



European  
Commission  
Delegation  
to BiH

# EU Newsletter

## Season's Greetings

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## Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas Presents Accreditation

## Progress Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina

- ❑ Report covers the period 1 October 2005 - 30 September 2006.
- ❑ Analysis of the situation in BiH in terms of the political and economic criteria for EU membership.
- ❑ Conclusion of the SAA negotiations depends on further progress on a number of priorities.

## SAA Technical Negotiations Successfully Completed





## Rehabilitation of Playgrounds in Sarajevo

On 27 October, the first of seven renewed playgrounds in Sarajevo Canton was officially opened. The European Union is working with Sarajevo Canton, Sarajevo Municipalities and the Public Enterprise PARK in a joint effort to provide clean, safe green spaces for children to play in.

The EC has provided playground equipment worth some €130,000, including large multi-purpose combination structures, such as crawler tubes, bridges, towers or climbers, as well as swings, roundabouts, see-saws, slides, park benches and waste bins. The equipment is designed for children aged three and over, and is compliant with EU safety standards, notably the European Standards for Playground Equipment.

The aim is to provide public spaces where children and parents can enjoy the local environment. Hence, they feature visible reminders to visitors on keeping everyone's space clean, with waste bins and panels instructing users to act responsibly in their park. The Ministry of Urban Planning and Environmental Protection of Sarajevo Canton financed the panels, while PARK will clean and maintain the surroundings and the new equipment.

The first playground to be opened is in City Square, Koševo, in Municipality Centar. This playground is intended for younger children and large, multi-purpose, combination structures will be installed next spring.



| Municipality  | Park  |
|---------------|---|
| Centar        | <input type="checkbox"/> City Square "Koševo"<br><input type="checkbox"/> ul. Branilaca Sarajeva<br><input type="checkbox"/> RCZ "Pionirska Dolina" |
| Novo Sarajevo | <input type="checkbox"/> Aleja Lipa (Pionirski Park), Grbavica<br><input type="checkbox"/> Azize Šaćirbegović                                       |
| Novi Grad     | <input type="checkbox"/> Gradačačka 145<br><input type="checkbox"/> Brčanska b.b  |

## Reception Centre for Irregular Migrants

On 13 September 2006, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of a Reception Centre for Irregular Migrants was signed between the Ministry of Security of BiH, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the Delegation of the European Commission in BiH. The signatories were Mr. Bariša Čolak, Minister of Security of BiH, Ms Regina Boucault, Chief of Mission of the IOM and Ambassador Michael Humphreys, Head of Delegation of the European Commission in BiH.

The EU has provided €1 million for the establishment of a Reception Centre for Irregular Migrants and BiH authorities have committed to contributing € 250,000 from the national budget. The Centre is one of BiH's priorities for fighting irregular migration and trafficking in human beings, which are:

- a Migration Information System,
- a Service for Foreigners,
- amendments to the current Law and
- a Migration and Reception Centre for Irregular Migrants at the State level.

This MoU institutes the tasks and responsibilities of the BiH Ministry of Security, IOM and the EC Delegation in establishing a functional Reception Centre for Irregular Migrants in line with international and European standards. Its signature represents an important step towards making progress and fighting irregular migration effectively.



## Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas Presents Accreditation

On 17 October 2006, Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas presented his letter of accreditation to President Sulejman Tihic at the BiH Presidency.

President Tihic and Ambassador Kourkoulas discussed progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement, forthcoming negotiations for visa facilitation and political changes following the October elections.

## Profile - Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas



Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas recently took over the responsibility as Head of the European Commission Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, managing one of the largest Delegations in the world.

The European Commission is negotiating the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a first step in the European integration process; and the Delegation manages a comprehensive assistance programme to the country, on behalf of the European Union. The European Commission is very closely involved in the International Community decision-making process in BiH and coordinates its activities with other EU institutions and EU Member States.

Ambassador Kourkoulas joined the European Commission in 1981 - following accession of his home county, Greece, to the EEC - and participated in the accession negotiations of Portugal and Spain, dealing with non-preferential commercial agreements.

