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Did you know?

The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society has prepared the Calendar of Open Calls for the financing of projects of associations and other civil society organisations from the budget of the Republic of Serbia in 2019. which is available at: konkur-si.civilnodrustvo.gov.rs

Exchange 5 Grant Scheme Programme - Support to Local Self-Governments

By:  REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
MINISTRY OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

 Republic of Serbia
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

 Funded by
the European Union

Exchange5

 Standing Conference
of Towns and Municipalities

Within the framework of the Exchange 5 Grant scheme, the implementation of 18 projects in the field of property management at the local level was approved. The projects will include 48 local self-government units (18 coordinators and 30 partners) as well as a few other users (PUC, development agencies, CSOs). The total value of contracted projects is over 3.5 million EUR, of which the European Union donation amounts to approximately 3 million EUR, while the remaining amount represents co-financing by the beneficiaries. The average value of the individual grant is around 165.000 EUR, and the envisaged duration of projects is 12-18 months. Exchange 5 Programme is funded by the European Union from IPA 2014. The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government is the Beneficiary in terms of indirect management of funds, Department for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Programmes at the Ministry of Finance (CFCU) is the Contracting Authority, while the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities is the implementing partner. Ultimate beneficiaries of the Programme are the LSGs in Serbia and citizens/local communities benefiting from improved property management and related services by local governments. On the occasion of contracts' signing, marking the launching of projects' implementation, organized in the January 2019 Minister of European Integration Jadranka Joksimović has highlighted that this is important for changing the investment and business environment in cities and municipalities. The Minister has explained that Exchange 5 is not only a programme related to asset management, but also to strategic planning and programme budgeting that has been an obligation since 2015. Speaking about property management, the Minister Joksimovic has said that it is extremely important to delineate ownership of publicly owned assets at the

central, provincial and local levels, stating that there have been legal-property issues before. She has highlighted the importance of synergy between the state, the provincial and the local level, inter alia, due to Chapter 22 on regional policy and coordination of EU structural funds, as well as due to the increase in funds presently available. Joksimović has stated that local self-governments need to increase their interest and capacities and also identify available development funds, because, as she has indicated, there is no need for them to borrow when they can obtain funds in another way - through EU funds. Joksimovic has recalled that the EU cohesion policy is actually a policy of solidarity in terms of reducing inequality in the development of



European regions, adding that Serbia's goal at this stage of the pre-accession process is to properly prepare for membership and make a painless and successful transition regarding the EU structural funds and cohesion policy. Implementation of activities under the Support Package is foreseen for the period from May 2019 to April 2020.

Open call for a packages of support to the local self governments in the field of property management is open until April 5th. All cities and municipalities have the opportunity to participate in this competition, except those that have received support under the Exchange 5 and EU Exchange 4 grant schemes in the field of property management. In order to provide support for preparing the application for the competition, three regional presentations will be organized in the third week of March. For any additional questions you can contact Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities - Ljiljana Jovanovic, e-mail: ljiljana.jovanovic@skgo.org.

Reconstructed Border Crossing Bajmok Opened

By:



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
MINISTRY OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION



Reconstructed border crossing Bajmok has been opened today. It is one of eight border crossings between Serbia and Hungary whose reconstruction cost EUR 2.1 million, done according to the highest global standards. The opening ceremony was attended by Minister of Finance Siniša Mali, Head of EU Delegation Sem Fabrizi, Assistant Minister of European Integration Branko Budimir and Director of the Customs Administration Miloš Tomić. Branko Budimir recalled that the EU allocates significant amount of grants for activities that are part of Chapter 24 – Justice, freedom and security. Over the past years, the EU has invested EUR 50 million in integrated border management. In addition, the EU allocates funds for cross-border and transnational cooperation projects. “The project will influence local economy and strengthen the impact in other areas, such as cultural cooperation, tourism, environmental



protection and education”, said Budimir. Modernisation of Bajmok crossing will improve the quality of life of the locals and facilitate travelling, as well as the work of the customs authorities and the police. The works were completed in 18 months. Bajmok crossing has been constructed according to the highest standards and it has everything to ensure smooth

functioning of passenger traffic and efficient work of border services. Out of the invested EUR 2.1 million, EUR 1.8 million was secured from EU pre-accession funds, while the other EUR 300,000 was secured through national co-financing. In addition, another EUR 240,000 was allocated for the supervision of works. Newly constructed crossing Bajmok is located some 30 kilometres from Subotica, that is,

50 and 30 kilometres from the busiest border crossings in the country, Horgoš and Kelebija respectively, where traffic will now be significantly reduced. The new crossing includes two lanes in each direction, which will speed up traffic with Hungary. This is also the fastest route to Vienna. The Customs Administration has created all necessary conditions for bus traffic at the crossing. As before, there will be no cargo traffic. The crossing was opened in 1991.

