



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union

Skopje, 19 April 2011

**Official opening of the Veterinary and Phytosanitary
Border inspection posts at the border crossing point of Tabanovce**

Tabanovce
April 2011

Speaking points

Ambassador
Mr. Peter SØRENSEN
Head of the European Union Delegation

Dear Deputy Prime Minister Stavrevski; Dear Minister Dimovski; Dear Director Runtevski, dear Director Stamenov, Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is my great honour to greet you and to welcome you to today's official opening of the new Veterinary and Phyto-sanitary border inspection posts in Tabanovce.

Today we are opening a modern border veterinary and phyto-sanitary facilities that will improve the working conditions at this most frequent border crossing point and enable the border veterinary and phyto-sanitary inspectors to perform their everyday duties in accordance to the EU requirements.

The design for these buildings was prepared by the EU/CARDS funded project and the layouts have been approved by the Food and Veterinary Office of the European Commission, which guarantee that the buildings are constructed in accordance with the European standards.

The value of investment is 1,35 Million Euro. It is covered by the CARDS (2006) programme. The buildings were constructed within a period of 13 months (from 22 December 2009 to 22 January 2011).

This is the third veterinary and phyto-sanitary border inspection post that is built with EU funds. The two others are Bogorodica and Medzitlija.

It is essential that the network of border inspection posts is fully effective to guard against potential threats from imports to public health, animal health and plant health.

The imported live animals and products of animal origin present the highest level of risks as they can transmit serious human and animal diseases. The veterinary border control is a key factor to ensure that the live animals and products of animal origin entering to the countries are safe and meeting the specific import conditions laid down in the legislation.

The countries need also to provide a reliable barrier against the entry of quarantine pests, so that the goods passing through the border phyto-sanitary inspection posts are accepted with confidence.

In the last year, your country made a good progress in the veterinary, and food safety sector, mainly in the legal approximation process by adoption of the New Law on Food Safety (December 2010) and establishment of a new Food Veterinary Agency (1 January 2011). However, the administrative capacity in the sector still requires strengthening.

The European Union have taken and will continue to take proactive approach to both helping with the preparations towards accession, and monitoring the progress.

We are providing technical assistance to help align the laws with the EU legislation and to build the capacities to implement and enforce the laws. There are ongoing 3

million euro technical assistance and supply projects for the Food and Veterinary Agency and additional financial assistance of 5,1 million euro is available in the next two years under the IPA programme.

So while the benefits of EU membership are significant, with that membership come responsibilities, which must be upheld in order to maintain the integrity of the food safety mechanisms within the European Union. This is why we helped with these veterinary and phyto-sanitary border inspection posts.

Thank you for your kind attention.