Other posts have included working as a member of the Cabinet of Mrs. Vasso Papandreou, Commissioner for Social Affairs and Education, where he was responsible for relations with the European Parliament, external relations of the Community, development policy, co-operation with third countries in education and social issues, and equal opportunities.

He has been responsible for relations with COMECON countries and, more recently, was Head of Unit for Central and Eastern Europe in the Directorate General for External Political Relations.

For the past nine years he has been Head of Delegation: from 1997 to 2001 in Lebanon and from 2001 to 2006 in Bulgaria, a crucial period in which the country's EU Membership aspirations became a reality. During his mandate in Sofia, he was also responsible for the management of EU financial assistance to Bulgaria of more than € 400 million per year.

Dimitris Kourkoulas graduated in law from the University of Athens in 1977 before completing post-graduate studies in Economic Law at Cologne University and Administrative and Economic Law at the University of Bonn in 1981.

## Towards a Common EU Immigration Policy

All Member States of the EU are affected by the flow of international migration. They have agreed to develop a common immigration policy at EU level. The EC has made proposals for developing this policy, most of which have now become EU legislation. The main objective is to better manage migration flows by a co-ordinated approach which takes into account the economic and demographic situation of the EU.

In spite of the restrictive immigration policies which have been in place since the 1970s in most Member States, large numbers of legal and illegal migrants have continued to come to the EU together with asylum-seekers. Taking advantage of persons seeking a better life, smuggling and trafficking networks have taken hold across the EU. This

situation means that considerable resources have had to be mobilised to fight illegal migration, especially to target traffickers and smugglers. Furthermore, it is recognised that the EU needs migrants in certain sectors and regions, in order to deal with its economic and demographic needs.

Realising that a new approach to managing migration was necessary, the leaders of the EU set out in October 1999 the elements for a common EU immigration policy. The approach agreed then was confirmed in 2004 with the adoption of The Hague programme, which sets the objectives for strengthening freedom, security and justice in the EU for the period 2005-2010.

For more information on these and other related policies, see:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/)

## Progress Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 8 November 2006, the EC approved the Strategy Paper for, and the Progress Reports on, candidate and potential candidate countries' on their road towards the EU.

BiH started negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) a year ago, in November 2005, and a considerable part of the text of the SAA had already been agreed. However, the new Progress Report noted that conclusion of the SAA negotiations depends on further progress on a number of priorities, most notably, police reform, broadcasting legislation and full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

This report covers the period between 1 October 2005 and 30 September 2006. It briefly describes the relations between BiH and the Union; it analyses the situation in BiH in terms of the political and economic criteria for membership; it reviews BiH's capacity to gradually approximate its legislation and policies with those of the *Acquis*.

Progress is measured on the basis of decisions taken, legislation adopted and measures implemented. As a rule, legislation or measures which are under preparation or await Parliamentary approval are not taken into account.

The report is based on many sources and includes contributions from the government of BiH, the Member States, European Parliament reports and information from various international and non-governmental organisations.

### Political criteria

Progress with regard to the political criteria has continued and the planned phasing out of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) is recognition of the country's achievements in terms of security and stability. The general elections in October represented further consolidation of democracy and the rule of law. A strategy for public administration reform has been adopted and some steps have been taken towards providing State institutions with sufficient resources.

BiH needs to step up its efforts regarding police reform. Other priorities are adoption of all necessary public broadcasting legislation and strengthening of the public administration, as well as full co-operation with the ICTY. Constitutional reform should be undertaken, to ensure that the country's institutions work properly both at State and entity level.

### Economic criteria

Some progress has been made towards becoming a functioning market economy. Coordination on fiscal policies across the country deepened and a Value Added Tax was successfully introduced. Fiscal consolidation continued and growth remained strong.

However, imbalances in the trade and current accounts remain to be tackled. Proper decision-making as regards economic and fiscal policies needs to be ensured. Privatisation and corporate restructuring have to be speeded up, while the business climate and corporate governance need to be improved.

### European standards

BiH has made further steps towards meeting European standards, with progress made in the fields of taxation, anti-trust policy, transport, energy and some of the justice and home affairs-related areas.

