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**THE FIFTH SECTORAL MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR
THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME HUMAN RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT**

**IPA Component IV
Zagreb, 25th November 2009**

Content:

1. Agenda of the meeting
2. List of participants including scanned "List of attendance"
3. Minutes on the topics discussed



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AGENDA

Fifth Sectoral Monitoring Committee for the Operational Programme Human Resources Development in Croatia

**Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship
Zagreb, 25th November 2009**

1. **Co-chairing of the Committee** (statements and approval of Agenda)
2. **Follow up and adoption of the Minutes of the Sectoral Monitoring Committee Component IV held on 9 June 2009**
3. **Annual audit activity report (AAAR)**
4. **Current state of play of implementation of the HRD OP – general**
5. **Progress related to the grant schemes within the HRD OP 2007-2009** (Workshops for potential grant beneficiaries)
6. **Proposed revision of the HRD OP including extension of programming period HRD OP 2010/2011** (presentation of the identified Priorities and Measures)
7. **Presentation of the Public and Regional Partner Consultations for the HRD OP held during July, September and October 2009**
8. **Implementation of the Communication Action Plan**
9. **Progress made within the PHARE 2006 projects regarding preparation of future operations for ESF**
10. **AOB**
 - **Date and venue** for next meeting of the Committee



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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

5th Sectoral Monitoring Committee for the Operational Programme Human Resources Development in Croatia

Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship

Zagreb, 25th November 2009

<p>European Commission</p> <p>Jeroen Jutte (co-chair)</p> <p>Jean-Marie Moreau</p> <p>Jelena Jakulj</p> <p>Armel de Kerros</p> <p>Rima Joujou Deljkic</p> <p>Dijana Kuzman</p> <p>Vedrana Ligutić</p>	<p>Deputy Head of Unit, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities</p> <p>Head of Operations Section 1- Social Cohesion, Regional development and Infrastructure</p> <p>Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities</p> <p>Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities</p> <p>Delegation of the EC to the Republic of Croatia</p> <p>Delegation of the EC to the Republic of Croatia</p> <p>Delegation of the EC to the Republic of Croatia</p>
<p>Ministry of Finance</p> <p>Dubravka Flinta (substitute)</p>	<p>Head of the National Fund</p>
<p>Central Office for Development Strategy and Coordination of EU Funds</p> <p>Iva Frkić (substitute of Strategic Coordinator)</p> <p>Ana Šimunić</p>	<p>CODEF</p> <p>CODEF</p>



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Dinka Bujas	CODEF
Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship	
Katarina Ivanković Knežević – co-chair (substitute)	Head of Dept. for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programs and Projects
Gordana Dragičević	Head of Department for European Integration and International Cooperation
Lovrenka Brajković Bulat	Dept. for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programs and Projects
Josip Ljubičić	Dept. for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programs and Projects
Naida Mekić	Dept. for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programs and Projects (Secretariat)
Krešimir Domjančić	Dept. for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programs and Projects
Ivana Matošin	Dept. for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programs and Projects (Secretariat)
Ana Vlček	Dept. for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programs and Projects
Ante Džapo	Dept. for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programs and Projects
Stella Čužić	Dept. for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programs and Projects
Anita Piskulić Serdarević	Internal Audit Department /MELE
Đurđica Mikuljan	Internal Audit Department/ MELE
Neven Kos	Dept. for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programs and Projects / IPA Component IIIc "Regional Competitiveness OP"



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Ministry of Health and Social Welfare Dorica Nikolić Mirjana Radovan (substitute) Natalija Bokulić	State Secretary for Social Welfare Directorate for Social Welfare Directorate for Social Welfare
Ministry of Science, Education and Sports Mihaela Dubravac Šigir (substitute) Jasminka Majsec	Head of Department within the Directorate for Secondary Education Directorate for Secondary Education
Agency for Vocational Education and Training Ivan Šutalo (member) Antonija Gladović Christina Anne Tkalec	Director Assistant Director for IPA Programme Dept. for Financing and Contracting of IPA (DEFKO)
Croatian Employment Service Sanja Mesarov	Head of Department for Financing and Contracting of EU projects (CES DFC)
A representative of the Government Office for Gender Equality Tamara Šterk (substitute)	Government Office for Gender Equality
Socio-economic Partners Ana Miličević Pezelj (member) Anny Brusić (substitute)	Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia Croatian Employers Association



