



## NEWSLETTER

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

SPECIAL LABOUR  
AGREEMENT FOR  
STATE AUTHORITIES  
CONCLUDEDINTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE "A  
FORWARD-LOOKING ADMINISTRATION  
FOR A EUROPEAN SERBIA – PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION REFORM 2009-2012"PREPARING STRATEGY  
FOR TRAINING OF LOCAL  
SELF-GOVERNMENT  
EMPLOYEESINSTRUMENT FOR  
PRE-ACCESSION  
ASSISTANCE – IPA

**A**s part of the overall social reforms, in November 2004 the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Strategy of Public Administration Reform in the Republic of Serbia. The main objectives of the reform are creation of a democratic state based on the rule of law, accountability, transparency, economy and efficiency as well as creation of a citizen-oriented public administration, capable of offering high quality services to the citizens and private sector, against payment of reasonable costs. Strategic-level management of public administration reform has been entrusted to the Public Administration Reform Council of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, while the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government is in charge of operational-level management of public administration reform, i.e. its implementation in practice. However, for public administration reform to be successful there is a necessity for coordination and active participation of all public administration bodies, given that each state authority is responsible for the implementation of specific activities which constitute the substance of the reform.

*Enhanced Dialogue between Trade Unions and the State***SPECIAL LABOUR AGREEMENT FOR STATE AUTHORITIES CONCLUDED**

*-By signing the labour agreement the conditions were met for systemic addressing of the issue of wages in state authorities-*

**A**fter several months of negotiations between the Government and representative trade unions of employees in administration, judiciary, social organisations and judicial bodies founded for the territory of the Republic, the Special Labour Agreement for State Authorities was concluded on 15 October 2008 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia no. 95/08).

The Labour Agreement regulates in more detail the ways of exercising the rights and duties of state authorities' employees (education, vocational training, right to vacation, leave, wages, wage compensation and other payments, safety and health at work, accountability of employees, conditions for trade unions, etc.).

The Labour Agreement, among other things, envisages that participants in the conclusion of this Labour Agreement will negotiate the base wage rate for calculation and payment of wages. Each year, in mid November, within the procedure for drafting the law on budget for the following year, the negotiations will be organised on the base wage rate, having considered the highest base wage rate determined for the previous year and targeted inflation. Within this procedure it is possible to organise negotiations on the change of coefficient. The negotiations on the change of base wage rate could be initiated by representative trade unions even during the fiscal year if the circumstances have been changed significantly since the last determination of the base wage rate.

**NARROWING THE RANGE OF WAGES IN STATE AUTHORITIES**

The Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government Mr. Milan Markovic announced that amendments to the Law on Wages of Civil Servants and State Employees will be prepared soon, allowing the range of wages to be narrowed from 1:9 to 1:6. During the discussions with trade unions, the latter range of wages was considered optimal.

In line with the requirements of representative trade unions, the Labour Agreement envisages the right of employee to an annual award which is regularly paid in January. ►

Exceptionally, the participants could agree on the payment of this award in instalments. The participants also negotiate on the amount and method of payment of the award for the following year during the procedure for drafting of the law on budget – in mid November of the current year.

Special Labour Agreement for State Authorities entered into force on 29 October 2008, but articles 12 and 13 of the

previous Special Labour Agreement for State Authorities providing for the right of an employee to financial assistance and a jubilee bonus will continue to be applied until 31 December 2008. Starting from 1 January 2009, articles 25 and 26 of the Special Labour Agreement for State Authorities envisaging the right of an employee to solidarity assistance and a jubilee bonus will be applied. ■

## *Intensifying Public Administration Reform*

### **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “A FORWARD-LOOKING ADMINISTRATION FOR A EUROPEAN SERBIA – PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM 2009-2012”**

*-All relevant public administration bodies will cooperate in the production of the Action Plan and the consultative process regarding this document will commence with the International Conference “A Forward-Looking Administration for a European Serbia – Public Administration Reform 2009-2012”-*

The Information regarding the Need to Produce the Action Plan for Public Administration Reform Implementation for the period 2009-2012, which the Government should adopt on 20 November 2008, envisages cooperation of all public administration bodies in the production of this document, which will serve to plan the activities in administrative reform for the next four years. This cooperation will proceed through a series of meetings between the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government and numerous other administrative bodies, so as to design, firstly, the key directions of various public administration reform areas and, later, the detailed activities for each of those areas.