It needs to intensify its efforts in other areas, such as free movement of goods and services, customs, state aids, SMEs, employment, education, environment and statistics. Concrete action is necessary to achieve a single economic space within the country. Overall administrative capacity must be further strengthened.

### Pre-accession Assistance

The EC will continue to provide financial assistance. In the framework of the 2006 CARDS national programme, pre-accession assistance worth € 51 million has been allocated to BiH while € 61.2 million is planned for 2007.



## Delegation Launches New Publication

As BiH's European prospects grow, so too does the importance of properly communicating Europe. As part of this endeavour, the European Commission Delegation to BiH has produced a new bilingual brochure: "Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union - Working Towards a Brighter Future".

The publication aims to help people better understand the EU, the support it provides to the institutions and the citizens of BiH on the country's path to European integration and the integration process itself. It is available at the EC Delegation to BiH and soon be available on the website: [www.europa.ba](http://www.europa.ba)



## SAA Technical Negotiations Successfully Completed

On 14 December 2006 the European Commission and Bosnia and Herzegovina concluded the final technical round of Stabilisation and Association Agreement negotiations.

BiH Chief Negotiator, Mr Igor Davidović was very pleased that the technical negotiations were completed in less than one year, as was initially planned. He highlighted that the agreement reached has been a process of discussion and compromise on the part of both negotiation teams which has satisfied both parties. The agreement covers tariffs and scheduled reductions per sector and products over a six year transition period, leading up to liberalised trade with the EU.

Director of the Directorate for European Integration, Mr Osman Topčagić, expressed hope that the agreement can be signed and will

enter into force within the next six months. He stressed that this depends entirely on BiH making progress on key reforms, most notably, police reform.

European Commission Chief Negotiator, Dirk Lange, the Head of Unit for Albania and BiH in the EC Directorate-General for Enlargement, praised the professionalism of the BiH negotiating team and stated that the EC would like to see the conditions for the next step - initialling the SAA - in place as soon as possible. These conditions relate to police reform, Public Broadcasting, Public Administration Reform and co-operation with the ICTY. He urged BiH politicians to grasp the current window of opportunity and take the necessary steps so as to enable the SAA to come into force as soon as possible.

### STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONER REHN ON THE SAA NEGOTIATIONS (15 -XII-06)

"I am informed that technical talks on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Commission and Bosnia and Herzegovina have been successfully finalised. I appreciate the professional and constructive work of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the negotiations. Now the Commission will report to the Members States on the results achieved. Before the

negotiations can be formally concluded, through the initialing of the agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to implement key reforms. Progress is notably lacking in area of police restructuring. The Commission is ready to initial the Agreement as soon as the necessary progress is made. I hope that it will happen soon."

## Germany Assumes the Presidency of the Council



On 1 January 2007, Germany is assuming the Presidency of the Council for the twelfth time overall, this being the third time since the European Union was founded.

The Presidency Programme has been agreed and will, as is the tradition, be outlined by Federal Chancellor Merkel at the first meeting of the European Parliament on 17 January 2007, in Strasbourg.

The focal points have been identified as follows:

- Economic and other internal EU topics. The key points here include the Energy Action Plan, climate protection, better regulation and the social dimension. These topics will be dealt with primarily at the Spring Summit.
- A further priority is shaping EU foreign relations. This sphere includes preparing the EU contribution towards a possible

status solution for Kosovo, work within the Middle East Quartet, renegotiating a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Russia, deepening transatlantic economic relations with the United States, further developing the European Neighbourhood Policy and drawing up a Central Asia Strategy.

- And finally, as a priority for the European Council in June 2007, continuing the constitutional process.

The climax of the German Council Presidency will be the celebrations marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome on 25 March 2007. On this occasion, the EU Heads of State and Government will meet in Berlin and present a declaration to reaffirm EU values and outline its future role.

Full details and schedules are available at: [www.eu.2007.de](http://www.eu.2007.de)

## Enlargement 2007 - Bulgaria and Romania to Join the Union

On 26 September 2006, the European Commission adopted its final monitoring report on Bulgaria and Romania's preparedness for EU membership. The Commission considered that solid progress has been achieved, and that both countries will be in a position to take on the rights and obligations of EU membership on 1 January 2007. To address the areas where further work will be necessary, the Commission also proposed a package of rigorous accompanying measures.