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Representatives of Civil Society Lidija Pavić- Rogošić (member) Anamarija Sočo (substitute)	NGO "ODRAZ" (Sustainable Community Development) NGO "Croatian Youth Network"
Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities Ante Vučić	Director
Governmental Office for cooperation with NGOs Tanja Čorlija	Head of Department for International Cooperation and European Integration
Agency for Adult Education Hrvojka Laušić Vedran Težak Ivana Soža	Head of Department for International Cooperation
Agency for the Audit of European Union Programmes Implementation System Mirko Gravara	Head of Department for audit of IPA component IV – Human Resources Development
TA Team Phare 2006 projects: Development of Institutional Capacity for the Management of EU Structural Funds Post-Accession - Project pipeline for IPA/Structural Funds". Nils Saaks	Consultant
National Foundation for Civil Society Development Tihana Ančević	
Ministry of State Administration Boris Zelenika	



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**THE FIFTH SECTORAL MONITORING COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMAN RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME**

IPA Component IV

Zagreb, 25th November 2009

MINUTES

The fifth meeting of the Sectoral Monitoring Committee for the Human Resources Development Operational Programme under the IPA Framework Agreement took place in Zagreb, on 25th November 2009 (14.00 - 17.00) at the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, Ulica grada Vukovara 78, Conference Hall.

Opening statements and approval of the Agenda

The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr Jeroen Jutte, Deputy Head of Unit in DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European Commission and Ms Katarina Ivanković Knežević, Head of Department for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programmes and Projects within the Directorate for International Cooperation in the Field of Labour and Social Security in the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship of the Republic of Croatia.

Mr Jeroen Jutte chaired the delegation of the European Union included representatives of relevant Commission services.

Ms Katarina Ivanković Knežević chaired the delegation of the Republic of Croatia, which included representatives of the relevant bodies nominated as members of the Sectoral Monitoring Committee (hereafter, SMC) and number of observers (complete list in Attachment).

Ms Katarina Ivanković Knežević greeted all present and stated that all the represented documents for this SMC have been sent to all the members of the SMC according to the Rules of procedures 15 working days before the Meeting. Most of the documents are prepared in both English and Croatian language in order to facilitate the correspondence and cooperation between members of the SMC.

Ms Ivanković Knežević thanked all the present for the support that was given to the Operating Structure stressing out that the progress regarding the implementation of the Operational programme Human resources Development (hereafter, HRD OP) has been continuing during the year 2009, which resulted with the first contracting activities.



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Following the brief introduction, Mr Jutte also welcomed all the present members of the SMC as well as Mr Jean-Marie Moreau, Head of Operation Section 1- Social cohesion, regional development and infrastructure and other colleagues from EC Delegation.

Upon the formal opening of the Meeting, the Agenda was adopted with a small adjustment regarding the sequence of points in the Agenda, due to the fact that representatives of the Agency for the Audit of European Union programmes Implementation System had previously scheduled obligations and could not participate until the end.

Minutes from the fourth meeting of the Sectoral Monitoring Committee for the HRD OP, held on 9 June 2009

Regarding the Minutes from the fourth Sectoral Monitoring Committee Meeting which took place on 9th June 2009 in Zagreb it was agreed that they are adopted.

Annual audit activity report (AAAR)

Mr Mirko Gravara, Head of Department for the Audit of IPA programme – Human Resources Development from the Agency for the Audit of European Union Programmes Implementation System greeted all present and apologized Director of the Agency Mr Neven Šprlje for not attending this meeting due to the previously scheduled obligations related to the Follow-up audit on Conferral of Management conditions for the Republic of Croatia preformed by the European Commission auditors.

Mr Mirko Gravara made a short introduction on the general responsibilities and work of the Agency as a functionally independent body from all stakeholders in the management and control system in the framework of pre-accession funds. Following the introduction, Mr Gravara gave an overview of the preformed audits in the year 2009 on the Operating structure bodies.

Mr Gravara stated that the Agency submits the Annual Audit Activity Report to the European Commission, the National Authorising Officer and the Competent Accrediting Officer.

