



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union

## **CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

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### **Presentation of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and other EU-funding opportunities for the business community**

**EU InfoCentre, Skopje**

Speaking points

H.E. Mr. Aivo Orav,  
Head of the Delegation of European  
Union

**Dear Minister Mr. Sarachini,**

**Dear Ms. Kuzmanovska,**

**Dear Ms. Abazi-Ramadani,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to wish you warm welcome and express my gratitude for joining us at today's event when we will present several EU funding instruments accessible to businesses in the country.

**The economy is the main creator of value and driver of growth and development.** A vibrant and highly competitive economic sector can provide the resources and many of solution for the challenges today's society is facing.

Therefore, the investments in the support of the business sector development made by the national authorities should be considered as investment for better future and wellbeing of all citizens.

**The challenges that businesses face today, to get ahead and stay ahead, are plentiful.** Starting up and managing a business is not an easy task. For a company to survive and grow with its business endeavours, it must adapt to the new legislative environment and continuously changing market competition.

**The EU market of 500 million prospective consumers** is an excellent export destination for local companies. However, on the common market, the local firms will face strong competitive forces. There are demanding and well informed consumers and strict legal requirements.

Entry to the EU market would require:

- 1) significant commitment;
- 2) investments to adopt EU standards;
- 3) change in the current manner in the operation of the companies.

On the other side, the local market becomes more and more open to the EU firms. Thus, it is inevitable that local firms very soon will have to fight more competitors even locally.

**A number of European community programmes that provide direct support of companies, research and innovation activities are also open to the local entities.** Further to this, the EU also develops programmes targeting specific economic development needs of the country. The IPA remains to be the main source of funds for the programmes open solely to local companies.

**Today we will present three EU funded programmes** currently available to the local companies:

- Competitiveness and Innovation Programme
- Business advisor services, and
- Western Balkan Sustainable Energy Financing Facility

**1. Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme** runs from 2007 to 2013 and will provide support in total value of € 3.6 billion EUR. These funds are available for EU Member States, candidate countries, potential candidate and other countries. The main objective of the programme is to encourage the competitiveness of enterprises. Having the small and medium-sized enterprises as its main target, the

programme supports innovation activities, including eco-innovation, provide better access to finance and deliver business support services in the regions. It also has a pillar to promote the increased use of renewable energies and energy efficiency.

**Let me inform you that the European Commission has made a proposal** to the EU Parliament for continuation of this successful framework programme after 2013. The new and re-branded **Programme** called **COSME** is expected to run from 2014 to 2020, with a planned budget of 2.5 billion EUR.

**2. Business Advisory Services-** commonly known as **BAS Programme** is a technical assistance programme. This programme supports the economic transition, by achieving enterprise change in the potentially viable micro, small and medium size enterprises and by developing a sustainable infrastructure of the business advisory services.

The BAS Programme has been genuinely designed and implemented by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and has been present in the country, for almost 10 years. The EU has been the biggest single donor to the BAS programme.

3. In November 2008, the EU and the EBRD established the **Western Balkans Sustainable Energy Credit Line Facility** in the Western Balkans. This Facility provides funds to the financial institutions in the Western Balkans to increase their investment portfolios in the area of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Under the Facility, the EBRD is providing loan amounting to 60 million EUR through 8 participating banks in the country. The EU secures a grant support to the loan beneficiaries totaling to 13.5 million EUR from

the IPA 2007 multi-beneficiary programme. This EU grant funds are used to secure financial incentives to sub-borrowers and participating commercial banks.

**More detailed information about** the programmes, you will find from presentations of the following speakers.

**Let me conclude by expressing a hope that business related** reforms initiated in the country will be stepped up in course of 2012. If tackled effectively they should bring new investments, open working posts, increase prospects for export of local companies, and enhance general living standard of citizens.

The EU for its part will remain your faithful partner and continue to support the country in its path to EU accession.

Thank you for your attention.