On 30 November the European Parliament adopted the final resolutions welcoming the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU on 1 January.



### BULGARIA

|                   |          |            |                         |
|-------------------|----------|------------|-------------------------|
| YEAR OF ACCESSION | 2007     | AREA       | 111.000 km <sup>2</sup> |
| POLITICAL SYSTEM  | Republic | POPULATION | 7.9 million             |
| CAPITAL           | Sofia    | CURRENCY   | Lev                     |



### ROMANIA

|                   |           |            |                         |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------------------------|
| YEAR OF ACCESSION | 2007      | AREA       | 238.000 km <sup>2</sup> |
| POLITICAL SYSTEM  | Republic  | POPULATION | 22.4 million            |
| CAPITAL           | Bucharest | CURRENCY   | Romanian Lev            |



Member states of the EU      Candidate countries      Potential candidate countries

## New Twinning Project for Agency for Statistics

On 30 November 2006, a new twinning project to support the Agency for Statistics was presented by Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas, Head of the EC Delegation to BiH and by H.E. Alessandro Fallavollita, Ambassador of Italy.

The twinning project started in August 2006 and will last 24 months, during which officials from the BiH Agency for Statistics and Entity Statistical Offices will work together with their colleagues from the twinning partner from Italy (the Italian National Institute of Statistics, ISTAT, in partnership with the Republic of Slovenia Statistical Office, the Central Statistical Office of Hungary and Statistics Denmark). The aim is to build the capacity of the statistical system of BiH in order to provide timely, reliable and harmonised statistical data for the country as a whole.

Ambassador Kourkoulas stressed that reliable statistics are vital when it comes to trade between BiH and the EU, and are essential for the implementation of the SAA and other agreements. He pointed out that the lack of harmonisation of the statistical methods used by the three statistical institutions in BiH means they are not currently able to

provide reliable and comprehensive information.

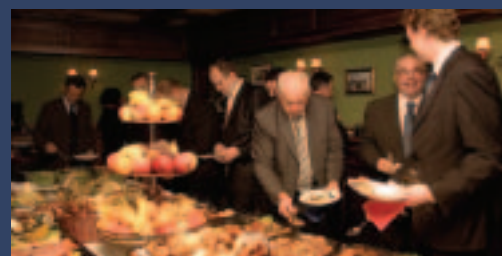
H.E. Alessandro Fallavollita highlighted the importance of statistics in understanding the social situation in BiH and offering a clear picture of the country's economic situation. This is crucial for policy planning and for investment. Italy is already funding bilateral assistance for the Institute for Statistics and a second phase is planned.

Mr Zdenko Milinović, Director of the BiH Agency for Statistics, stated that it is essential that the Agency and Offices for Statistics apply the same methodology and are harmonised with international standards, including professional independence, without which there can be no improvement.

Mr. Osman Topčagić, Director of the Directorate for European Integration, noted that the ongoing economic dialogue with the EU is more and more in need of reliable statistics.

The EU has provided € 1.45 million for this project and also plans to provide equipment worth € 500,000. A further € 7 million will support the Statistics sector over the next four years.





## End of Year Reception

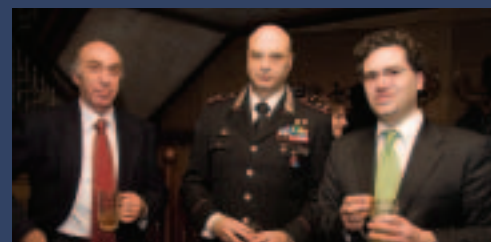
The traditional yearly reception was co-hosted by the Directorate for European Integration and the European Commission Delegation to BiH on 19 December in a Sarajevo restaurant.

Guests included government representatives and civil servants, members of the diplomatic corps and international organisations, as well as staff from NGOs and consultants implementing funded projects.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Osman Topčagić shared his impression that 2006 has been a good year for BiH and will be remembered as

such. He thanked all those who participated in the SAA negotiations as well as in their preparation, notably colleagues from the Directorate and other BiH institutions, as well as the press who closely followed developments.

Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas concurred that 2006 has seen great achievements. He warmly congratulated BiH for one such achievement which took place earlier in the same day, when BiH formally joined CEFTA (the Central Europe Free Trade Agreement). He expressed hope that 2007 will also prove to be a very productive year.



## Conference on Rules of Origin

On 29 November 2006, the EU-TDI project organised a conference on Rules of Origin, in the framework of project activities. The conference was co-hosted by the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Relations.

In preparation for joining the World Trade Organisation and for the Stabilisation and Association Process, BiH has already adopted legal acts which regulate rules of origin. This is an important subject as all types of preferential treatment - such as free trade agreements, CEFTA, the SAA or unilateral preferential treatment from specific countries - for products from BiH depend on their proper implementation.

The Conference provided an opportunity to discuss in detail the differences between preferential and non-preferential rules of origin,

and how to apply these rules in the framework of the Preferential Agreement which is already in force with the EU.

Mr. Konstantin Woebking, Head of the Economic and Political Department in the EC Delegation to BiH, stressed that this is a difficult topic with complex rules - for example, the SAA includes a long definition of rules of origin - and that the authorities must ensure that rules are followed while businesses must be able to understand them and how they are applied. To illustrate this point he referred to the sugar question in recent years, where the origin stated on the certificates was not correct and resulted in counter-measures, with trade restricted in the sugar sector from BiH to the EU. In the future, with different areas of Free Trade, the authorities must also be able to distinguish in which context a certificate should be issued.

### EU-TDI - "EU Capacity Building Initiative for Trade Development and FDI Attraction to BiH"

The EU-TDI project started in March 2005 and finished in December 2006. It focused on the development of trade, on expanding trade opportunities, on raising the capacities of the BiH economy and, by so doing, on assisting BiH to reduce its trade deficit. The project addressed the following three main areas:

- foreign trade policy development;
- sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regulations and administration; and

- attraction of foreign direct investment.

The objective was to assist BiH in developing the capacity to create trade policy which is consistent with international norms, as established by the WTO and SAA, and the country's economic interests. Well-conducted trade policy is of key importance to the improvement of the trade deficit, increasing export opportunities and attracting foreign direct investment.

## The Ambassador's Advisers

The EC Delegation to BiH includes a Political & Economic Section and a Press & Information Section. Posts of advisers in Delegations are created following a request from the Delegation to the Commission headquarters in Brussels, and, therefore, their numbers vary from one Delegation to another. The scope of political relations with BiH and the extended assistance programmes have, over the years, resulted in three posts of Advisers and a total of seven staff members working in two teams.

They closely monitor political and economic developments throughout the country, as well as how the media is covering such developments, in order to advise the Ambassador and help him keep up-to-date at all times. To do so, they rely on political and diplomatic contacts, co-ordination meetings with international actors, NGO reports, contacts in EU-funded projects, among others, and inputs from colleagues from the Delegation's Operations section for specific technical issues.

### Political and Economic Section

The Political and Economic Section is responsible for producing the first draft of the annual Progress Report, the most recent of which was presented on 8 November 2006. A Delegation is the Commission's "eyes and ears" in the field, hence the Political and Economic Section prepares regular reports to Brussels which – apart from the annual Progress Report – include weekly political reports, monthly SAP reports as well as bi-weekly economic reports. Most of these are internal Commission documents and are not disseminated.

Monitoring developments related to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement is an important task and the monthly SAP reports review progress in each sector. Scrutinising developments related to outstanding priorities, such as police reform, are ongoing tasks, while other priorities develop in accordance with the domestic agenda.

In analysing developments, the Political and Economic Section liaises closely with headquarters in order to define the Commission's policy towards the country (and the region) in the political and economic fields, including trade. In co-ordination with

other international actors and through close contacts with all levels of local authorities, it pursues the goal to see policy implemented.

The Political and Economic Section follows the negotiations for the Stabilisation and Association Agreement – and other contractual relations with the country – and in the future will have an important role in monitoring its implementation.

The Political and Economic Section also works closely with the operational sections of the Delegation, in order to tap the information and experience acquired by staff in Operations and in EU-funded projects through their own contacts with relevant government officials and beneficiaries, to ensure overall policy co-ordination and to help when a project is facing political obstacles which affect its proper implementation, by addressing the issue at the political level.

