



In this issue:

- Olli Rehn addressed participants of Crans Montana Forum 2
- Pierre Mirel at First Meeting of European Commission – Bosnia and Herzegovina Interim Committee 2
- The European Commission and the World Bank assist to privatised companies in BiH 3
- Signing of the IPA 2007 Financing Agreements between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Commission 3
- European Union Supports Fiscal Policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina – “Conference on public finance and fiscal management” 4
- Final Conference of the EU SESMARD Project 4
- Successful completion of project between the European Union and the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina 5
- European Commission and UNDP work together with BiH authorities on solving the issue of small arms and light weapons 5
- EU Funded Project “Integrated Landmine-Survivor Assistance in Mine-Affected Returnee Communities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina” Launched 6
- „Agro-incubator Žepče” opened – support to agricultural development of the Central Bosnia region 6
- Support to Water Quality Management in BiH 7
- Regional Conference on Insurance Markets 7
- Conference on Support to Tourism Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina 7
- EU marked UN Day against Torture and Ill Treatment 8
- Marking the European Car Free Day 8
- EU QUIZ published on Delegation’s website 8



Ollie Rehn, European Commissioner for Enlargement visited BiH

The European Commissioner for Enlargement, **Olli Rehn**, visited Bosnia and Herzegovina on October 10, 2008 and met with Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, **Haris Silajdžić**, member of the BiH Presidency, **Nebojša Radmanović** and **Zeljko Komšić** member of the BiH Presidency

At the press conference, following the meeting, Commissioner Rehn said that he had a frank and open discussion about political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its European future. On behalf of the European Commission, he expressed disappointment with the fact that party leaders have recently been busier with negative rhetoric rather than taking country forward to the European Union. *“We expect respect of the state institutions and it is important that the country is able to speak with one voice as a future candidate country of the European Union.”*, said Commissioner Rehn and added that European Union was in favour of the constitution evolution to take place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but that it had to be done in respect of the Dayton Peace Agreement.



Commissioner Rehn outlined the importance of the census to take place in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2011 because of the implementation of European policies, such as regional development, structural funds, allocation of budgets, etc. *“All the political leaders of this country have to understand that current lack of consensus about key reforms in state-building is hurting the country’s progress towards the European Union.”*

“The choice is extremely clear: leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina can choose whether to quarrel year after year or forever and be at a standstill and left behind their neighbouring countries, or they can meet all challenges on the European path”, concluded Commissioner Rehn and expressed his belief in the Bosnia and Herzegovina’s future in the European Union.

Olli Rehn addressed participants of the Crans Montana Forum



As a part of his visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Commissioner **Rehn** addressed participants at the exceptional session of the Crans Montana Forum on the topic "European Union policy: Enlargement process and South Eastern Europe". The session took place in Sarajevo from October 7 to 10 under the patronage of the three Prime Ministers Nikola Špirić, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of BiH, Nedžad Branković Prime Minister of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Milorad Dodik Prime Minister of Republika Srpska.

In his opening remarks, Commissioner Rehn stressed that the enlargement was a strategic priority for the European Union, but its prospects were quite different today than couple of months ago.

The global financial crisis has its impact on the process of enlargement, as well as general political atmosphere in Europe and elsewhere in the world, he said. "This will be an overwhelming concern in the coming period and I know that the economic shock has to be felt in the countries of the Western Balkans. Ratification of Lisbon Treaty is another topic that raises heavily on European leaders minds for the moment, and, of course, the Georgia crisis and its consequences raise fundamental questions to Europe today." – said Commissioner Rehn. He also noted that, while the European Union is dealing with urgent problems, it has to keep working in parallel on carefully managed and gradual accessing progress in South Eastern Europe.

As for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Commissioner Rehn underlined that signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) this summer represented an opportunity that should not be wasted. "This is about actions rather than only words, results as well as commitments. And, the key challenge for the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina is to achieve political consensus on the EU related reforms. I am fully aware that the Bosnian people, the citizens of this country, overwhelmingly wants to join the European Union, to be a part of the European family, it is now up to their leaders to deliver on this aspirations and move EU reforms to the top of the political agenda of the country."- emphasised Commissioner Rehn.