Germany Has Written off 18.5 Million Euros of Serbian Public Debt

By:



KfW


Upon approval of the German Federal government, KfW formally announced on 3rd December 2018

the cancellation of Serbian sovereign debt amounting to 18.5 million euros to the Serbian Ministry of Finance. This is resulting from a Debt Swap Agreement called “Debt for Nature” dated on the 30th of September 2011. It is the second debt cancellation in recent years after the Federal Republic of Germany has already cancelled 25 million euros of Serbian debt in August 2012 based on a similar agreement. The general idea behind the Debt Swap is to release public debt of the Republic of Serbia conditioning on the investment of state-owned funds equalling to the amount of 50 percent of the cancelled debt into an environmental program of the German Financial Cooperation. Both, the Serbian and German side have agreed on transferring the Debt Swap funds to the KfW program “Rehabilitation of district heating systems in Serbia - Phase IV”. They confirm that the promotion and modernization of district heating will make a significant contribution to energy efficiency and thus to the reduction of negative impacts on the environment and climate. The first goal of the Debt Swap Agreement was generating financial space for environment friendly infrastructure investments. This was achieved as the Serbian government was able to invest 9.25 million euros from the national budget into the program. The second goal - the reduction of public debt due to debt cancellation - was achieved after all planned investments had been implemented and an independent audit submitted its summary report to the KfW and the German government that the Serbian contribution have been used for the purpose of the program. Particularly positive is that from the moment of signing the Debt Swap Agreement in 2011 no more interest payments

had to be issued for the entire amount of 18.5 million euros. The project “Rehabilitation of District Heating Systems in Serbia - Phase IV” is the follow-up program of three successfully implemented programs in the Serbian district heating sector financed by the German Government through KfW since 2001. By realizing the rehabilitation and modernization of old district heating systems in 21 district heating companies the program makes an important impact to secure and pollutant reduced energy supply in Serbia. In 9 out of 21 participating district heating companies measures were financed only with Debt Swap funds. The total contribution of the German Financial Cooperation implemented by KfW on behalf of the German government throughout all program phases amounts to around 87 million euros. The EU also contributed to the program with EU-WBIF-funds in the amount of 2 million euros.



Launch of a Unified IT System of Local Tax Administrations

By:  Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

The Government of Switzerland has supported with 200'000 euro a new information system for local tax administrations. Through the Swiss project "Property Tax Reform", records of property taxes have been established in 44 municipalities and 11 cities throughout Serbia. The system was officially launched on March 1st 2019 at a conference attended by Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabic, the Minister of State Administration, and Local Self-Government, the Minister of Finance, the Swiss Ambassador Philippe Guex and Mayor of Sombor. Prime Minister Ana Brnabic expects this will assist Serbia advance on the Doing Business list, which will bring new investments and jobs. She believes electronic administration means a faster, more efficient and more transparent service to both the general public and business, but also represents a very efficient instrument to fight corruption. "The introduction of e-governance introduces basic order in the state. The biggest benefit is that we bring common sense and order into public administration, while at the same time, becoming a service for citizens and businesses," the Prime Minister pointed out. H.E. the Swiss Ambassador Philippe Guex emphasised that the intro-



duction of this system has been a great success, and that it will contribute to more efficient law enforcement. "Switzerland is proud to support local governments in introducing services that make life and business easier for citizens and businesses. The value of this project is 5.3 million euro, but good relations between Serbia and Switzerland are more important than that", said Ambassador Guex. As a representative of one of the users of this system, the Mayor of Sombor and President of the Association of Towns and Municipalities in Serbia,

Dusanka Golubovic, highlighted that the new system improves municipal services in line with good governance principles. In this context, the Mayor stated the participation of Sombor in the Swiss project "Property Tax Reform" would enable them to increase tax revenues, but also to raise the public's awareness of their role in spending the funds

raised, and how to become actively involved in the "process called life in local self-government". All local tax administrations in Serbia now operate in a unified system that allows citizens and businesses to submit tax returns online, and to check and pay their tax obligations electronically. In practice, this means that citizens can see what they owe in taxes by simply entering their user name and a password.