On the basis of the annual audit work plan for the year 2009, that was submitted to the European Commission on 30 December 2008, in the framework of IV. Component of IPA, by 30 September 2009, the Agency for the Audit of European Union programmes Implementation System, Department for the Audit of IPA Component IV - Human Resources Development, performed the following audits:

- The audit of internal audit function, irregularities and risk management in the Operating Structure
- The audit of the Statement of Assurance procedure in the Operating Structure
- The audit of tendering and evaluation procedures in the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports

Mr Gravara further stated that the auditing of management and control systems in the Operating Structure is underway and it is due to be completed by the end of the year. The findings and



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recommendations will be included in the Annual Audit Activity Report which will be submitted to the European Commission, the National Authorising Officer and the Competent Accrediting Officer by 31 December 2009.

The audit of internal audit functions, irregularities and risk management in the Operating Structure was carried out in the period from 10 March to 13 July 2009. The audit period covered was from 1 October 2008 to 1 April 2009. The general conclusion of the audit of processes regarding risk and irregularity management and internal audit is that the system works, however further improvements are needed. In performing the audit no finding of high importance was identified.

In the area of risk management improvements are referring to the segregation of duties, development/improvement of Risk Management Strategy, strengthening the cooperation with internal auditors, improving risk reporting procedure and ways of their eradication, improvements in recording of weaknesses of internal controls and their follow-up as well as additional trainings for employees in the area of risk management.

For the process of internal audit the following improvements are needed: strengthening the supervision over internal auditors' work, additional employees working in the Department, strengthening the cooperation with risk managers, improvements in development of the strategic and annual internal audit plan, risk assessment and planning of audits, amendments in IPA Manual concerning audit and recording of internal controls weaknesses, additional trainings in the area of auditing EU funds.

As for the process of irregularities it was stated that improvements are needed in the area of organisation of monthly meetings of irregularity officers and especially additional trainings of employees on the issue of irregularities.

The audit of the Statement of Assurance procedure in the operating structure was performed in the period from 1 June to 7 August 2009. The audit period covered was from 1 October 2008 to 1 May 2009. The conclusion on audited system is that the process of the establishment of the Statement of Assurance functions partially, therefore further improvements are needed. No finding of high importance was identified.

Specifically, it was mentioned that there is a need for improving the methodology for the Statement of Assurance, linking the internal controls identified in the Statement of Assurance with other findings relating the internal controls weaknesses and improvements of the internal audit work within the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and additional trainings in this specific area.

The audit of tendering and evaluation procedures in the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports was performed in the period from 16 July to 26 October 2009. The audit period covered was from 1 October 2008 to 31 July 2009. The conclusion on the audited system is that the management of IPA programme in the part of the audited process is aligned with accredited procedures and requirements which arise from the Financial Agreement. No finding of high or medium importance was identified.



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It was stated that there is a need for enhancement in the access to the early warning system, improvements in the development of the audit trail in IPA Manual and respecting the segregation of duties.

In the end of presentation, Mr Gravara pointed out that the Agency's auditors shall check whether the recommendations of the stated audits are adopted and to which extent they are followed by the time of the establishment of the Annual Audit Activity Report for the year 2009.

Ms Ivanković Knežević thanked Mr Gravara for this presentation and pointed out that the most of the recommendations of the audit findings have been already implemented.

Mr Jean-Marie Moreau thanked for the detailed presentation and raised a question regarding the adoption of the given recommendations as well as monitoring of their implementation. Mr Gravara pointed out that the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendation of audit findings will be done before the final Annual Audit Activity Report is submitted to the European Commission, the National Authorising Officer and the Competent Accrediting Officer.

Current state of play of implementation of the HRD OP – general

Furthermore, Ms Ivanković Knežević invited responsible persons from the relevant sectors to give a short overview of the state of play of implementation within the following HRD OP Priorities/Measures:

- Ms Naida Mekić, Expert Assistant in the Department for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programmes and Projects within MELE, started by giving a short overview of the progress achieved in relation to tendering and contracting **Priority 1** - Enhancing access to employment and sustainable inclusion in the labour market.
- Afterwards, Ms Mirjana Radovan, Head of Department within the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, proceeded with the **Priority 2** - Reinforcing social inclusion of people at a disadvantage, **Measure 2.1** Supporting access to employment by disadvantaged groups and
- Ms Mihaela Dubravac Šigir, Head of the Department within the Ministry of Science, Education and Training, continued for the **Measure 2.2** Supporting access to education by disadvantaged groups and Priority 3 - Enhancing human capital and employability. In the end,
- Mr Krešimir Domjančić, Expert Assistant in the Department for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programmes and Projects within MELE concluded the presentation of the state of affairs with the **Priority 4** - Technical Assistance.