Commissioner also announced that the visa liberalisation negotiations for the Western Balkans countries would reach a crucial stage next year, adding that the countries most advanced in fulfilling the criteria might obtain visa free travel already by the end of 2009.

First meeting of the European Commission – Bosnia and Herzegovina Interim Committee held in Sarajevo

The first meeting of the EC-Bosnia and Herzegovina Interim Committee was held on 7 October 2008 in Sarajevo. This body was established under the Interim Agreement which entered into force on 1 July 2008 and which allows for comprehensive trade liberalisation between the European Union and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is an important step forward in the Stabilisation and Association Process of the country.

At its first constitutive meeting, the Interim Committee approved its internal rules of procedure and set up a number of sub-committees to assist it in monitoring the implementation of the Agreement.

The meeting offered an opportunity for the Parties to have a fruitful discussion on current and future priorities, including free movement of goods, customs and taxation, competition, intellectual and industrial property and transit traffic. Bosnia and Herzegovina's WTO accession negotiations and CEFTA implementation were also discussed.

While most of the industrial, agricultural and fishery products from Bosnia and Herzegovina have been given duty and quota free access to the European internal market, Bosnia and Herzegovina is granted the right to progressively reduce such duties over five

years on goods of EU-origin.

The Commission welcomed adoption of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Agreement by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and encouraged the country to enhance preparations for full implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. In this framework, it also encouraged BiH to ensure full compliance with the European Convention for Human Rights, full cooperation with the ICTY and early preparations for a census in 2011.

The delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina updated the Commission on steps undertaken so far to fulfil its commitments. The Government committed itself to enhance the monitoring of the implementation of relevant obligations of the Interim Agreement with a particular focus on the practical administrative arrangements by the various authorities concerned such as the customs services.

The delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the meeting was led by the Director of the Directorate for European Integration, Mr **Osman Topčagić**. The European Commission delegation was led by Mr **Pierre Mirel**, Director in the Commission's Directorate General for Enlargement for Western Balkan countries.



The European Union and the World Bank assist privatised companies in BiH

Delegation of the European Commission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the World Bank Office in BiH have launched on 26 June 2008 in Sarajevo a project "Accelerating Enterprise Restructuring in BiH through Active Portfolio Management of Investment Funds". This project is aimed at provision of assistance to the local companies that were privatised in the voucher/certificate privatisation process but which are still facing poor results in their functioning due to a dispersed ownership structure.

In the scope of this 18-month project, six companies in both entities will be selected to receive regular expert assistance and support in development and implementation of the restructuring plans. Goal of the project is twofold - to initiate corporative restructuring of voucher privatised companies and to transform current Investment Funds into active owners that will have capacities to increase value of their portfolios.

Dr. **Johann Hesse**, Head of Operations Section for Economic Reform of the EC Delegation to BiH welcomed the participants and the launch of this project underlining that it started in a timely manner, soon after the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) had been signed. "The signature of the SAA has created a new environment for business in BiH because it will progressively increase the security of foreign investments, given that BiH will have to approximate the *acquis* and gradually establish the free market area with the EU.", said Mr. Hesse and added: "This will reduce the perception of risk attached to business in BiH and will potentially lead

to a greater interest in privatisation and hence, more FDI, more jobs and higher incomes."

Underlining the importance of this project, Mr. **Marco Mantovanelli**, Country Manager of the World Bank Office in BiH said: "This project will have an important potential for broader impact and transfer of experience and we will ensure that the results and lessons learnt emerge as valuable guidelines on increasing productive enterprise and competitiveness in BiH for all participants in BiH transition process".

The European Union provided 2.1 million Euro for implementation of the project "Accelerating Enterprise Restructuring in BiH through Active Portfolio Management of Investment Funds".



Signing of the IPA 2007 Financing Agreements between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Commission



Mr. **Marc Vanbrabant**, First Counsellor of the European Commission Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Mr. **Dragan Vrankić**, BiH Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Treasury have signed Financing Agreements for IPA Annual Action Programme 2007 in Sarajevo on July 31, 2008. These Agreements will enable Bosnia and Herzegovina to access the funds allocated under the new European Union assistance programme "Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)" for 2007.

The European Commission has allocated 440 M€ to Bosnia and Herzegovina under its IPA programme for the period 2007-2011.