In Brief - REGIOSTARS Awards 2019 Launched

The REGIOSTARS Awards are a yearly competition, organized by the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy. It aims at identifying good practices in regional development and highlighting innovative, EU-funded projects, which could be attractive and inspiring to other regions and project managers. All INTERREG IPA CBC Serbian projects are eligible to apply, too. The call is opened until 9 May 2019, more information on:

www.regiostarsawards.eu

National Awards for Applying Good Governance at the Local Level

By:  МИНИСТАРСТВО
ДРЖАВНЕ УПРАВЕ
И ЛОКАЛНЕ
САМОУПРАВЕ

 **Swiss PRO**

With the Swiss support, the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government (MPALSG) and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) have conducted the first National annual competition for selecting the best practice in the applying the good governance principles at the local level for 2018. Swiss PRO, Swiss Government supported development program, enabled Annual good governance awards for towns and municipalities in Serbia. In his opening remarks, the Swiss Ambassador, H. E. Philippe Guex, said that his country is supporting Serbia in establishing good governance practices at the local level, and that results are now visible. "Good governance is a precondition for socio-economic development, based on democracy and respect for human rights," said Ambassador Guex. "These awards were given to the visionaries", said Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Governments Branko Ružić and emphasised the connection between the current Government measures and the awarded practices. He also highlighted that the task of his Ministry and the Government was to create governance suitable for all. The call for the first National annual competition for selecting best practices in applying good governance prin-

ciples at the local level, which was opened for four areas, resulted in 31 applications from 11 cities, 13 municipalities and two city municipalities. Annual good governance awards for best practices at the local level for 2018 went to:

⇒ Novi Pazar in the area of efficiency and effectiveness, while special recognitions went to the municipality Indija and town Užice.



⇒ Ruma in the area transparency and public participation of the local self-government, while special recognitions went to the town Pirot and municipalities Veliko Gradište and Nova Varoš.

⇒ Vlasotince in the area of accountability and rule of law, the award went to the.

⇒ Vračar in the area equality and non-discrimination, while special recognitions went to the town Pančevo and municipalities Bečež and Raška.

The Swiss PRO programme has been supported by the Government of Switzerland with EUR 5.8 million for the period 2018-2021.

The CNC Training Center in Secondary Vocational School Opened



By: On Thursday, 14th March, 2019, The Secondary Vocational School in Kragujevac has celebrated two important events - opening of the first CNC (Computer Numerically Controlled) training center and 165 years anniversary of the school. The CNC Training Center in Secondary Vocational school was renovated and equipped within the public private partnership among the stakeholders: the school, City of Kragujevac, companies IND Group, Siemens, Wacker Neuson, Unior Components, Gorenje Group, Teximp and the the German Development Cooperation project Youth Employment Promotion. The school has also been supported through the Reform of Vocational Education and Training in Serbia project and, according to the model of dual education, for 5 years it educates young people according to the needs of the local economy. The goal of the newly established partnership is to support youth employment in line with the needs of the private sector through non-formal education. In CNC



training center, young people will be trained to operate Computer Numerically Controlled machines, and will be prepared to meet all requirements of the workplace and employers after the training. The CNC training center was opened by the representatives of school, the city of Kragujevac, the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Serbia, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, who agreed that multisectoral cooperation is needed for the achievement of a common goal – youth employment promotion. The first group of 12 young people from Kragujevac have started training in a renovated school workshop, and by the end of 2019, another 36 unemployed young people will be given the opportunity to complete the training and get employed in local companies. German Development Projects Youth Employment Promotion and Reform of Vocational Education and Training in Serbia are implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

UN Country Team in Serbia in Brief



By: ⇒ The UNCT Serbia continues to implement activities planned under the Development Partnership Framework 2016-2020 to support the Government of Serbia with the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and advance the EU accession process. During 2016-2018, our team comprised of 19 UN Agencies, funds and programmes, implemented development and refugee and migrants related activities in total value of US\$ 193 mill (US\$ 43 mill for refugee/migrant related activities).



⇒ The UN Country Team in Serbia commemorates the **International Women's Day** in the spirit of its 2019 theme "Think Equal,

Build Smart, Innovate for Change". [Read more](#).