In conclusion to the state of play Mr Jutte stated that visible progress has been made resulting with the first payment. Also, he emphasised that the sum up of the activities/operations within the Programme for the next SMC Meeting is important in order to assess the state of play of implementation of the HRD OP.



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Furthermore, Mr Jutte explained ETF's activities: European Training foundation (ETF) country reviews for pre-candidate and candidate countries will act as an input into the IPA HRD programming process. The objective is to produce analytical document underlining the key issues and challenges related to employment and social inclusion, education and training in a lifelong learning perspective. The ETF does not, as part of this cooperation, give advice on projects or does not in any way represent the Commission and/or Commission views. It concerns independent reports.

ETF will be contacting national authorities and stakeholders in order to prepare this detailed analysis. Joint workshops will also be organized to discuss these reports and other relevant documents with our counterparts and stakeholders as part of the partnership process towards the future operational programme. The report will provide a concrete and independent basis for debate, hopefully stimulating discussion and further reflection.

Progress related to the grant schemes within the HRD OP 2007-2009

Ms Ivanković Knežević invited representatives from the Implementing bodies within the Operating structure to give a short overview of the current state of play and progress made related to the grant schemes within the HRD OP 2007-2009.

- Ms Sanja Mesarov, Head of Department for Financing and Contracting of EU projects within the Croatian Employment Service (hereafter, CES) started by giving a short presentation related to the five grant schemes within the responsibility of CES as the Implementing body. It was stated that all five grant schemes have been published and workshops for potential grant beneficiaries are being held since September 2009 and are continuing in the next period, until the calls are open for potential grant beneficiaries. Ms Mesarov gave the overview of the statistical data collected from the evaluation sheets during the workshops.

- Ms Antonija Gladović, Assistant Director for IPA Programme within Agency for vocational education and training (hereafter, AVET) concluded the presentation with the information regarding the three grant schemes that have been published within the responsibility of AVET as the Implementing body. Ms Gladović also presented the general information on the workshops that have been held throughout the Republic of Croatia and the statistical data of the evaluation sheets from participants that has been processed, referring to the degree of satisfaction with the workshop, access to information, comments, suggestions for the future workshops etc.

Furthermore, Ms Tamara Šterk, Advisor in the Government Office for Gender Equality and substitute member of the SMC, raised a question regarding the selection procedure of trainers for the workshops.

Ms Ivanković Knežević thanked for the question and responded that for the selection of trainers on the workshops for potential beneficiaries three offers were collected after which the selection procedure took place taking into account the expert knowledge, background as well as the previous experience of the candidates in these areas.



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Furthermore, Ms Lidija Pavić Rogošić, from the NGO "ODRAZ" (Sustainable Community Development) as the nominated representative of the civil society in the SMC, stated that excellent cooperation of the Operating Structure with the civil society was established in a sense that civil sector participated in the information activities in order to inform as many potential applicant about the scheduled workshops and to pass the message throughout the civil sector.

As to the education of the potential applicants, Mr Jutte emphasised the importance of the active involvement and training of the potential beneficiaries as this is the main reason for the successful implementation process.

Proposed revision of the HRD OP including extension of programming period HRD OP 2010/2011

Furthermore, Ms Ivanković Knežević stated that all the members of the SMC received the proposed draft of the revised HRD OP, according to the Rules of procedures, 15 working days before the Meeting, in order to examine the changes that have been made. The changes are referring to the extension of the OP HRD with the financial allocations for two more years, 2010 and 2011, and in that sense widening the areas of interventions by introducing the new Measure regarding the Development of social services to improve employment opportunities, as well as widening the scope of Measure 3.3. Supporting the quality and effectiveness of institutions responsible for policy design and provision of education and training. Ms Ivanković Knežević opened the discussion and invited all the members to give their comments. Ms Lidija Pavić Rogošić, from the NGO "ODRAZ" (Sustainable Community Development), made the suggestion to include additional strategies in the revision of the OP HRD, that have been recently adopted at the national and European level. In addition, Ms Pavić Rogošić welcomed the proposal of widening the area by including the social community services and pointed out that sustainability should be taken into account. Furthermore, Ms Dubravac Šigir, Head of Department within the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports was involved into the discussion on the issue regarding the informal means of providing education.