"The Financing Agreements that we signed today will be targeted at projects in the area of 'Institution Building' and 'Cross-border Cooperation'. The funding for Institution Building in the amount of 49.7 million euro will assist BiH in further transformation of its public administration to allow the country to function more effectively in the near future and as a Member State later. The other two Financing Agreements for a total amount of 3.8 million euro that Bosnia and



Herzegovina and European Commission signed on cross-border programmes between BiH and Serbia and Croatia will stimulate cross border cooperation" stated Mr Vanbrabant.

Minister Vrankić thanked the European Commission for this financial support and emphasised that the main objective of the IPA was to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in tackling the European Integration challenges, implementing the necessary reforms for the accession into EU and establishing the necessary foundations for the fulfilment of the Copenhagen criteria.

Funding of **49.736,394** Euro under the IPA 2007 includes the following areas: social inclusion and return, rule of law, public administration, labour and economic development, social policies, regulatory body, preparation for pre-structural funds, civil society and media. Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently eligible for the first two components of the IPA funds: transition assistance and institution building and Regional and Cross Border Cooperation. Once Bosnia and Herzegovina obtains a candidate status, it will have access to the remaining three components.

European Union Supports Fiscal Policy in BiH



In order to strengthen the fiscal policy analysis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU-funded Project "EU Fiscal Policy Support to Bosnia and Herzegovina" (EUFPS) has organised a conference "Public finance and fiscal management" that took place from July 1 to July 5 in Sarajevo. The Conference brought together leading international experts and representatives from the beneficiary institutions, who exchanged their views and experiences on statistics, macroeconomic and fiscal forecasting, budgetary coordination and fiscal rules, taxation and expenditure as well as assessments of fiscal policy and fiscal sustainability.

In his opening address, Mr. **Marc Vanbrabant**, First Counsellor of the Delegation of European Commission to BiH, pointed out the importance of adequate fiscal policy in BiH: "The European Partnership calls for BiH to develop fiscal surveillance mechanisms that promote fiscal discipline in BiH; to ensure an adequate environment for institutional cooperation within the framework of the National Fiscal Council and to agree on a permanent formula for allocation of indirect tax revenue", said Mr. Vanbrabant. He expressed his pleasure to announce that Bosnia and Herzegovina was

progressing toward achieving the other noted European Partnership priorities, in pursuit of fiscal prudence and sustainability.

BiH Deputy Minister of Finance and Treasury, Mr. **Fuad Kasumović**, noted that the results of this Project were very useful for the management of fiscal policy in BiH. "Building of institutional capacities and strengthening fiscal management at all levels of BiH government are the foundations for sustainable reform in BiH and this Conference will, no doubt, contribute to improving the knowledge and understanding of public finance and its management", concluded Mr. Kasumović.

About EUFPS

The EU Fiscal Policy Support to Bosnia and Herzegovina Project follows the general structure and direction outlined in the *Inception Report and Work Plan* signed on 10 April 2006. The current project was implemented by the public sector consultancy company Human Dynamics and it was successfully concluded by August 24, 2008.

The immediate objective of EUFPS was to strengthen the capacity of the BiH authorities to develop and execute effective fiscal policies and to improve the management of public finances at State, Entity, and District levels, including strengthening sub-entity government levels' ability to comply with fiscal reporting requirements. The wider objective was to contribute to progress in the Stabilisation and Association Process and foster institutional development and economic growth in BiH on its road to European Union integration.

The European Union provided 1.9 million Euro for implementation of the project 'European Union Fiscal Policy Support to Bosnia and Herzegovina'.

Final Conference of the EU SESMARD Project

H.E. Ambassador **Dimitris Kourkoulas**, Head of the European Commission Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina attended the Final conference on 1,2 million euro EU project "Support for Implementation of the Functional Review Recommendations in the Agriculture Sector" that took place on September 10, 2008 in Sarajevo. The Conference brought together all major stakeholders in the sector of Agriculture, including representatives of all relevant ministries in BiH and the Project Team.

