
Vojvodina **WORLD**

October 2012 / www.vojvodinahouse.eu



Milan Pajević, Director of the European Integration Office of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, was previously the Head of the prominent ISAC Fund for many years:

Ahead of Serbia is the most complex phase of the European integration process because we expect to obtain the start date for EU accession negotiations, in compliance with the fulfilment of the existing criteria, as well as to start this highly demanding process. On the other hand, we expect the finalisation of the ratification process of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), because so far 26 EU member states have ratified the SAA, so has the European Parliament; and it is left for Lithuania to do so. As before, the European Integration Office will continuously proceed with the work on the implementation of the European agenda within those coordinates. Its well-coordinated, highly professional and dedicated team will continue to be a reliable service for state authorities of the Republic of Serbia on issues of harmonization of national legislation with EU *acquis communautaire*, and to play an active role in the utilization of international development assistance, with special focus on EU pre-accession funds.



Of course, without the cooperation of all levels of authorities, institutions and stakeholders, and without maximally coordinated, well-designed and planned actions, there is no accelerated motion towards the European Union. We learn from the experience of

other countries which have underwent the process Serbia is currently facing, and which are EU member states or will become one in the near future. Only in conjunction with all political bodies and state administration, as well as trade unions, professional organizations, civil society sector, etc. can we introduce our society into full European Union membership.

In this sense, the role of the Vojvodina European Office in Brussels is of utmost importance since it has to represent the voice and interests of AP Vojvodina, as a province within the Republic of Serbia, in the heart of the European Union. The cooperation of Vojvodina with other European regions and EU bodies, its participation in IPA cross-border cooperation programmes and other European calls, its engagement in the implementation of the Danube strategy and similar projects will be to the benefit of the entire Serbia.

Bojan Pajtić, LLD, is for the third term in a row President of the Government of Vojvodina, an autonomous province within the Republic of Serbia

VOJVODINA

prioritises investments

The Government of Vojvodina has set key goals for the following period: to attract foreign investment, to keep existing jobs and open new ones. It is our obligation to preserve the multi-ethnic character of our province as the only region in Europe with six languages in official use. We will also target to improve the conditions for medical treatment, education and all other segments of social standard in which the provincial administration has competence.



As a region, we have had notable success in the area of employment despite the crisis, and today we have 6,000 unemployed less than in the same period last year. The Financial Times has ranked us the fourth region in Europe in terms of attractiveness for foreign investment. I can strongly reiterate that we will continue to create preconditions for Vojvodina to be recognised by investors as a desirable and attractive investment location in the future.

In the forthcoming period, we will focus on further infrastructure development and construction of industrial zones. Through its institutions, the Government of Vojvodina will offer favourable credit lines for export programmes and programmes in the area of agriculture,

furthermore we will offer financial support programmes to investors for opening new jobs, as well as for the preparation of infrastructure for the construction of new factories and plants.

NEARLY A HALF OF TOTAL FOREIGN INVESTMENTS THAT HAVE COME TO SERBIA HAVE FOUND THEIR PLACE IN VOJVODINA, WHICH BEARS WITNESS TO THE CONDITIONS AND INVESTMENT CLIMATE THAT IS DOMINANT IN OUR REGION.

Vojvodina is a region that constitutes nearly one-third of Serbia and a region in which support for European integration is most prominent. Because of that, we will insist, by all legal and political means, that Serbia must not deviate from the European path, that it has to reform its institutions, that it has to develop internal democracy, and that it has to fulfil the terms set in front of it, such as determined fight against corruption and organized crime, in order to become a full member of the European Union.

Our administration co-operates with a number of European regions. In addition

to the regions from neighbouring and geographically close countries, as well as countries that are native countries of national communities living in Vojvodina, we also develop co-operation with regions with a strong industrial and innovative base. We do

view regional co-operation as a development tool for achieving common interests and combining resources that could contribute to further progress in economy, science, education, culture, etc.