In addition, Mr Jutte agreed that the element of sustainability is very important adding that the ESF has a multi-annual programming period in which multi-annual projects can be implemented. As regards to the modification of the HRD OP 2007.-2011., the approach was to have as minor modification as possible in order to ensure smooth implementation process. It was stated that the indicative timeframe for this first revision of the HRD OP related to the finalisation of the adoption process and the Commission decision is planned for the end of March 2010.

Also, Mr Jutte pointed out that in the later second revision of the HRD OP in the year 2011, more substantial changes can be introduced reflecting the experience that will be gained with implementation of the OP by that time, the results of the interim (mid-term) evaluation, that will be preformed by that time, taking into account the social and economic development.

In addition, Ms Ana Miličević Pezelj, representing the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia as the nominated member of the SMC, raised a question regarding the deadline for giving their comments on the proposed draft of the revised OP as well as the scope of the changes that could be introduced at this first revision of the HRD OP 2007.-2011. The question was raised



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regarding the current economic crises, its effects on the current labour market situation in terms of addressing and reflecting this issue in the HRD OP.

At the end of the discussion on this issue, all the members of the SMC agreed that the proposed draft of the revised Operational programme HRD 2007.-2011. is considered to be adopted in principle, with the indication that the members of the Committee could send their comments until 15 December 2009, in order take further steps in the following period regarding the final adoption of the proposed revised OP HRD 2007.-2011. In line with that, Ms Ivanković Knežević pointed out that MELE, as the body responsible for the OP will send the written notice to all the members of the SMC regarding the agreed deadline for the submission of comments on the proposed draft of the OP HRD 2007.-2011.

Presentation of the Public and Regional Partner consultations for the HRD OP held during July, September and October 2009

Ms Gordana Dragičević, Head of Department for European Integration and International Cooperation within MELE, presented all activities that were the subject of the Public and Regional Partner Consultations for the HRD OP which were held in seven cities of the Republic of Croatia (Zagreb, Zadar, Split, Rijeka, Čakovec, Bjelovar i Osijek).

Ms Dragičević explained the need of maintaining of the consultations as a way to present the grant schemes under HRD OP 2007.-2009. and to inform future partners and potential beneficiaries about the scope of the area of interventions for the years 2010.-2011.

Through the consultations the grant schemes within the HRD OP under the IV. Component of IPA were presented, the new areas envisaged within the period 2010.-2011., possibilities within the European Social Fund, once the Republic of Croatia becomes the EU Members State, and the existing opportunities within the Community programme "PROGRESS" (European Unions Employment and Social Solidarity Programme).

In conclusion, it was stated that the consultations were attended by a total of 363 participants from government bodies, social partners, representatives of civil society and local and regional government.

Ms Jelena Jakulj, from Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, raised a question about the way of responding to the questions from participants on partner consultations. Ms Ivanković Knežević informed all the present that the consultations were conceived as a direct communication, so the questions were answered immediately.

Furthermore, Ms Ivanković Knežević gave a short presentation on the brief survey/research that was conducted on the Public and Regional Partner consultations with the assistance of the Phare 2006 consultants regarding the ESF project pipeline and the current abilities of the potential grant beneficiaries to prepare and implement projects.

Ms Lidija Pavić Rogošić, from the NGO "ODRAZ" (Sustainable Community Development), expressed their satisfaction on the good and fruitful cooperation with the Operating structure of the IV. Component of IPA, not only on the SMC meetings, but also through other forms of



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cooperation (for example MELE participated on the Meetings of the Council for Development of Civil Society in order to disseminate information on the grant schemes within the HRD OP). Ms Ivanković Knežević thanked for the encouragement and expressed gratitude for all contributions and support given from all the members of the SMC.

Implementation of the Communication Action Plan

Mr Josip Ljubičić, Expert Adviser in the Department for Preparation and Implementation of EU Programmes and Projects within MELE, presented all activities undertaken in implementing the Communication Action Plan (hereafter, CAP) for the HRD OP 2007.-2009. Mr Josip Ljubičić presented the main objectives of CAP in the light of raising the awareness of EU interventions. For the end of presentation, Mr Ljubičić gave an overview of the publicity activities conducted so far and those which are planned for the forthcoming period.