### Press and Information Section

The Press and Information Office is the "voice" of the Commission and the Delegation in BiH, responsible for disseminating its activities through media relations, publications and other communication tools, special events, etc.

Media coverage of all relevant topics related to the European Union, its assistance programme and the SAP is carefully monitored and analysed. This section is also responsible for following developments in the Public Broadcasting reform, an outstanding priority for the SAA.

From 1998 to 2003 the Press and Information Section was also responsible for the management of contracts for projects to support media development, such as: Establishment of the Communications Regulatory Agency, BiH Press Council, reform of Public Broadcasting and a number of smaller media projects for training and development of the BiH media. This task has been taken over by the Operations section.

The Press and Information Section is also responsible for co-ordinating overall visibility activities with regard to EU funded projects and provides inputs and advice to funded projects which are organising public awareness campaigns or events, producing publications and other related activities.



Left to right:

Emil Okanović,  
*Economic Adviser*

Lejla Ramić-Mesihović,  
*Senior Secretary/Interpreter*

Giulio Zanni,  
*Political Adviser*

Daniela Mićanović,  
*Senior Secretary/ Documentalist*

Konstantin Woebking,  
*Head of Economic and Political Department*

Frane Maroević,  
*Press and Information Adviser*

Zora Stanić,  
*Press Officer*

Giorgia Zeta Astra,  
*Political Attaché*





## Promoting Exports

EU-EXPRO, a technical assistance project to support export promotion, was launched on 10 November 2006.

Currently, BiH's balance of trade suffers from a serious deficit, as imports far outstrip exports. This has been improving recently - exports for the first eight months of this year increased by almost 40% over 2005, while the coverage of imports by exports improved from 35% in 2005 to 50% in 2006.

Too high a percentage of BiH exports fall into the category of raw materials and semi-processed products, with too little value added before shipment, leaving insufficient benefits with the exporter. The solution to this problem is not easy, calling for investment in industrial design as well as product development and support in the market through advertising and promotional brand-building activities. Currently, a very small number of exporters account for the vast majority of BiH exports.

The EU EXPRO project should result in a broader export base and an improved value of exports, by helping exporters to identify more attractive markets and more direct access to buyers in those markets.

The project aims to:

- Provide capacity building support for the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations (MoFTER) and for the

establishment of a BiH Export Promotion Agency, to secure an effective institutional framework that can implement an export promotion strategy.

- Assist the BiH Export Promotion Agency in developing international competitiveness and capacity to export in specific sectors.
- Improve access to trade and market information and increase awareness of BiH's export potential among BiH intermediaries and the business communities in BiH and internationally.

The Foreign Trade Chamber will provide export promotion services to all exporters. In addition to the services it already provides, the Chamber will introduce new market information and export advisory services.

MoFTER continues to have the overall responsibility for trade and trade promotion policy. It will now coordinate trade promotion activities through the new Export Council, which will act as an institutional link between the Ministry and the Foreign Trade Chamber, in order to coordinate activities. The Council will also address issues in the export environment, helping to level the international playing field for BiH exporters.

Individual exporters will also be helped to plan their approach to international markets through the Exporter Development Programme and up-to-date information on international markets will be available in the Market Information Centre which will be established by the Foreign Trade Council.

The project will also undertake a series of Sectoral studies, to assess their international competitiveness and recommend export promotional strategies.

## Local Environmental Action Plans

The EU technical assistance project "Support to Environmental Field Inspection" assists local partners in improving environmental management and working towards sustainable development policies. The project included assistance in the development of Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs) in four BiH municipalities: Gradiška, Konjic, Ugljevik and Tuzla.

The LEAPs were developed through a participatory process involving a variety of forums which brought together relevant actors in each of the municipalities, to establish priority actions. A LEAP is not just a document - it is a fundamental process that should become a standard rule of behaviour in the local community which developed it. The process aims to:

- identify environmental problems and concerns in the areas;
- suggest and agree on solutions that are practical for implementation; and
- secure local, national or international resources to implement these changes.