⇒ In partnership with the Government, private sector, academia, creative industries and civil society organizations, UNDP is working to change the linear (take-make-waste) approach to production and consumption – to a more circular one, recognizing that **Circular Economy** is needed for sustainable development in Serbia. [Read more](#)

⇒ Within the Family Safety Net project, launched by UNICEF and Telenor company, and implemented by the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the Uzice Child Rights Centre NGO, the **first**

digital guide to online safety "Children and Internet – Smart from the Start" has been developed in Serbia. [Read more](#)

⇒ The UN Refugee Agency, UNICEF and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia organised a round table „Protection of Unaccompanied and Separated Asylum-Seeking, Refugee and Migrant Children in Serbia - A Call for Action” on 12 March. [Read more](#)

⇒ The Reception Center for migrants in Bosilegrad is fully reconstructed within the EU Support to Migration Management in Serbia. As a result of EUR 465.00 worth reconstruction, implemented by the International Organization for Migration, accommodation capacities are enlarged and living conditions for migrants improved. [Read more](#)

⇒ Supported by the **Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic**, UNDP assists five underdeveloped municipalities in Serbia to improve financial management and control, as well as economic development planning. [Read more](#)

⇒ The Kingdom of Norway remains a reliable partner to the Republic of Serbia - "**Norway for You**" project implemented by UNOPS confirmed the importance of friendship between the two countries. [Read more](#)

⇒ Civil Society Association Rainbow, supported by UNFPA Serbia, initiated revision of the Local Action Plan for Youth for the City of Šabac with aim to include measures to address personal safety, health, and education options for the most vulnerable youth in the city. [Read more](#)

Digitalisation of National Cultural Heritage

By:  REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
MINISTRY OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

of restored cultural heritage sites in Serbia that were financially supported by the European Union. Ministry initiated a project "National Cultural Heritage-Interactive 3D Panoramic Tours" aimed at digitizing national cultural heritage to highlight the significance of the renovation of cultural monuments in the Republic of Serbia, as well as the importance of using EU funds in the field of culture and creativity. Through this activity, the Government of the Republic of Serbia joined the countries of the European Union that mark 2018 as the "European Year of Cultural Heritage", by

Ministry of European Integration has launched a new website dedicated to promotion



Fortress Kale, Pirot

promoting the richness of cultural diversity, heritage and intercultural dialogue with the aim of stressing the importance of these areas for economic development and improvement of diplomatic and foreign policy relations. An integral web platform

provides detailed presentations of five restored buildings – the Subotica Synagogue, the Pirot Fortress, Jablanica church complex, the Golubac Fortress, and the Bač Fortress. In addition to the information on the EU funds invested in their restoration and on their history, each building has its own virtual interactive panoramic tour, which now allows you to visit these buildings with just a few

clicks. Visit www.srbija-projektieu.rs and join the virtual tour through these magnificent objects!

Grants to Micro and Small Enterprises in Kraljevo

By:  REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
MINISTRY OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION



Jadranka Joksimović, Minister of European Integration of the Republic of Serbia and Christian Danielsson, Director-General for Neighbourhood Relations and Enlargement Negotiations at the European Commission, on 5 March in Kraljevo, awarded grant certificates to the representatives of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) operating in Zlatiborski, Kolubarski, Mačvanski, Moravički, Podunavski, Pomoravski, Rasinski, Raški, Toplički and Šumadija district. In total 106 MSEs will receive over two million Euros through the EU PRO development programme to purchase new equipment that will boost their production and product quality ultimately resulting in job creation and enhancement of overall local competitiveness. During the ceremony Minister Jadranka Joksimović underlined that as in EU countries as in Serbia, MSEs are the backbone of the healthy economy. "The EU is a club of states that proved how common interests and corresponding policy bring peace, prosperity, and better living conditions. The Gov-

ernment of Serbia is determined to maximise opportunities during the pre-membership period, when funds, various programmes and opportunities are available, to develop not

only our economy, but to move towards sustainable development," Joksimović concluded. „This kind of programmes that we have been implanting together with the Serbian Government have concrete results and support economic development. It also means you having the opportunity to fulfil your dreams but also to employ people and contribute to better lives of your communities”, Christian Danielsson, Director-General for European Neighbourhood Relations and Enlargement Negotiations said while congratulating the entrepreneurs for the funds approved.



About Aid Matters Newsletter

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The newsletter aims at improving communication between stakeholders and exchange of information relevant to development assistance activities in the Republic of Serbia.



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
MINISTRY OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

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