The issue of inter-ministerial cooperation in the production of the Action Plan 2009-2012 was treated in more detail in the first issue of the e-newsletter.

#### **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AS THE BEGINNING OF THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS**

The results of the initial meetings will serve as a basis for the discussions in the framework of the International Conference “A Forward-Looking Administration for a European Serbia – Public Administration Reform 2009-2012”, which is being organised by the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government in order to initiate a wider consultative process regarding the Action Plan 2009-2012. Participants in this Conference, to take place on 1 and 2 December 2008 in Belgrade, will be representatives of public administration bodies and state authorities relevant to the public administration reform process, heads of administrative districts, representatives of the donor community and other stakeholders, including

the NGO sector. In addition, the Conference will gather numerous international experts specialised in the specific areas of public administration reform, who will present both comparative and individual national experiences in specific areas of public administration reform in EU member states. It is envisaged that representatives of the relevant administrative bodies, with whom the Ministry will cooperate during the production of the Action Plan 2009-2012, will speak at the Conference about the plans in the various segments of public administration reform in the Republic of Serbia.

#### **STRUCTURE OF THE ACTION PLAN AND THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

The structure of the International Conference will follow the planned structure of the Action Plan for Public Administration Reform Implementation 2009-2012 itself. Hence, the Conference will, after the introductory plenary part, split into six panel discussions, out of which three will take place on the first and three on the second day of the Conference. The themes of the panel discussions will be: 1. decentralisation, 2. financial control and accountability, 3. horizontal policy coordination, 4. professionalisation and de-politicisation, 5. modernisation and e-government development and 6. rationalisation. At the end of the two-day work, Rapporteurs will present the results of the discussions which took place in each of the panel discussions to the plenary and conference conclusions will be determined.

The International Conference is to ensure that substantial comments are obtained and opinions heard from stakeholders as well as relevant international partners and organisations from the very beginning of the drafting of the Action Plan 2009-2012. ►

Thus, the presence of the donor community and the international organisations engaged in public administration reform, such as SIGMA/OECD and the Council of Europe, will ensure that in further development of reform plans positions of key international partners are kept in mind.

## FROM INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO THE ACTION PLAN ADOPTION

After the International Conference, intense work will

take place on further development and finalisation of the Action Plan 2009-2012, which will proceed through intense inter-ministerial cooperation. Upon completion of the final version of the Action Plan, public access to this document will be made possible, too. Intense work during the winter period should result in the adoption of the Action Plan for Public Administration Reform Implementation for the period 2009-2012 in the first quarter of 2009. ■

## *A Systemic Approach to Local Self-Government Employees' Training*

### PREPARING STRATEGY FOR TRAINING OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

*-Initial documents to serve as a basis for drafting of the national strategy for training of local self-government employees have been prepared-*

The issue of local self-government employees' training should be systemically addressed by producing a relevant strategic document. The objective of the initiative launched recently by the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government in cooperation with the Delegation of the European Commission through the project "Support to Enhancing of Local Self-Government Capacities in the Context of the EU Integration Process" is to draft the Strategy for Training of Local Self-Government Employees.

The Strategy should encompass key areas for training of local self-government employees as well as define the future roles of key institutions in this process, including the role of the local self-government units.

#### INITIAL DOCUMENTS NECESSARY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Initial analyses have recently been prepared as a part of the project and should serve as a basis for drafting the Strategy. These documents, such as training needs assessment, legislative analysis and stakeholder analysis and an overview of relevant experiences in this area will be presented to the stakeholders through a workshop, which will be organised in late November 2008. Participants of the workshop will be representatives of relevant ministries and Government services, Delegation of the European Commission, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, as well as representatives of several local self-government units. After the workshop, the work on the draft Strategy will start and the first draft

will, once again, be discussed among the stakeholders. It is expected that the final Proposal of the Strategy will be prepared in March 2009.