Ambassador **Kourkoulas** reminded the participants that the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) was one of the key European Union policies and one of the building blocks on which the EU was built, and that EU spends 40% of the budget on this sector. He underlined the need for Bosnia and Herzegovina to harmonise its policies and to foster the creation of structures required for absorption of future IPA funds. "It is clear that BiH needs to increase the competitiveness of its agricultural products by ensuring that they can provide domestic and international markets with a stable supply of safe and good quality food.", noted Ambassador Kourkoulas.

He also added that the main issue was to improve the environment and diversity of rural economy by creating jobs and growth opportunities in order to make rural areas attractive as a place to live and work. Ambassador Kourkoulas concluded his address welcoming the adoption of the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development of BiH, and urged all relevant stakeholders to continuously strengthen the capacities in this sector.

Mr. **Mladen Zirojević**, Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic

Relations of BiH presented main achievements of the Ministry that were realised with the support of the European Union - first of all, preparation of the First Agricultural Report, Draft Law on Agriculture adopted in May this year and other vital documents that should accelerate the progress in this sector. He underlined that every achievement was made as a result of the participation of all relevant stakeholders. Therefore, Mr. Zirojević called for the continuation of the good cooperation for the benefit of all.



About SESMARD

SESMARD was assessed as one of the most successful EC projects in the sector of agriculture. Its main achievement relates to the creation of the state level competencies within BiH Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations to coordinate the international matters (SAA, CEFTA, and WTO) and to harmonise the policy, strategy, subsidies, registers, payments, etc. as the issues which are entity competencies according to Dayton Peace Accord.

For more information about the Project, please visit its official web-site: www.sesnard.org

Successful completion of project between the EU and the HJPC BiH



Signing ceremony of the "Memorandum of Understanding on the Continuation of the Cooperation between the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH (HJPC BiH) and the Swedish National Court Administration (SNCA)" took place on July 3, 2008 in Sarajevo. The Memorandum of Understanding is a result of the "Twinning Light" project "Support to the HJPC BiH" funded by the European Union with 250,000 Euro.

Mr. **Marc Vanbrabant**, First Counsellor of the European Commission Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, congratulated the partners on the continuation of their cooperation. *"Independence, impartiality, accountability and good functioning of the judiciary are vital for any democratic society."*, said Mr. Vanbrabant outlining three fundamental reasons for the European Union's support to the judiciary. First objective was to consolidate mandate of the HJPC BiH. Second, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement outlined the provisions for strengthening the area of justice, freedom and security by reinforcing the institutions and the rule of law. Finally, the dialogue on visa liberalisation with Bosnia and Herzegovina recently launched by the European Commission would also depend on the progress made by the judiciary. *"May I assure you that the European Union support to the judiciary will continue. We believe that the Agreement signed today is good basis for us to continue funding the HJPC in particular. We count on your successful cooperation."* concluded Mr. Vanbrabant.

Mr. **Milorad Novković**, President of the HJPC BiH, explained that the completed Twinning Light Project covered the issues of

consolidation of the HJPC mandate, constitutional amendments; the introduction of better practices for court and prosecutor office administration; enhancing budgets and financing for courts and prosecutors offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina and coordination between judges, prosecutors and the police. He thanked all relevant partners, especially the European Commission Delegation to BiH for financial support for this Twinning Assistance stressing that it was vital for the ongoing process of judicial reform in BiH.

Mr. **Anders Hedlund**, Director of Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) stressed out the importance of coordination of all relevant projects with Justice Sector Reform Strategy for the success of judiciary reform in BiH.

About European Union's assistance to judiciary sector

The European Union has been supporting the reform of the judiciary through significant CARDS assistance and will continue under the new Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). From 2001 to present the European Union committed close to 40 million Euro to the judiciary sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The IJC and the HJPC were the main recipients of such support, along with the BiH Court and BiH Prosecutor's Office, the BiH Constitutional Court and the BiH Ministry of Justice.

European Union and UNDP work together with BiH authorities on solving the issue of small arms and light weapons

On behalf of the European Commission Delegation to BiH, Mr. **Constantino Longares**, Head of Operations Section for Democracy and Social Development and Ms. **Christine McNab**, UNDP Resident Representative to BiH, signed a contract for the Project of reduction and control of small arms and light weapons – SACBiH in Sarajevo on September 24, 2008.

