

PRESS RELEASE

United Nations Development Programme



Montenegro Keen to Replicate Macedonian Experience on Inter-Municipal Cooperation

Skopje, 24 March, 2011

A nine-member delegation composed of government, municipalities and UNDP representatives from Montenegro arrived on a two-day visit to Skopje to learn more about the country's positive experience on inter-municipal cooperation.

They had meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Local Self Government, the Government's commission for stimulation and monitoring of Inter-Municipal Cooperation and ZELS. They also went on a field visit to the municipalities of Bosilovo, Vasilevo and Novo Selo, as well as the Center for Regional Development of the Southeast Planning Region.

The Danilovgrad Mayor, Branislav Duranovic, stated "This visit has been highly beneficial for us. It has provided us with an opportunity to learn about the Macedonian positive experience on inter-municipal cooperation. We hope that we will be able to replicate this in Montenegro as well".

Why is inter-municipal cooperation so important for the country?

One of the main objectives of the decentralization reform is to improve public service delivery to better meet the needs of all citizens. The number and size of responsibilities that are transferred to the municipal administrations has been increasing, which represents a challenge for many municipalities.

There is great diversity and disparities among municipalities. Some of them are too small to efficiently provide the most basic municipal services. Some of the services are very costly, like environment protection, but are essential for the quality of life and are required by the EU integration process.

Inter-municipal cooperation and joint service delivery proved to be a very positive approach for providing services in an efficient and equitable manner. Cooperative arrangements through inter-municipal cooperation among smaller municipalities in particular can compensate for disparities in administrative capacity.

Since 2006, UNDP has been supporting the establishment of arrangements for such cooperation, particularly among smaller municipalities, starting with the municipalities of the Strumica region. In 2009 and 2010, the Inter-Municipal Cooperation Programme initiated 19 partnerships, involving 42 municipalities. Now, all of them have improved administrative procedures and strengthened human resources in areas such as: urban planning, tax administration, local economic development, social and environmental protection. They are delivering better and more transparent services for all citizens.

The Government of Norway has provided over 2 million USD for the funding of the Inter Municipal Cooperation programme in the country.

Based on the Macedonian experience with IMC, UNDP has supported the replication of this approach to service delivery and improving overall efficiency of the local institutions in several countries in the the region.

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