#### CREATING A NETWORK OF TRAINERS

Alongside with the initiative of preparing the Strategy for Training of Local Self-Government Employees, the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, with the support from the Delegation of the European Commission, is implementing the "Training Programme for the Local Self-Government Employees" Project, which is aimed at creating a network of trainers at local level. This project will be focused on training of a certain number of local self-government employees to be able to share their knowledge further on the local level in the areas relevant for the EU integration process (strategic and operational planning, project cycle management and EU integration).

#### TRAINING AND THE EU INTEGRATION PROCESS

The process of EU integration of the Republic of Serbia poses a number of challenges and duties to local self-government units, which they will have to address in the following period. In that sense, training is of great significance for improving the level of knowledge and professional competences of employees, their readiness to meet the ever-increasing demands of their professional environment and to adapt to new and sudden situations, thus becoming ready to satisfy their citizens' needs. ►

Although a great number of training initiatives on the local level supported by different foreign donors have been launched so far, a systemic approach to this issue has been lacking.

As a solution to this problem and a necessity, the Strategy

for Training of Local Self-Government Employees, as the first initiative of this kind, will contribute to creating a sustainable base for adequate and timely responses of the local self-government units to the challenges brought by the ever-intensifying EU integration process. ■

## *EU support to the European future of Serbia*

### **INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE – IPA**

*-Preparation of projects to be financed from IPA fund in 2009 is in its final phase-*

**I**nstrument for Pre-Accession Assistance – IPA is a fund available to the EU candidate countries (Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey) and potential candidate countries (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania) as a means to support their EU integration process. In 2007 this instrument has replaced all other EU instruments with the similar purpose available by that date (CARDS program, ISPA, SAPARD, etc.) and it is planned to cover the period until 2013. The total amount of money offered to all the eligible countries in the planned period is € 11,468 billion out of which € 771,7 million is intended for Serbia in the period 2007-2010 or € 192.8 million per year in average.

IPA is made up of five components out of which only the first two components are available to Serbia as a potential EU candidate country.

representatives of the Cabinet of the Vice-President of the Serbian Government in charge of EU integration, the Ministry of Finance and the Serbian EU Integration Office) prepared the comments and recommendations for improving a certain number of prioritised project proposals.

#### THE PROGRAMMING PROCESS

Programming is a process of identifying the list of developmental projects in line with strategic national priorities and EU priorities in the context of beneficiary countries' EU integration process. The programming process is realised in accordance with the Action Plan for the Programming of International Development Assistance and the detailed plan for IPA 2009 programming as its constituent part.

#### IPA COMPONENTS

**IPA components are: support for transition and institution-building, cross-border cooperation, regional development, human resources development and rural development.**

Other components will be available to Serbia after acquiring the status of a candidate country, which would result in an increase of the funds available to Serbia.

Rules and procedures for using these funds are laid down by the European Commission. IPA is based on annual planning of funds for the period of three years. This means that the projects intended to be implemented in 2011 shall be prepared in 2009.

#### PROGRAMMING OF IPA 2009

During October, within the process of programming IPA 2009, the Project Evaluation Group (composed of the

In accordance with the conclusions of the Project Evaluation Group, in the latest completed phase of the IPA 2009 programming process, five Inter-ministerial Project Groups for IPA Programming adopted conclusions regarding the group of proposed project ideas which will be developed into the final project proposals in the next phase (the so-called project fiches – standardised documents containing detailed information on preparation and implementation of a certain project). The group is made up of around 25 projects that have been positively evaluated according to strategic relevance and technical preparedness criteria.

After the final project proposals are prepared through consultations with the National IPA Coordinator (Vice-President of the Government of Serbia in charge of EU integration), by the end of January 2009 the Delegation of the European Commission in Serbia will make a decision on the group of projects to be financed from IPA 2009 funds. ■

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