Signing ceremony was also a formal launch of the project aimed at cooperation with the BiH authorities in reducing risks of uncontrolled presence of small arms and light weapons that represent a threat to security of people in the country. The European Union's support to the project activities amounts to Euro 2.72 million, while the UNDP ensured co-financing in the amount close to 325,000 Euro.

Mr. **Longares** underlined that Bosnia and Herzegovina was making progress in many sectors on its path to the European Union, adding that the reform of the state institutions, including the reform of the security sector was not yet fully completed. One of the biggest challenges that BiH is facing is solving the issue of explosive devices left from the past war. *"We think that this is a very important task to continue with it and to have it accomplished one day."*

Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) will finance more initiatives that will bring Bosnia and Herzegovina in line with accession requirements in the near future." – said Mr. Longares.

The UNDP will use the European Union funds for activities in disposal of small arms and ammunition, which include upgrade of demilitarised facilities to be used for these activities, and the destruction of collected unstable weapons and ammunition during a period of the next 18 months. *"Our minds have been focused on this problem, not only as theoretical idea that you should not have surplus arms and ammunition, but also as a reality of major catastrophes in other countries. I think that explosions in countries like Mozambique and Albania, and small ones in the neighbouring countries, have really shown that stockpiling of arms and ammunition, particularly when it is old and unstable, is a real threat to a security of people."* – stressed Ms. McNab during the signing ceremony.

It is estimated that BiH stock of small arms and light weapons were around 100.000 pieces and up to 24.000 tons of ammunition.

EU Funded Project “Integrated Landmine-Survivor Assistance in Mine-Affected Returnee Communities throughout BiH” Launched



Mr. **Constantino Longares**, Head of Operations Section for Democracy and Social Development of the European Commission Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina addressed the participants at the ceremony that marked the beginning of the EU funded Project “Integrated Landmine-Survivor Assistance in Mine-Affected Returnee Communities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina” in Sarajevo on September 25, 2008.

The specific objective of the project is to enable ninety (90) landmine survivors from mine-affected target communities with significant minority return, to develop livelihoods and increase household income and thus strengthen their position in the local socio-economic environment.

In his address, Mr. Longares outlined that this Project is oriented towards job creation activities and how European Union is and will continue to be critically engaged in strategies that will successfully rehabilitate and fully reintegrate in economic, social, and political life the people who suffered the most. *“The project builds on capabilities, and not disabilities of landmine survivors and should contribute to their social inclusion.”*, said Mr. Longares and added that Bosnia and Herzegovina as a pre-accession country would need to strengthen its strategic approach to promote social inclusion so that all citizens, including the most vulnerable ones, are able to benefit from economic growth. In that regard, he reiterated commitment of the European Union to provide all necessary help to BiH authorities, whose main responsibility was to create the conditions for successful preparation for membership and better future for all citizens of this country.

Mr. **Marko Nišandžić**, Mercy Corps Country Director in BiH, reminded that every tenth person belongs to category of vulnerable people and that five new landmine victims are registered every month. In that regard he concluded his address with the message shared by all participants in the Project, that vulnerable persons and especially landmine victims should become a priority of the society.

At the occasion of opening ceremony, all partners and co-funders signed the Memorandum of Cooperation and officially marked the beginning of the Project.

Total project value is 475.000 Euro, where European Union provided 394.158 Euro.

„Agro-incubator Žepče“ opened – support to agricultural development of the Central Bosnia region



With aim to support agricultural business development in the Central Bosnia region, the “Agro-incubator Žepče” was opened in Žepče on Friday, August 29, 2008. Dr. **Johann Hesse**, Head of Operations Section for Economic Reform and Natural Resources of the Delegation of the European Commission to BiH, Mr. **Ivica Čurić**, President of the Žepče Association of Entrepreneurs and Employees, Mr. **Mato Zovko**, Head of Žepče Municipality, as well as representatives of the FBiH Ministry of Development, Entrepreneurship and Crafts and other representatives of local authorities, addressed the guests at the opening ceremony.

Beneficiaries of the agro-incubator will be individual producers-farmers and various associations and small and medium enterprises that work in the field of agricultural production. The European Union provided approximately 260,000 Euro (90% of the project value) for the project implementation.