We are proud of a high degree of exercise of national communities' rights, without which, after all, Vojvodina cannot be imagined. Yet those rights are not only reflected in the fact that Vojvodina has six languages in official use, and that we have a lot of broadcasters in the languages of national communities, but in the fact that members of various national communities

are enabled to finish elementary and secondary schools, even some faculties, in their mother tongue. Vojvodina



is also unique for having a higher vocational school for the education of Roma teachers.

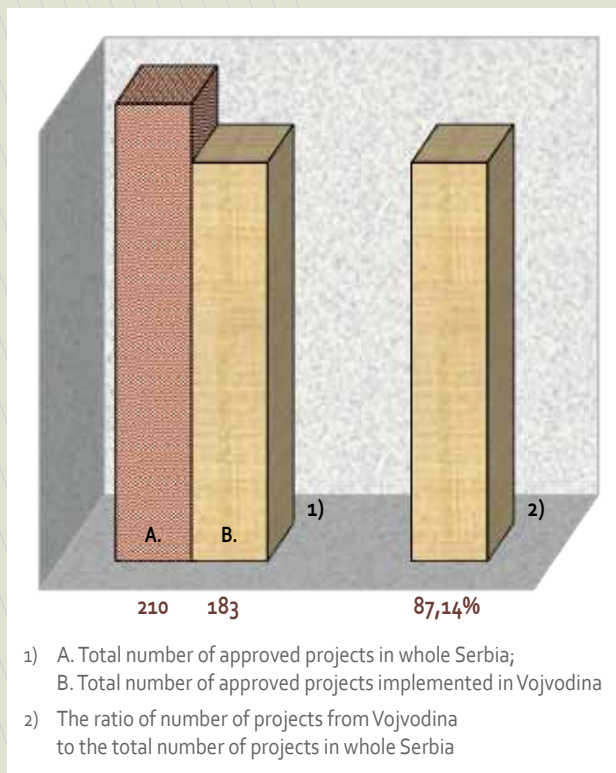
A number of national communities whose native countries are EU member states live in Vojvodina, thus this fact indeed recommends us for further co-operation with other European regions. Vojvodina will continue to strongly support our office in Brussels. We are determined to go on with our activities in the heart of the European Union. We will keep lobbying for our interests, as well as fighting for the legitimate rights of citizens of Vojvodina to develop and preserve the region, which had first achieved this status 160 years ago.



VOJVODINA HAS A ROAD, RAIL AND RIVER NETWORK, AND TWO MAJOR PAN-EUROPEAN ROUTES, CORRIDOR 10 AND THE DANUBE - CORRIDOR 7, PASS THROUGH IT, CONNECTING THE NORTH WITH THE SOUTH, AND THE WEST WITH THE SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST EUROPE. THE PROVINCE HAS THE LARGEST PERCENTAGE OF QUALIFIED AND HIGHLY QUALIFIED LABOUR FORCE IN SERBIA (54%), AND THE INVESTORS PRESENT THERE INDICATE THAT VOJVODINA IS COMPETITIVE BECAUSE OF THE OPTIMAL RATIO BETWEEN THE QUALITY OF WORK, PRODUCTIVITY OF LABOUR FORCE AND ITS COST, AS WELL AS QUALITY OF FINAL PRODUCTS AND LABOUR COSTS. FURTHER ADVANTAGES ARE SURELY THE QUALITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE, VICINITY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND RELATIVELY OPERATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AT THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL, AS WELL AS SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL, TAX AND CUSTOMS EXEMPTIONS. CONVENIENT ACCESS TO FOREIGN MARKETS PARTICULARLY SUITS INVESTORS THANKS TO FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS SERBIA HAS WITH SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES (CEFTA), TURKEY, BELARUS, KAZAKHSTAN, ITS PREFERENTIAL STATUS WITH THE EU, AS WELL AS THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA, WHICH PROVIDES FREE ACCESS TO A MARKET OF 150 MILLION PEOPLE.



