



Government of Serbia Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja

Information on the Coordination Body's Activities

(March – October 2009)

The Coordination Body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja presents its report on the activities taken in the period from March to October 2009. Two extremely important events marked the period for which the report was compiled, and they're the following:



- The signing of the Agreement on the Principles of Reconstruction of the Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, whereby political representatives of the Albanian ethnic community are re-included in the Coordination Body's work.



- The opening of units of higher learning of the Nis University's Faculties of Law and Economics in Medvedja.

In relation to the priorities it had set, the Coordination Body achieved a remarkable success in the previous period, which, in brief, relates to the following:

a) In the field of politics – Representatives of the Albanian political parties got engaged in the Coordination Body's work. The Agreement on the Principles of Reconstruction of the Coordination Body was signed, as well as the Decision on Reorganization of the Body, with the aim of improving the efficiency of work.

b) In the field of economics – Until October 2009, the Coordination Body, both independently and in cooperation with the relevant ministries of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, invested over 250 million dinars in the infrastructure improvement, for the purpose of boosting the economy of these municipalities. The Coordination Body continued working on inclusion of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in various international and domestic economic projects.

c) In the field of integrations – The Coordination Body, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and with financial contribution of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), provided conditions for South Serbia's students to study in their mother tongue. The opening of institutions of higher learning in Medvedja, where classes are conducted in Serbian and Albanian, is one of the preconditions for integrating Albanians in the social developments of the Republic of Serbia. In addition, until October 2009, the Coordination Body invested around 14 million dinars in youth and youth projects, civil society, as well as in providing pecuniary aid to the most vulnerable categories of the population.

d) In the field of international relations – Thanks to daily communication and the "open door" principle, which means that the Coordination Body's Office and its President Milan Markovic are always at the disposal of their foreign partners, a better coordination with international partners, as well as excellent cooperation with them, was achieved, for the purpose of improving living conditions in Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja.

e) In the field of communication with the public – The Coordination Body's Office continuously publishes reports on its work, which are e-mailed to all the media, the Government of the Republic of Serbia, international partners, as well as to others. The reports are also posted on the Coordination Body's website, so that all interested citizens could read them.

The Coordination Body attempts to solve all identified problems and priorities, so that in the coming period it will be focused on the following activities:

- a) In the field of politics – The establishment of multiethnic governments in Presevo and Bujanovac and inclusion of the Albanian community in the governmental institutions, as it was specified in the Agreement on the Principles of Reconstruction of the Coordination Body.
- b) In the field of integrations – The completion of a feasibility study for the opening of institutions of higher learning in Bujanovac and Presevo, where classes will be conducted in Serbian and Albanian.

The Coordination Body's major activities in the past period:

- **Representatives of the Albanian ethnic community rejoined the Coordination Body** – President of the Coordination Body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, Minister Milan Markovic, a member of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia, Riza Halimi,



and the then Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad, signed the Agreement on the Principles of Reconstruction of the Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja on March 27, 2009. President of the Coordination Body Milan Markovic, MP Riza Halimi, Presidents of the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, President of the Bujanovac Municipal Assembly and Director of the Coordination Body's Office signed the Decision on Reorganization and Competencies of the Coordination Body. The signing was attended by the then US Ambassador to Serbia and by representatives of the British embassy

in Belgrade. Also attending the signing were State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice Slobodan Homen, the Republican Ombudsman Sasa Jankovic and Vice Presidents of the Coordination Body Dusan Spasojevic, Dejan Jovanovic and Sima Gazikalovic. The text of the Agreement, as well as the Decision on Reorganization and Competencies of the Coordination Body, are posted on the Coordination Body Office's website www.kt.gov.rs.

- **Four sessions of the Presidency of the Coordination Body held** – Since the signing of the Agreement on Inclusion of Albanian representatives, four sessions of the Presidency of the Coordination Body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja have been held, out of which three were held in Belgrade (in April, September and October) and one in Bujanovac (May). All the sessions were chaired by President of the Coordination Body, Minister Milan Markovic, and his Deputy, President of the Municipality of Bujanovac Saip Kamberi. The narrower composition of the Coordination Body also includes MP Riza Halimi, Vice Presidents of the Coordination Body Dejan Jovanovic, Dusan Spasojevic and Sima Gazikalovic, Presidents of the Municipalities of Presevo and Medvedja, Ragmi Mustafa and Slobodan Draskovic, Presidents of the Municipal Assemblies, as well as Director of the Coordination Body's Office Nenad Djurdjevic. The first session of the Presidency resulted in adoption of the Rules of Procedure and in establishment of six Working Groups (WG), which are as follows: (1) WG for Economy and Infrastructure Development; (2) WG for Political and Social Integrations; (3) WG for Security and Judiciary; (4) WG for Strengthening Local Self-Government Capacities and for Enabling them for Sustainable Development; (5) WG for Education, Culture, Information, Sports and Youth; and (6) WG for Healthcare and Social Welfare. The WG for Education, Culture, Information, Sports and Youth was set up in April 2009, and it has had four meetings so far. At the meeting of the Presidency, which was held on October 19, 2009, it was agreed to set up the remaining working groups by the end of October 2009.

