerised customs processing of freight consignments.
- Designing and implementing Value Added Tax (VAT) in 2006.
- Advising on modern human resource management.

For the first ten years, the CAFAO project was managed from Brussels. In July 2006, the first Project Steering Committee was held in Sarajevo with BiH counterparts - the meeting launched the discussion on the 2007 work programme.



Eurocustoms is a not-for-profit consortium of the EU Customs Administrations, founded in 1991 by the EU Member States as a response to the growing need for technical assistance in Eastern Europe. The Member States - and those of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) - provide customs staff on secondment, to work as project managers or technical experts.

Projects are mainly contracted directly by the EC, or by partner countries using EU funds under decentralised procedures. The main EU funding programmes are for countries hoping to join the EU.

Since April 2006, the EU-CAFAO project in BiH is managed by Eurocustoms.

Automatic Chlorinators Safeguard Potable Water

On July 15, the first of ten automatic chlorinators was inaugurated in Kasindo, East Ilidza. A second one will soon be installed for nearby Kasindo public hospital, while the remaining eight will be installed in four other municipalities, both in RS and in FBiH. Access to clean water is considered a basic human right but, unfortunately, the quality of this precious natural resource has been constantly deteriorating, due to uncontrolled human activities.

"Natural Resources Protection" is a 10-month project worth € 100,000, financed from the CARDS 2003 grant scheme "Support for Increasing Civil Society Interest in Environmental Activities". The project was designed as a combination of public awareness campaigns and small-scale concrete environmental protection activities, such as clean-up actions or planting in public areas. It involves various stakeholders from the local community, such as municipal authorities, water supply companies, local hospitals, schools, waste collection services, media

and civil society. It addresses the issue of safeguarding drinking water in view of the general problem regarding the unsatisfactory microbiological control of springs used for the public water supply.

The "Natural Resources Protection" project is part of the ongoing EU support to the Environment Fund in BiH, worth € 1.2 million, which consists of technical assistance and ten grant-funded projects implemented by NGOs active in environmental protection initiatives throughout the country. Since 1997, the EU has invested € 40 million in the water sector in BiH - the most recent being support to BiH water quality management, worth some € 2.5 million of field and laboratory equipment for water companies and laboratories in Bijeljina, Sarajevo, Mostar and Trebinje. Indeed, the water quality from the Kasindo spring is tested in Bijeljina, most likely using some of the equipment provided by the EU.



EUROPE AND TECHNOLOGY



Debate Europe - One Million Hits!

"Debate Europe" - an internet forum on the future of Europe launched in March 2006 by the EC - reached one million hits by July.

On this forum, European citizens can participate in discussions focused on three major topics:

- Europe's economic and social development
- Feeling towards Europe and the EU's tasks
- Europe's borders and its role in the world

The website has proved a great success, with an average of 200,000 hits a month and 12,700 comments posted. Contributions can be made in the twenty official languages of the EU, as well as in Catalan.

Each topic includes a range of reference documents for the debates and is divided into themes. For example, "Europe's borders and its role in the world" has the following categories:

- Do you think the EU can continue to take in new members?
- What do you expect from the EU in a globalised world?
- How should the EU approach issues such as international trade, climate change, security or aid to developing countries?
- What should Europe's relationship be with its neighbours and other large blocs in the world?

This debate is part of "Plan D" - where D stands for Dialogue, Debate and Democracy. Plan D is the EC's contribution to the "period of reflection" on the future of the EU, which was called for by EU Heads of State and Government in June 2005, following the rejection of the proposed Constitutional Treaty by voters in France and the Netherlands. Contributions on the forum feed into the EC's analysis in the ongoing reflection on the future of Europe.

View the discussion, or join in it, at: http://europa.eu/debateeurope/index_en.htm

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European Union home page: www.europa.eu

The EU's actions in BiH web page: http://ec.europa.eu/comm/enlargement/bosnia_herzegovina/index.htm

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