Vojvodina Investment Promotion (VIP) was founded in 2004 with the aim to present Vojvodina to the world public as a region that offers investors good labour force, quality and security, in which large world companies invest and stay for a reason. At the same time, the task of VIP is, through partnerships with local self-governments, to obtain and provide information about accessible locations, help each micro-investment area to better prepare itself for the arrival of foreign companies, as well as suggest to all relevant authorities changes that need to be done, so that the business climate could become even more favourable and attractive. On the other hand, VIP also helps investors to position themselves better on the new market, acquaint themselves with laws, furthermore, assists them in affairs related to the administration, customs or new employment, should it be necessary. According to VIP data, over 230 foreign companies have invested in Vojvodina in the previous period, having invested over EUR 6 billion and having employed around 65,000 citizens of Vojvodina.



- 1) A. Total number of approved projects in whole Serbia;
B. Total number of approved projects implemented in Vojvodina
- 2) The ratio of number of projects from Vojvodina to the total number of projects in whole Serbia

The "Support to Allergen-Free Environment" project, with the ID: HUSRB/1002/122/195, has resulted from the cooperation among four institutions: European Affairs Fund-AP Vojvodina, Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection, City of Sombor and Local Government of Baja. The partnership was developed under the Second Call for Proposals of the Hungary-Serbia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme, among institutions situated in the eligible area of Csongrád and Bács-Kiskun counties in the southern part of Hungary, as well as NUTS III level equivalent regions of West Bačka and South Bačka in the northern and north-western part of the Republic of Serbia. The implementation period covers 24 months, from 1 October 2011 to 30 September 2013, and its allocated budget somewhat exceeds EUR 390,000. The project implementation in the first two reporting periods revealed a high-level of cooperation among partners and a significant role of the European Affairs Fund-AP Vojvodina, as the leading institution of AP Vojvodina related to EU initiatives.

Some of the most promising sectors of Vojvodina for investment have already been revealed and show excellent results. There is agro-business, financial sector, construction industry, energy sector, oil industry, motor industry, as well as metal and machinery sector. The information technology (IT) industry has also great potential. The Faculty of Technology in Novi Sad plays a significant role in this area, having established more than 50 IT companies and, in addition, foreign investors from Germany, France, the Netherlands and Spain have also created new jobs in this sector. With that aim, the Business Incubator and ICT Cluster have been established, and there are plans for a quality science and technology park that will attract even more foreign and domestic IT companies to Vojvodina. Otherwise, the majority of investors in Vojvodina are from Germany and France, while companies from Italy, Slovenia, Belgium and Greece traditionally invest in Vojvodina, whereas focus is shifting to the Far East, which is becoming increasingly interested in this region.

TRUSTED UNIVERSITY

The rector of the University of Novi Sad (UNS), Professor Miroslav Vesković, PhD, is also the coordinator of Priority Area 7 of the Danube Strategy - To Develop Knowledge Society through Research, Education and Information Technologies. At the University of Novi Sad, which network consists of 14 faculties and two institutes, more than 50,000 students receive education: more than 40% of the students study technical and technological sciences, around 14% natural sciences, around 30% social and human sciences, and 13% medical science. However, at the same time, we insist on interdisciplinary studies because in the future, there will be less and less of those who will have graduated from physics, mathematics, law or economics, but they will be divided into those who can solve a problem and those who cannot.



Within the framework of Tempus project, UNS has been recognised as a pro-active and trustworthy university. We have also been entrusted with the management of Gomes project, which is related to the management of higher education institutions in our region. Within FP 7 project, we have a number of important activities related to the application of knowledge in practice, mostly in the field of environmental protection, where-

as bio-economics is arising as an important topic, which parallel to water protection and water regulation, should become dominant in the development of Vojvodina and Serbia. Cross-border cooperation has also progressed in recent years, so we have had a large number of IPA projects in cooperation with Hungary and Croatia; in addition, we are engaging in all other projects that are at our disposal.

The Danube Strategy is important for us not only because it enables the utilisation of the Danube resources for sustainable development of Vojvodina, but it also offers new prospects to UNS for greater and more complex forms of regional cooperation. Our goal for the Danube macro-region is, on the one hand, to accentuate specific skills of people and their innovativeness, and on the other hand, to involve higher education and ICT in all that in order to make the economy of the region most competitive. The Vojvodina European Office in Brussels is important to us in all these areas, for it is a logistic and thematic support and facilitates our communication with relevant European institutions.