Mr. **Hesse** used the opportunity to warn that Bosnia and Herzegovina still imports significant quantities of food, while very small quantity of agricultural products are exported to the European Union countries. Among many reasons for such situation, Mr. Hesse pointed out the lack of funds or work premises, difficult access to the market as well as the lack of information on the latest agricultural technologies. *„The Žepče Agro-business incubator will not solve all of these problems, but as a regional centre it will provide much needed technical assistance and advice to regional farmers and businesses. More importantly, this centre will support the creation of new jobs, and alternative source of income for people in the wider rural area,”* concluded Hesse.

Ivica Čurić emphasized the importance of the project for agricultural producers in the municipalities of Žepče, Maglaj and Zavidovići, but also for the whole region of Central Bosnia. Agro-incubator Žepče will ensure improvement of the quality and quantity of agricultural products from this area.

As BiH moves towards the European Union, access to other components of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) will be opening once BiH obtains candidacy status, announced Mr. Hesse. Meanwhile, the European Commission Delegation to BiH provides support to five regional development agencies aiming at developing of their capacity for providing support to local stakeholders in identifying regional projects and preparing development projects.

„Agro-incubator Žepče“ is located in a newly reconstructed facility spread on 650 square meters.

Final Conference in Banja Luka marked the end of EU project "Support to Water Quality Management in BiH, phase II"

Final Conference of the EU-funded project "Support to Water Quality Management in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Phase II", took place in Banja Luka on August 27, 2008. The specific objective of the project was to provide support in developing a proposal for a strategy for the protection of surface waters of BiH, in accordance with the strategies and objectives of the Water Framework Directive of the European Union.

Dr **Johan Hesse**, Head of Operations Section for Economic Reform and Natural Resources of the Delegation of the European Commission to BiH, expressed his satisfaction that the reform of water sector resulted in a new legal framework, precisely in the new Law on Water, as well as in significant progress in capacity building in BiH. "One of the preconditions for European integration process is organised environment control, water management and water in urban areas that need significant assets.", pointed out Mr. Hesse.

The European Union provided around 0.4 million EUR for continuing support of the water quality management in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project lasted one year (September 2007 – September 2008), following a successful completion of the first phase, which was a two-year EU assistance in the value of 1 million Euro.

Regional Conference on Insurance Markets in South East and Central Europe and their Regulation

Mr. **Ferdinand Kopp**, Acting Head of Operations Section of the European Commission Delegation to BiH addressed the participants of the Regional Conference on Insurance Markets in South East and Central Europe and their Regulation held in Sarajevo on September 29, 2008. The Conference was hosted by the Insurance Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and co-sponsored by the European Union funded Twinning Light Project "Support to the Insurance Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina" which was implemented with the assistance of the Bulgarian Financial Supervision Commission (FSC).

Mr. Kopp stressed the commitment of the European Union to assist further harmonisation and strengthening of the insurance sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a part of the European *Aquis Communautaire* in the field of the freedom of services in preparation of BiH accession to the EU and taking part in EU insurance market.

This Conference also marked the end of the successful Twinning Light Project which aimed to contribute to development of a single insurance market in BiH, to ensure efficient and transparent insurance regulation, monitoring and coordination, arbitration, transparent information sharing and reporting. The European Union supported this project with 250,000 Euro.

Conference on Support to Tourism Development in BiH



On September 23, 2008, H.E. Ambassador **Dimitris Kourkoulas**, Head of the European Commission Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, attended the opening ceremony of the Conference on Support to Tourism Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo. Organised on the occasion of marking the World Tourism Day, this Conference gathered all relevant stakeholders to exchange views and to jointly derive conclusions on future actions in tourism sector.

Ambassador Kourkoulas reminded that the European Union supported the development of competitiveness in tourism sector by financing 60 projects with over than 10 million Euro "For the

European Union this Conference is an excellent example that in spite of all problems, this country can progress and build better future and European Union is here to help in these endeavours.", concluded Ambassador Kourkoulas.

Mr. **Mladen Zirojević**, BiH Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, said that the goal of this Conference was to dedicate additional attention to the sector of tourism and to "start the processes that would bring us to the better usage and enjoy in beauty of the nature and the heritage of our ancestors."

