



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union

Skopje, 29 May 2013

**Kick-off Event:
“Strengthening of the Blood Safety System”**

EU Info Centre

Speaking points
Ambassador Aivo Orav
Head of the EU Delegation

Dear Minister Todorov,

Dear Mr. Reesink

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you today at the EU InfoCentre at the official launch of the **EU-funded project: Strengthening of the Blood Safety System.**

This project represents for the health system of the country an additional step towards approximation to EU policies, standards and goals. It's about health first of all, it's about human rights and dignity of human beings; it's about the right of people to have access to quality and efficient healthcare system. All these elements are crucial for the growth of the country but also in the process of accession to the European Union.

Blood and blood components are "vital" part of human health, indispensable elements for our own lives, needed in medical emergencies, routine surgical procedures but also in various therapies. The use of these products demands that their quality, safety and efficiency are ensured in order, for example, to prevent the transmission of diseases.

We are happy to acknowledge that the country has already made good progress in this area by completing the reorganisation of the Blood Transfusion System by which the blood transfusion facilities are now integrated in one national blood establishment - National Institute for Transfusion Medicine (NITM) - an umbrella institution encompassing 3 regional centres and 18 hospital units.

The general aim of EU assistance to this sector is to support this progress and improve the provision of quality, efficient and continuous health care, able to supply safety blood and blood components also to help minimizing the risks of communicable diseases.

More specifically, the project will ensure, on one side, appropriate alignment of the national legislation in the area of blood safety with the EU Acquis as well as its correct implementation. On the other side, the project will help strengthen the capacity of the health professionals working in the field, with the aim to create the conditions for providing adequate and timely supplies of safe blood for all patients in need.

Later on EU will provide additional support to the sector with the supply of IT and blood related equipment to the various transfusion centres. When launched, this project will complement the one we are presenting today and further strengthen the blood safety system in the country.

Therefore, it is a great pleasure to see this project starting and I am looking forward to see the outcomes in one year time, when the project will end.

I would like to use this opportunity to wish the Minister Todorov, his staff and the contractor good and successful work.

Thank you for your attention.