This approach to project development has a clear advantage, as donors and investors can choose to support projects that are known to have the full backing of the community and have undergone prior discussion with regulators.

On 21 September 2006, the EC Delegation hosted a conference to present the methodologies and outputs of these four LEAPs and seek funding for some of the projects identified by the communities. Embassies of bi-lateral donors and international institutions pledged their support for this LEAP process and attended the conference, where Mr. Reuf Hadžibegić, Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, highlighted the fact that this process is crucial to help BiH address the requirements of the Stabilisation and Association Process and the *Acquis*.

Mr. Ferdinand Kopp of the EC Delegation to BiH noted that this is an important step in environmental issues for the country, but that the process will take many years, eventually covering 140 municipalities. It is necessary to seek a balance between economic development and the environment: the EU has created a framework for sustainable development which respects the rights of future generations. He called on the international community and BiH to join efforts to strive for sustainable development. There is a need to do away with the view that protection of the environment is in opposition to development aims and that it leads to long term increases in social costs.





## European Mobility Week

The European Mobility Week, supported by the European Commission's DG Environment, was launched in April 2002 in Brussels, during the Green Week. Based on the success of the International Car Free Day "In town without my car!", which was initiated in France in 1998, this annual event has grown in scope ever since.

From 16 to 22 September 2006, European citizens had the opportunity to enjoy a full week of events dedicated to sustainable mobility, with the objective of facilitating widespread debate on the necessity for changes in behaviour in relation to mobility and, in particular, the use of the private car. As usual, the Car Free Day was the highlight of the Week. Thirty-eight countries throughout the world participated in this year's European Mobility Week and

over 1,300 cities participated in the Car Free Day.

The governments of Europe are also working together to tackle climate change and reduce the EU's carbon emissions. However, to really make a difference, individuals need to think about their personal environmental impact and take steps to reduce carbon footprints. The EC's "You Control Climate Change" campaign is helping individuals contribute to the fight against climate change and includes promotion of eco-friendly alternatives to driving: on average, for each litre of fuel burned in a car engine, more than 2.5 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> is released. For more information on this campaign, see:

<http://www.mobilityweek-europe.org>

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/climat/campaign/index.htm>

## Promoting Sustainable Mobility in BiH

"Eco-mobility: public awareness-raising campaign promoting alternative modes of urban transport" is an eleven-month project funded under the CARDS Programme. Launched in December 2005, it is implemented by the NGO Sprofondo-Bezdan, in partnership with the NGOs Kyodo and Pro.ba.

The project marked Car Free Day on 22 September 2006 with a special tram in Sarajevo displaying promotional material with their slogan "think twice". It provided service free-of-charge and passengers received leaflets, post-cards and other material on the subject. Volunteers also interviewed passengers for a survey on transport habits and opinions on public transport.

Ambassador Michael B. Humphreys rode the tram on its maiden run, spoke with journalists and passengers on the concept of the Car Free Day and welcomed the beginning of the concept in BiH. He stressed the importance of using public transport or other alternatives to private cars and recognised that, although this was his first tram ride in Sarajevo, he was in the habit of walking to work.





## Delegation Staff Support Reforestation

In response to the appeal launched by 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai from Kenya - who called on all citizens of the world to help plant a billion trees over the coming years to combat global warming - on 12 December 2006 the staff of the European Commission Delegation to BiH, together with the public company "Park", planted 150 trees in Betanija, Sarajevo.

### GRASSROOTS PARTNERS



## EKOTIM - Campaigning Against Waste

EKOTIM is a non-governmental, non-partisan citizens' association founded by students and schoolchildren in 2002, to protect the environment and thus improve people's health and quality of life. Its founders realised the low level of awareness on the need to protect the environment and nature, and decided to do something about it, though at the beginning their only resources were their own power to communicate their ideas to their friends and communities. EKOTIM is now led by a small team of committed professionals and currently has eighty members from a variety of professions and levels of education. It continues to raise awareness among children and youth, as the hope for the future.

In partnership with the NGO COOR, EKOTIM applied for - and received - a grant from the EU to implement the project "Campaign to Reduce Waste: If You Won't, Who Will?" in the municipality of Kreševo. The twelve-month project started in December 2005 and

focused on raising awareness on the problems created for local communities by irresponsible dumping of waste and the need to reduce waste at the source.