Partner of Vojvodina World

NOVI

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Novi Bečej is situated on the left bank of the Tisa River, 66 kilometres from its confluence with the Danube. It is the only town along the Tisa which centre is located on the river and it is also adorned with one of the most beautiful quay along the Tisa. Apart from Novi Bečej, the municipality is comprised of three other places: Novo Miloševo, Kumane and Bočar. Novi Bečej Municipality covers an area of 609km² and it has a population of 25,000 people.

The municipality of Novi Bečej has substantial natural resources such as:

- Arable land suitable for the production of oil-seeds and bio-mass
- Forests, meadows, fields suitable for the production of healthy foods of animal origin
- Clay for the production of building material
- Sources of thermal waters
- Protected areas (Slano kopovo and Biserno ostrvo)
- Natural reserves of carbon dioxide
- Sources of natural gas
- The Tisa River and canal network



BEČEJ

- Dam and bridge on the Tisa
- Rich culture and historic heritage.

The position of the municipality of Novi Bečej, in the heart of Vojvodina, as well as the solid transport infrastructure (above of all, the waterways) is its greatest comparative advantage. In cooperation with the neighbouring municipality of Bečej, which has been intensified lately, this micro region could become a centre of regional development.

Potential branches for investment:

- Agriculture
- Tourism and catering
- Food industry
- Textile industry
- Metal industry

Development projects:

- Facilitation of East industrial zone
- Construction of a dock on the Tisa
- Construction of a water pipe network
- Construction of an aqua park
- Construction of a spa centre in Novo Miloševo

www.novibecej.rs



Along the entire course of the Tisa River through Serbia, there is no standardized dock, marina or mooring where small boats, yachts and river cruisers could resupply with fuel or obtain repair service, while their passengers could spend some quality time. Tourism has been identified as the greatest development potential of the municipality in strategic documents, whereas nautical tourism plays a significant role. In accordance with that, the development and construction of a passenger terminal has been set as a priority. Thus, a greater number of domestic and foreign tourists would recognize Novi Bečej as an attractive holiday destination. At the same time, the construction of a dock on the Tisa in Novi Bečej, a project for which support from EU partners is expected, would have positive impact on the economic development of not only the region, comprised of at least four municipalities (Kikinda, Nova Crnja, Bečej and Novi Bečej), but of the whole Vojvodina as well.



Milivoj Miša Vrebalov, Vice President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina, was the President of the Municipality of Novi Bečej in the past six years

Managerial spirit

Vojvodina is a benchmark for unity even for highly developed countries. We value people solely on the basis whether they are good or bad, whether they are hardworking or lazy. I lived in Chicago and Athens, developed businesses there, but I decided to return to my hometown of Novi Bečej with the goal to recreate a place where people will gladly go to, and not a place where people will flee from. Based on my experience, I have had knowledge about what troubles both entrepreneurs and state owned companies. An entrepreneurial spirit has been introduced into the local administration. We have managed to connect the traditional and modern, to merge the European and Russian, and investors have gradually begun to recognise our town as an attractive investment location.

While preparing the Municipal Development Strategy, focus was initially put on tourism, because it contributes to image building. In a short period of time, we have promoted a series of programmes; the Feast of Assumption has grown from a rural funfair to a manifestation that stands shoulder to shoulder with EXIT and Guča, thus this year it has attracted over 200,000 visitors. We are not situated in the vicinity of large cities, we alone are not a big town, but we have managed to spread the word about us. Our goal is now to construct a dock on the Tisa, which would primarily serve tourist boats, and in the future it would assume the role of a transport centre. And we are ready to compete for EU funds in order to make this dream a reality.



Vojvodina

Area: 21,506 km²

Population: approximately 2 million people

Main administrative and university centre: Novi Sad

Government of Autonomous Province Vojvodina

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