- **158 million dinars from the Coordination Body for infrastructure projects** – By October 2010, the



Government of the Republic of Serbia, through the Coordination Body, invested around 158 million dinars in infrastructure projects in Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja (roads, schools, electric power system and the like). Until the end of the year, the Coordination Body will fund the projects with the additional 68 million dinars. So far, 61 million dinars have been invested in 14 projects in Presevo. Around 59 million dinars were invested in 7 projects in Bujanovac, whereas around 38 million dinars were invested in 10 projects in Medvedja.

- **76 million dinars from the Ministry for National Investment Plan (NIP)** – In cooperation with the Coordination Body, the Ministry for NIP, as part of the program for development of the infrastructure in 40 least developed municipalities in the Republic of Serbia, approved 76 million dinars for the implementation of projects in Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in 2009. 34 million dinars were approved to the municipality of Bujanovac for continuing the construction of the “Sezai Suroi” secondary vocational school. Bujanovac also received additional 10 million dinars, as an incentive for good work that was in accordance with the criteria set by the Ministry for NIP. Medvedja got 5 million dinars for reconstruction of part of Jablanicka Street, whereas 27 million dinars were approved to Presevo for the project of providing electric power to the “Zeleznicka stanica” (Railway Station) settlement in Presevo.

- **The works on reconstruction of the Presevo city center and on electrification of a part of Bujanovac were opened** – On September 1, 2009, President of the Coordination Body, Milan Markovic, together with the president of the municipality of Presevo, Ragmi Mustafa, opened the works on reconstruction of the city center. On the same day, Milan Markovic, along with Saip Kamberi, the president of the Bujanovac municipality, opened the works on electrification of part of the Bujanovac municipality. “These works have dual importance. They are firstly important from an industrial point of view, since an industrial zone has been planned here, and they’re also important because electric power and legal electric power lines are to be provided to the nearby Roma settlement,” Minister Markovic said.

- **Cooperation between the Coordination Body and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management continued** – In March 2009, Minister of



Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management Sasa Dragin and Director of the Coordination Body’s Office Nenad Djurdjevic delivered seedlings, a donation of the Ministry, for further distribution to the municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja. 11 tons of barley, six tons of oats and several tons of corn were delivered. Also, 10,000 vine grafts, 4,900 fruit tree seedlings (apples trees, pear trees, cherry trees, plum trees and raspberries) and 210 family packets containing various vegetable seeds for the garden were delivered.

- **Faculty in Medvedja was opened** – On October 12, 2009, Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Mirko Cvetkovic, opened departments of the Nis University’s Faculties of Economics and Law in Medvedja. On that occasion, President of the Coordination Body Milan Markovic and Minister of Education Zarko Obradovic handed out matriculation books to the first generation of students. The ceremony was attended by Deputy Chief of the US Mission to Serbia Mr. Troy Pederson, as well as by Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia Mr. Dimitrios Kypreos. The event gathered high representatives of the international community, as well as representatives of local self-governments and civil society from the Peinj and Jablanica districts. The opening of the Medvedja faculty is one of the strategic priorities of the Coordination Body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The project is aimed at strengthening all ethnic communities and ensuring quality education in Serbian and Albanian. The classes of the Nis University’s Faculties of Law and Economics in Medvedja will be organized in mother tongues of the students belonging to the Serbian and Albanian community. The initiative of

the Coordination Body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja was supported by the Ministry of Education, which was a key institution in contributing to the opening of these two faculties. The opening of the faculties was financially assisted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), while the project was supported by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Serbia.

