



# EU AND SERBIA AT WORK

## FACT SHEET

### EU PROGRES

**European Partnership with Municipalities Programme EU PROGRES** was a joint Programme of two major donors - the European Union and the Government of Switzerland which have been providing continuous support to the people living in 25 municipalities in the South and South West Serbia in period *July 2010-March 2014*. The Programme was helping municipalities improve their infrastructure, quality of services they provide to their citizens and businesses, to modernise their work in line with the principles of good governance, and to promote their development potentials. Strategically, EU PROGRES is in line with endeavours of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to support equal development, reform administration and integrate the country into the European Union.

The 25 municipalities in the South and South West Serbia were identified as the most underdeveloped and needed additional support to increase their capacities to equally follow the growth.

In South Serbia: Blace, Žitorađa, Kuršumlija, Prokuplje, Bojnik, Vlasotince, Lebane, Leskovac, Medveđa, Crna Trava, Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Vladičin Han, Vranje, Preševo, Surdulica and Trgovište.

South-West Serbia: Ivanjica, Nova Varoš, Novi Pazar, Priboj, Prijepolje, Raška, Sjenica, and Tutin

The Programme budget was €19.9 million, out of which the European Union has provided €14.1 million, the Government of Switzerland €2.9 million, while the Government of Serbia co-funding reached €2.9 million.

In total, **265 projects were completed within the Programme**; majority (86%) is implemented through grant methodology, which was not only an assurance of the ownership but also served as a capacity building tool for municipalities.

There were over 40 projects for the development of industrial zones, enhancement of competitiveness and entrepreneurship, which contributed to commercial investments, facilitated employment of 300 people, and created a basis for opening of 3,000 jobs in the next five years. The Programme also supported setting up of four One Stop Shops, which should decrease the total time needed for issuing of construction permit and thus reduce one of the major obstacles for investors. EU PROGRES' support to local tax offices in eleven municipalities added 5,565 people to the databases, and generated increase of 47% in invoiced amount while, at the same time, the amount of collected taxes increased by 78 million dinars or 52%.

Implementation of 45 local infrastructure projects directly made positive impact for 30,000 people, and indirectly for the entire area population. Within the education sector, 48 projects benefited 12,600 children: four reconstructed kindergartens enabled enrolment of 431 children, one new school was built and four were renovated, while taking into account the energy efficiency regulation.

New equipment was provided to twelve medical centres, giving citizens better access to screenings and health prevention, and in particular to women's health. The most significant individual project was the provision of equipment worth €255,000 for the Maternity Ward in Preševo.

Ten projects directly improved water supply systems and enabled delivery of drinking water for tens of thousands of citizens. EU PROGRES supported implementation of 48 projects that contribute to cleaner environment.





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One of the strongest features of EU PROGRES was the assistance to vulnerable communities, such as Roma, disabled, unemployed, elderly, and women. Over 10,000 vulnerable directly benefited from these activities.

Significant progress has been made in the field of gender. At the end of the Programme, all 25 municipalities had a mechanism for gender equality (GEM), 22 developed local gender action plans, and 13 adopted European Charter for Equality of Men and Women. EU PROGRES also supported 24 projects that improved the position of women in the local communities, while nine women were assisted to start own businesses.

*There are numerous examples how the EU PROGRES changed peoples' lives in Serbia:*

Almost every tomato in Lila Mitova's garden weighs at least half a kilo. Lila proudly shows her seedlings and says that, one year ago, weed grew in place of the long neat aisles. She is the representative of one of the 25 Roma families that provided their families with seasonal jobs and food through a project of the NGO Optimist and the Bosilegrad Municipality, through EU PROGRES. (Complete story is available at <http://www.euprogres.org/vest.php?id=276>)

The EU, the Government of Switzerland and the Government of Serbia continue to support their efforts through the successor programme, European PROGRES.

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EU PROGRES final report: <http://www.euprogres.org/biblioteka.php?id=605>