Project activities included competitions between primary and secondary schools to collect old paper and packaging, communal clean up of the banks of the river Kreševčica, posters and other promotional material, among others. Municipal authorities, public services, businesses, educational institutions, local NGOs and communities all participated in the activities.

The EC provided € 88,600 for this project, which was co-funded by the Institute for Hydrotechnology and the partners themselves. The project was implemented between December 2005 and December 2006, and succeeded in making a real difference in the communities. The clean villages and river banks in Kresevo are now an example for the entire country.



## Regional Meeting of Heads of Police

CARPO (CARDS Police) – a regional CARDS project aiming to develop reliable and functioning policing systems, enhance the combat against major criminal activities and police co-operation – covered Albania, BiH, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and FYROM. Specific project activities targeted:

- developing and implementing regional strategies against serious forms of crime based on the *Acquis* communautaire, by providing the beneficiary countries with the necessary tools to combat organised and economic crime, and
- enabling them to deliver comprehensive training against trafficking in human beings, smuggling and illegal migration.

The 30-month project, with a total budget of € 4.4 million, was due to end in August 2006 but was extended by nine months, with an additional budget of 550,000. The extension will concentrate on financial investigations and exchange of information among financial intelligence units.

The Council of Europe was responsible for implementing the project, in partnership with the governments of Belgium, Finland,

Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden, as well as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

On 21 September 2006, the Project's Final Conference brought together the Heads of Police from South-east Europe to review the progress made in the implementation of the "Brijuni strategy" on tools to combat organised and economic crime.

The EC regards the "Brijuni strategy" as one of the primary achievements of the first module of the project and the successful result of a collective effort of all partners in the region. The recently adopted national strategy for the fight against organised crime and corruption will guide the authorities of BiH in the implementation of these international commitments.

Sustainability of the training provided under the second module is crucial. The Police academies participated in many such sessions and are expected to incorporate them into their regular curricula. The anticipated creation of a single training institute in the context of police reform will greatly benefit from the expertise transferred to those who attended these courses.

## Easier Travel for Citizens of Western Balkans Countries

Following the EC's confirmation that the door of the EU remains open to the Western Balkans, 13 November provided concrete proof that the EU welcomes the citizens of the region. The Union's twenty-five Member States mandated the EC to start negotiating visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Albania\*, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

The exact content of these visa facilitation agreements will be defined during the negotiations. They will apply to short-stay visas, and their overall aim is to make it easier for trusted citizens of Western Balkan countries, in particular those who travel the most, to acquire visas for the EU (excluding the UK and Ireland) as well as Norway and Iceland.

Visas for school pupils, students and researchers will be free of charge. For those who have to pay, the fee will remain € 35, exempting the region from the rise to € 60 that will be introduced for most of the world in 2007. Businessmen, researchers and journalists will have easier access to multiple-entry visas, rather than having to get a new visa for each visit. Member States will make the conditions for issuing short-stay visas more transparent and will speed up the procedures for issuing them.

Negotiations on both the visa facilitation and readmission agreements will be conducted together, starting at the end of November. The conclusion of these agreements will be an

important step towards the eventual lifting of the visa requirements for the countries of the region. Visa liberalisation – the introduction of visa-free travel – is, however, a long-term goal.

The agreements on readmission will set out clear obligations and procedures for the authorities of both the Western Balkan countries and EU Member States as to when and how to take back people who are illegally residing on their territories.

"We welcome the adoption today by the Council of mandates for the Commission to negotiate Community visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. This step reflects the commitment by the EU to promoting people-to-people contacts between the Western Balkans and the Union. It is really good news for the citizens in the region and a tangible proof of what the European perspective can offer" stated Vice-President Franco Frattini and Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn.

The countries in the region have to play their part too. They need to work on making progress on key security issues, such as more effectively fighting organised crime, corruption and illegal migration, improving border control and the security of documents through the introduction of biometric data, and ensuring the rule of law.

\* Albania already has a readmission agreement with the EU, hence only a mandate on visa facilitation was adopted for this country