- **Funds allocated through open competitions of the Coordination Body's Office** – The commission of the Coordination Body's Office reached a decision on funding the projects that participated in the open competition for implementing projects of associations of citizens in the municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in 2009, as well as on funding the projects that are part of the Program for allocation and use of funds for the programs for exercising of and improvement of social and minority rights and special qualities in the territory of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in 2009. At the open competition for funding the projects of associations of citizens 2,358,748.5 dinars out of 3,000,000.00 dinars were allocated. 25 projects were received for the open competition, while the Coordination Body's Office approved the funds for five projects. Regarding the open competition for funding the projects within the Program for allocation and use of the funds for the programs of achieving and improving social and minority rights and special qualities in the territory of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in 2009, 8,696,224 dinars were allocated out of 9,000,000.00 dinars. 25 projects were received for the open competition, while the Coordination Body's Office approved the funds for seven projects. Both rank lists are posted on the Coordination Body's website. A new open competition will be announced by the end of October 2009.
- **The Coordination Body awarded 152 scholarships** – In accordance with the clearly set criteria of the open competition for students' scholarships and the available budget, the Coordination Body awarded scholarships to 152 students, out of whom 58 are from Presevo, 55 from Bujanovac and 39 from Medvedja. The total value of the scholarships awarded this year is 3,040,000 dinars. The scholarships were given to all the students without one or both parents, as well as to those who are in a difficult financial position, provided they had previously received good school marks. The total of 819 secondary school students, out of whom 444 are from Presevo, 256 from Bujanovac and 119 from Medvedja, entered for the competition that the Coordination Body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia announced on June 25, 2009. This is the first year from the establishment of the Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja that the funds for students' scholarships were earmarked in its budget. Such activities are in compliance with the Coordination Body's four priorities, which are as follows: education, social issues, economic development and the strengthening of the non-governmental sector's capacities in the municipalities.
- **6 million dinars given as a lump sum financial assistance to persons with special needs, self-supporting mothers and parentless children** – By the end of the year, the Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja will pay 6 million dinars in the accounts of the three municipalities as a lump sum financial assistance to persons with special needs, self-supporting mothers and parentless children. The transfer of the first portion of the funds, which includes one million dinars for each municipality, took place in mid-September, while each municipality will receive another million dinars in the last quarter of the year. Prior to obtaining the funds, the municipalities are obliged to set up the commissions for allocation of funds, while the Coordination Body's Office will have one representative in each of the commissions. The Coordination Body decided to make this move because undeveloped municipalities suffer the most in an economic crisis, while its consequences are first felt by the most vulnerable citizens of those municipalities.
- **The Coordination Body distributed school equipment to first-grade students from Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja** – The Coordination Body distributed 1,300 school bags, which contain the necessary school equipment, in the municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja. The value of each single package containing school equipment is 2,100 dinars. On the very first day of the school year, Milan Markovic, President of the Coordination Body, handed out school bags containing the equipment to all first-grade students in Presevo and Bujanovac. 600 students from Presevo and 603 from Bujanovac received school equipment. Milan Markovic, together with presidents of the municipalities of Presevo and Bujanovac, Ragmi Mustafa and Saip Kamberi, handed out school bags to children. Mr. Markovic said that the Coordination Body would carry out new activities for providing assistance to students and schools. Mr. Mustafa and Mr. Kamberi expressed satisfaction with the activity. Sima Gazikalovic, Vice President of the Coordination Body, together with the president of the municipality of Medvedja Slobodan Draskovic, delivered backpacks with the necessary school equipment to 97 first-grade students of the "Gornja Jablanica" elementary school in Medvedja. In an undeveloped municipality such as Medvedja, this was a significant relief for every family with first-grade students.

