



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union

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**Closing event of the EU-funded project:
Technical Assistance to the Parliament**

11 July 2012, EU InfoCentre

Speech

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

Dear Parliament Speaker, Mr Veljanoski

Dear Deputy Prime Minister Ms Arifi,

Dear Members of the Parliament,

Your excellencies,

ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you today at the official closing of this important EU-funded project which provided technical assistance to the Parliament.

An independent, effective and professional Parliament is one of the three main institutions which guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities in any country and thus is an important element of the Copenhagen political criteria for a country's accession to the European Union.

Although the Government is the institution which organizes and leads a country's path to EU membership, the Parliament has a very crucial and important role to play in the country's EU integration process:

- As the legislative branch, the Parliament has the important responsibility to adapt and harmonize the national laws with the many different adopted EU laws on a wide variety of topics.
- As the elected representatives of its citizens, the Parliament has the duty to oversee and scrutinize the actions and decisions of the Government regarding the EU accession process and developments.

- As the institution most closely linked to its citizens, the Parliament has a natural role in raising the public awareness on EU matters through information to and involvement of the civil society.

Therefore, the EU has provided technical assistance to the Parliament aiming to further improve the work of the Parliament, particularly in view of the European Union integration processes.

I am pleased to note that the project provided significant support to the Parliament. I am glad to mention some of the achieved results, as follows:

- ❖ More than 30 seminars on various EU-related topics have been organised for 115 Parliament staff members. The expertise of the EU Member States, including Hungary, Latvia and Slovenia, was used and presented during those seminars.
- ❖ A comprehensive training manual was developed, containing 11 different chapters, providing general knowledge needed for understanding the role of a national parliament in the EU accession process and later in the European Union as a Member State.
- ❖ The project assisted the Parliament in establishing an EU Information Center which will begin to provide Members of Parliament and Parliament staff with improved information services about EU-related topics.
- ❖ Recommendations for improvements of the Parliament were sublimated in 8 reports.

More details about the project will be provided by the project Team Leader later on.

Earlier this year, the European Commission and the Government launched the High Level Accession Dialogue to provide valuable support

to the accession process by focusing on the key reform priorities and to serve as a bridge to EU accession negotiations.

As Commissioner Füle stated during his last visit in May, I quote: "We are keen to strengthen the inclusiveness of this process where the Parliament and National Council for European Integration play an important role. HLAD is not an agenda for the European Commission and the Government but for the Commission and the whole country. This is an opportunity for everyone here and the participation of all the stakeholders is critical for the success of the Dialogue."

We believe that the technical assistance provided to the Parliament will enhance Parliament's role, not only during the High Level Accession Dialogue, but also during the subsequent EU accession negotiations.

At the end, I would like to thank the Project team and all the experts for their dedication and professionalism shown throughout the project implementation, as well as to the project beneficiary for their cooperation and active engagement in the project.

Thank you very much for your attention.