



Date: 20 November 2012
Time: 13:00-14:00
Venue: Cifte Amam National Art Gallery, Skopje
Subject: Signing ceremony of IPA financing agreements & opening of photo exhibition "Partners in Reform"

**Speech by Ms. Alexandra Cas Granje, DIRECTOR
DIRECTORATE B CROATIA, MONTENEGRO, THE FORMER YUGOSLAV
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA, TURKEY, ICELAND**

*Dear Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers, Ambassadors
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is my great pleasure to be with you today in the magnificent Chifte Amam National Art gallery to open our photo exhibition "Partners in Reforms".

I am very pleased to be here with Minister Arifi who is one of our key partners in reforms! The High Level Accession Dialogue has injected real momentum into the reform process. This is the proof that the partnership of the European Commission with the country is working and it is yielding concrete results. This year's progress report has reflected progress that has been made in the context of the high level dialogue, while at the same time highlighting the challenges that remain.

The country is actively showing that it is moving on its European path. Consequently, for the fourth time in a row, the European Commission has recommended to the Council that accession negotiations be opened. [We are hopeful that the Council will be able to react positively to our recommendation.] Hard work lies behind us, and hard work lies in front of us.

The financial assistance that we provide to the country through our Instrument for Pre-Accession, roughly some EUR 100 million every year, plays a key role in the modernisation of the country, in its democratic development, in its overall path towards full membership in the European Union.

Today's event is an occasion to showcase the comprehensive financial assistance the EU is providing to the country.

Besides opening this wonderful photo exhibition with pictures and information on particularly successful IPA projects, I have the pleasure to conclude the

signature of three different multi-million IPA financial agreements with the Government.

These financial agreements will provide assistance in a wide range of important issues: a National Programme for institution building assistance worth EUR 28.9 million, the modification of our current assistance programme in the field of agriculture worth EUR 65.5 million, and the signature of the 2011 financing agreement on the Cross border programme with Greece in the amount of EUR 1.5 million.

In more detail, the **IPA National Programme 2011** will provide assistance in the following areas:

- Public Administration Reforms (€ 3.6M)
- Support to Civil Society (€ 1.2M)
- Strengthening the Rule of Law (€ 2.4M)
- Freedom of Expression – Support to Media Reforms (€1.5M)
- Bankruptcy and voluntary liquidation of companies (€1.7M)
- CAP - Upgrade of institutional and administrative capacities (€2.5M)
- Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (€1.4M)
- Housing for refugees, IDPs and minorities (€3M)
- Reinforcement of administrative capacity (€10.5M)
- Union Programmes and Agencies (€4.6M)

The assistance programme of DG AGRI in the field of **agriculture** will continue to provide assistance in the following areas (EU contribution 2007–2012):

- Improving market efficiency and implementing EU Standards (€48,8M)
- Implementation of agri-environmental measures and Leader¹ (€1.4M)

¹ The Community Initiative Leader+ is part of the Community's rural development policy, the second pillar of the common agricultural policy (CAP). Encouraging the implementation of integrated, high-quality and original

- Development of the rural economy (€12.7M)
- General Technical assistance (€2.6M)

The **Cross-Border Programme with Greece** is on-going since 2009 for a total cumulative value of EUR 6 million. The agreement that we sign today will finance 6 or 7 new projects. The programme focuses on socio-economic development and on the enhancement of environmental resources, and promotion of cultural heritage in the regions of Pelagonia, Vardar, Southeast and Southwest on the one side, and the Greek regions of Thessaloniki, Florina, Pella, Kilkis and Serres on the other side of the border.

This photo exhibition is an attempt to make our assistance and help in achieving our reform goals more visible to the public. The support of the public for the "European project" of the country is vital. The European perspective has clear advantages for all citizens. A stronger more competitive economy, transparent democratic institutions, and good relations of this country with all its neighbours are our common objectives. Much has been done, much remains to be done.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With these closing words, I thank you for your attention.

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