- **A meeting with Minister of Education, Zarko Obradovic, held** – On September 25, 2009, a meeting between presidents of the municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja and Minister of Education Zarko Obradovic was held. The meeting was initiated by Milan Markovic, President of the Coordination Body, for the purpose of recognizing major issues in the field of education in the said three municipalities. Minister Markovic reiterated that the issue of education and investment in the young was the priority of the Coordination Body, which would work on it in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and other responsible Ministries. Minister Obradovic pointed out that representatives of the three municipalities had the Ministry of Education as their partner and added that the Ministry of Education was willing to resolve all issues efficiently and constructively. The presidents of the three municipalities expressed satisfaction with the meeting with Minister Obradovic and acquainted him with the most important problems in the sphere of education. It was concluded at the meeting that all the problems would be solved by mutual agreement and that cooperation would be intensively continued until all problems are resolved.
- **PCs for a school in Bujanovac and the Medvedja faculty** – As part of the activity “One Thousand PCs for Schools in Serbia”, President of the Coordination Body for South Serbia Milan Markovic and Director General of the Public Enterprise of PTT Traffic “Srbija” Goran Ciric, on September 18, 2009, donated seven PCs and two printers to the IT room of the “Bora Stankovic” elementary school in the village of Klenike, municipality of Bujanovac. Minister Markovic expressed to the PE of PTT Traffic “Srbija” appreciation for the donation. Minister Markovic promised to the school management that problems with school access road would be solved and announced that local roads in the nearby villages would be paved with asphalt as soon as possible. Director General of PE of PTT Traffic “Srbija” Goran Ciric stated that one of the greatest problems in South Serbia was its lagging behind in the technological field, and added that the donation would serve to children as a “window into the world” and a way for children to familiarize themselves with other peoples, other peoples’ cultures and new knowledge. In addition, at the initiative of the Coordination Body, the Commodity Reserve Directorate donated 15 PCs, while the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government donated four PCs to students of the Faculties of Law and Economics in Medvedja.
- **„Kolo“ in Bujanovac and Medvedja** – Through the agency of the Coordination Body, and as part of the “Serbia in Serbia” project, the aim of which is equal development of culture in the territory of the entire Serbia or the bringing of top artistic programs to all Serbian citizens, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia organized a tour of the “Kolo” national folk troupe to Bujanovac and Medvedja. The “Kolo” national folk troupe gave a concert at the “Vuk Karadzic” community center in Bujanovac for the first time, in which both Serbian and Albanian folk troupes participated. The concert was opened by Minister of Culture Nebojsa Bradic.
- **A visit of Nebojsa Bradic, Minister of Culture, to Bujanovac** – On the occasion of a tour of the “Kolo” national folk troupe to Bujanovac, Minister Bradic visited the “Kale” archeological site in the village of Krsevica.



He also talked with the president of the municipality of Bujanovac and Vice President of the Coordination Body for South Serbia Saip Kamberi. Minister Bradic stated then that his ministry would try to provide assistance with the multi-culture project in the region of South Serbia, particularly to the media in Serbian and Albanian. Minister Bradic talked at the Bujanovac Coordination Body's Press Center with representatives of the media from South Serbia. Nadezda Gace, President of the Association of Independent Journalists of Serbia (AIJS), talked about media issues. She, among other things, said that this association had launched the Fund for Assistance to the Media and Journalists in Economic Crisis. Vukasin Obradovic, the editor-in-chief and the owner of “Vranjske novine” weekly, talked about a difficult position of the local media in South Serbia.

- **„Peter Pan“ in Bujanovac and Presevo** – After almost ten years, children of Bujanovac and Presevo had an opportunity in April 2009 to hang out with members of “On the Stage Troupe,” who performed “The Adventures of Peter Pan” for them. The tour of the Novi Sad-based theatre was organized under the aegis of the Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, while the admission for the children and their teachers was free. Around 750 children from junior elementary schools in the said two cities watched the play.



- **„Peca and the Wolf“ in Bujanovac and Medvedja** – Upon excellent response to “Peter Pan”, which is the first children’s play that was performed in Bujanovac and Presevo after a long period of time, the Coordination Body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for the Municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, organized in Bujanovac and Medvedja on June 11, 2009, the performance of “Peca and the Wolf”, which was performed by the Wind Brass Quintet of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra. In the opinion of performers themselves, the response to the tour of the Wind Brass Quintet of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra of Bujanovac and Medvedja, as well as to their musical fairytale “Peca and the Wolf”, was very favorable.

- **„The Days of Ombudsman“ in South Serbia** – Sasa Jankovic, the Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia (Republican Ombudsman), along with his associates, stayed in Bujanovac, Presevo and Medvedja on



May 26 and 27, 2009, where he talked with the citizens and representatives of the local self-governments about major problems and improvement in exercising the citizens’ rights. Ombudsman talked with Minister Milan Markovic, President of the Coordination Body, as well as with presidents of the three municipalities, about the opening of Ombudsman’s Office in South Serbia on May 26, 2009, in Bujanovac. During the “Days of Ombudsman” in South Serbia, the Protector of Citizens and his deputies visited schools, social welfare centers, police stations and other public institutions. Milan Markovic, President of the Coordination Body, said that the opening of the first Ombudsman’s Office in these

southern Serbian municipalities was very important for relations in South Serbia. Ombudsman’s offices are going to be opened in Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja by the end of the year, while an open competition for representatives of the Ombudsman’ office in these municipalities was announced (<http://www.ombudsman.rs/attachments/konkurs.doc>).