Mr. **Nevenko Herceg**, FBiH Minister of Environment and Tourism stressed the importance of creating a positive image of BiH by promoting it as a beautiful country of rich history and cultural diversity. Mr. **Predrag Gluhaković**, RS Minister of Trade and Tourism urged that no one in BiH should be shy of promoting all the beauties and capacities of BiH and that tourism should gain second or third place of the community priorities.

The conference covered broad spectre of topics relevant for further development of tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina: from the legislative framework and tourism statistics, topics related to the cultural heritage protection and tourist valorisation, significance of branding and marketing in tourism to the brief on priorities in the sector of tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina as recognised by the EU.

The Conference was organised with technical assistance of the EU funded project - EU Training and Consultancy EU TAC.

Delegation of European Commission to BiH Marked the UN International Day against Torture and Ill Treatment

In order to mark the UN International Day against Torture and Ill Treatment, the Delegation of the European Commission to Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the global efforts in a fight against torture by supporting a series of activities organised as a part of the campaign "Together against Torture". Activities started on 20 June 2008 in Sarajevo with the Roundtable organised by the Association for rehabilitation of the victims of torture/Center for the Victims of Torture.

Tuzla hosted another Roundtable on 25 June 2008, organised by Viva Žene Tuzla, an association active in this field for 14 years. This Roundtable was focused on rehabilitation and support to the victims of torture. „What is important for us is that the persons who survived the war torture in our country know that there is a place for them where someone is going to listen, hear, understand and help them in their suffering, fears and difficulties“, said Ms. **Jasna Zečević**, Director of Viva Žene and added: „We have to break the silence and educate

people how to deal with their past in order to contribute to nurturing of the culture of human rights.“

The video clip prepared by EuropeAid within the EC campaign against torture, was shown to the participants of Tuzla roundtable. They agreed that the video clip was an excellent illustration of Bosnia and Herzegovina's experience in this context. Activities in Tuzla continued on June 26, 2008 through public event including creative workshops and magician performance for children organised by Tuzla based youth NGOs "Manufaktura" and "Revolt".

The participants (more than 100 children and other citizens) were addressed by Tuzla Mayor Mr. Jasmin Imamović and representative of the EC Delegation to BiH, Mr. Vladimir Pandurević. The whole event was covered by local TV "Slon" and national broadcaster BHT1. In addition, a radio jingle has been broadcast on 11 radio stations throughout the country.



European Car Free Day Marked by Sarajevo Half Marathon



In order to mark the European Car Free Day, a Half-marathon (21.1 km) took place in Sarajevo gathering more than 250 participants from a number of countries on Sunday 21 September, 2008. Non-governmental organisation "Marathon Sarajevo" together with other

sponsors and donors, including European Commission Delegation to BiH, Embassy of the Republic of France and United Nations Development Programme in BiH (UNDP) organised this huge sport and social event.

With running time 1:07:27 Đuro Kođo run first through finish line and set the new record of the route, while the winner in female competition was Lucija Kimani with score 1:14:44.

Representing the partners of the organisers, Mayors of Cities of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo, Ms. **Semiha Borovac** and Mr. **Radimir Kezunović**, together with the Ambassador of the Republic of France, H.E. Ms. **Maryse Berniau**, and the UNDP Resident Representative in BiH Ms. **Christine McNab** handed over the trophies and medals to the winners.

Running through streets of both BiH entities, participants were part of a large social action under the motto "Include me", promoting the concept of social inclusion. Having in mind that Sarajevo is the only big city in the region without a marathon, the main goal of the NGO "Marathon Sarajevo" was to organise the first Sarajevo Marathon in 2011 by organising a half-marathon every year from 2008 to 2010.



Online Quiz – Let's Explore Europe published on the website of the European Commission Delegation to BiH

The Delegation of the European Commission to Bosnia and Herzegovina recently published local version of the on-line EU Quiz "Let's Explore Europe". Explore Europe by Topic is the section providing interesting information about EU related issues (i.e. A Continent to Discover, What the EU does, Languages in Europe, Climate and Nature, A Family of Peoples, etc). After reading this section, one can test his/her knowledge through one of 11 chapters, each providing 10 questions. The Quiz is available at: <http://www.europa.ba/go/welcome.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

European Commission Delegation to BiH: www.europa.ba

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