



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union

Skopje, 20 March 2012

Closing event

**Technical Assistance to the State
Statistical Office**

Tuesday 20 March 2012, 10:30hrs
Skopje, Hotel Arka

Speaking points
Mr Aivo Orav
Head of Delegation of the European Union

Dear Deputy Prime Minister Ms. Arifi,
Dear Director Ms. Novkowska,
Dear Mr. Eichler,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Closing Conference of the EU-funded project: Technical Assistance to the State Statistical Office.

The financial and economic crisis has underlined the key role of credible and impartial data for proper functioning of the economy. Policy makers, businesses and individuals can only make good decisions, if they have access to statistics that reliably measure and describe what is happening in the economy and in the society. Key economic indicators are now more than ever closely watched and scrutinized. Such indicators are at the core of EU governance and growth strategies, such as the Euro Plus Pact, the Six pack, the Fiscal Compact and Europe 2020.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of official statistics for the EU accession process. They play a dual role in the process. First, compliance with the EU standards and rules and capacity to provide reliable statistics are required as a fundamental precondition for accession processes. Second, statistics provide data on other policy areas and chapters, based on which policies can be developed, changes monitored and impacts assessed.

With more than 200 regulations and directives, statistics represents a large and dynamic part of the *acquis communautaire*. Its implementation is a complex and challenging process. Therefore the EU has a long-standing commitment to support the State Statistical Office in developing the national statistical system. Our assistance to this project has been 1.8 million Euros.

On this occasion, I would like to recognise the hard work and commitment of all who have participated on this project. During the past two years, the project has contributed to considerable progress in national accounts, business and social statistics, with additional focus on upgrading quality standards.

Nevertheless, the national statistical system will still require significant efforts to achieve full sustainability and harmonisation with EU standards. In order to reach this objective, the State Statistical Office will need to be provided with the necessary human and financial resources and its role as coordinator of all statistical work in the country strengthened. Under the pre-accession programme, further EU assistance to the State Statistical Office is foreseen, with the next project starting this summer.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage the employees of the State Statistical Office and their counterparts in other institutions to keep up the good work. I am convinced that the accomplishment of this project and the experience you have gained provide a solid basis for successful continuation.

Thank you for your attention!