- **Working Group for Education, Culture, Information, Youth and Sports** – The working group was established in April 2009, whereas the chairperson of the working group is Tinde Kovac Cerovic, State Secretary of the Ministry of Education. The Working Group for Education, Culture, Information, Youth and Sports has had four meetings. The working group tries to efficiently solve issues in the fields of education and culture, while most of its priorities will be set through the National Minority Council. The working group agreed that the Ministry of Education would invest extra funds in procuring computer and other equipment for schools in Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja. It was also agreed that teachers from Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja should take teachers’ exams. The exam was firstly held in October 2009, while it will be held for the second time in February and March 2010. Another working group’s agreement relates to the opening of the office for control and supervision of teachers’ work in Bujanovac, while the open competition for this position will be announced by the end of October 2009. The Ministry of Education approves the opening of the Department for Disabled Children in Bujanovac, where classes will be held in Albanian. The topics discussed by the working group include the issues of textbooks and curriculum in Albanian, as well as the insufficient number of employees in Presevo schools. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Youth and Sports agreed that members of the working group should submit to them draft project requests, which will be discussed at subsequent working group meetings.

The Coordination Body is constantly in contact with international partners, who are interested in the situation in South Serbia, with the aim of improving the quality of life in the municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja.

The greatest successes achieved in the past period include the following:

- **Cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission** – The OSCE Mission to Serbia fully supported the work of the Coordination Body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The most important support, by all means, is the expert assistance provided with preparing a feasibility study for the opening of faculties in Bujanovac and Presevo, which is essential, so that all important aspects for opening institutions of higher learning in Presevo and Bujanovac in 2010 and 2011 could be analyzed. Representatives of the OSCE Mission, which is one of the signatories of the Agreement on the Principles of Reconstruction of the Coordination Body, also attend meetings of the Coordination Body's Presidency.
- **Cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on the opening of the faculty in Medvedja** –The Coordination Body underscores the excellent cooperation with the Preparedness, Planning and Economic Security (PPES) Program, which is funded by the USAID. This program financially supported the translation into Albanian of textbooks for Nis University's Faculties of Law and Economics.
- **New projects in South Serbia** – The agreements on implementation of the projects “Capacity Building for Inclusive Local Development in South Serbia” and “Promotion of Peace Preservation in South Serbia” were signed in the Serbian Government by Milan Markovic, President of the Coordination Body, and William Infante, UN Resident Coordinator in Serbia.



“7,920,000 dollars were invested in the project that will be implemented in the territory of 13 cities and municipalities of the Pcinj and Jablanica districts. Those are just the places that need help the most,” Mr. Markovic said. He added that the projects would be implemented in Vranje, Trgoviste, Bosilegrad, Vladicin Han, Surdulica, Bojnik, Medvedja, Leskovac, Lebane, Vlasotince, Crna Trava, Presevo and Bujanovac.

William Infante, Director of UNDP Office in Serbia, said that he was convinced that those two projects would contribute to the strengthening of peace in South Serbia. “We are going to work with local self-governments in South Serbia on making the institutions available to everybody and on institutional improvement. That is how we are going to achieve the assumptions for economic development and to improve the citizens' quality of life,” Mr. Infante said. The project “Capacity Building for Inclusive Local Development in South Serbia” will last three years, while the funds amounting to 5,420,000 dollars were provided by the Swedish Agency for International Cooperation and Development, Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development, the Norwegian government and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The project “Promotion of Peace Preservation in South Serbia” is going to last two and a half years, while the funds amounting to 2,5 million dollars were provided by the UN/Spain Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund. Donors from Switzerland, Sweden and Spain announced that they would continue providing Serbia with assistance in building the capacities of local self-governments and making institutions more accessible to the citizens.

In the field of public communications

The Coordination Body presents its fourth report for the public. The report is aimed at providing information to the Serbian citizens on the Coordination Body's work, as well as at ensuring communication with the Serbian Government's ministries and agencies and international partners. The Coordination Body submits its reports to over 400 addresses of national and international partners, and is available on the Coordination Body's website www.kt.gov.rs.



The goal of the Coordination Body is to contribute to a sustainable development of the municipalities of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in partnership with other Serbian government's ministries, international organizations and representatives of the international community. The Coordination Body strives to strengthen the capacities of local self-governments and civil society, so that they would be able to take care of their development themselves, without relying on lump sum financial assistance, which doesn't improve the situation over a longer period of time, isn't sustainable and doesn't contribute to a reduction in the poverty of these municipalities.

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