Ms Ana Miličević Pezelj, representing the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia, raised a question regarding the organisation of the informative workshops for press and the address book of journalists.

Ms Lidija Pavić Rogošić, from the NGO "ODRAZ" (Sustainable Community Development) as the nominated representative of the civil society in the SMC, suggested that the "mailing list of notification" should include also members of NGO Network Associations.

These questions were addressed and it was stated that the issue referring to the organisation of the informative workshop for press have been considered and are planned to be organised in the forthcoming period. As regards to the mailing lists, it was stated that Public Relations Department within MELE has the general list of media, but in order to have the more relevant and precise list, Publicity Officers within the Operating Structure will draw the improved list of media for the purposes of the IV. Component of IPA.

Furthermore, Mr Jean-Marie Moreau, Head of Operations Section 1- Social Cohesion, Regional development and Infrastructure, proposed the meeting with the Operating Structure of the HRD OP, in order to coordinate all the publicity activities and to have the consistent approach among all the involved parties in the implementation process of the HRD OP in the forthcoming period. Ms Ivanković Knežević welcomed the proposal and suggested that the meeting is organised in the end of 2009 or beginning of the 2010.

Progress made within the PHARE 2006 projects regarding preparation of future operations for ESF

Ms Katarina Ivanković Knežević presented the progress made within Human Resources Development Project Pipeline to all the members of the SMC, in particular referring to the view of activities that are now in progress, and those that are related to the implementation of the HRD OP for ESF. Ms Katarina Ivanković Knežević also presented steps are planned in the forthcoming period.

It was stated that Project Pipeline contains project proposals envisaged for the IPA 2010.-2011. period as well as for the ESF. Ms Ivanković Knežević gave a short overview of all types of



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projects that have been envisaged, such as grant schemes, service contracts, direct awards, national projects, scholarship schemes, subsidy schemes and microcredit schemes.

At the end of the presentation, Mr Nils Saaks, consultant on Phare 2006 project “EU Structural Funds Post-Accession - Project pipeline for IPA/Structural Funds” gave a short explanation of the issue raised by Mr Jutte regarding the maturity index of the projects elaborated in the previous presentation.

Ms Iva Frkić, as a representative of CODEF informed the members about current state of affairs and recent developments within the two Phare 2006 projects „*Development of Institutional Capacity for the Management of EU Structural Funds Post-Accession - Institution Building Component*” and “*Development of Institutional Capacity for the Management of EU Structural Funds Post-Accession - Project pipeline for IPA/Structural Funds*”, as a very important issue especially in terms of the delivery of Chapter 22 of Negotiations process.

Ms Frkić stated that they are satisfied with the developments, especially because of the fact that Operating Structure has a concrete and clear picture about what are the main priorities in terms of the ESF.

As to the progress made regarding the NSRF, Ms Frkić informed the members of the SMC that further improvements are now in the way, following which the partner consultations with the broader public will be held, taking also into consideration the close link with the preparation of the OP for the ESF. Furthermore, Ms Frkić commended the Operating Structure for the high level of responsibility that they have shown regarding this issue.

Additionally, Mr Jutte raised a question regarding the envisaged timetable of the partners’ consultations. Referring to the stated question, Ms Frkić informed the members that considering that further consultations with Directorate General for Regional Policy of the European Commission are currently taking place, the public consultations are envisaged for March 2010. with the emphasise that few rounds of the consultations are planned.

Furthermore to this discussion, Ms Ana Miličević Pezelj, from the Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia, raised a question regarding the involvement of the social partners into the consultation process. Ms Frkić stated that in the consultation process all the relevant stakeholders will be involved and consulted, including the social partners.

AOB

Ms Lidija Pavić Rogošić pointed out that some of the IPA SMC meetings are organized on the same day and asked that this issue is taken into account in the future. Ms Ivanković Knežević stated that the SMC meetings will be coordinated in the future.

Ms Knežević Ivanković proposed that the next meeting of the SMC is organised in another town of Republic of Croatia in order to stress out the importance of regional level stakeholders and to deepen the cooperation in that sense.



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It is agreed among all the members that the next meeting of the SMC is held within the 6 months, at the end of May or at the beginning of the June 2010 outside of Zagreb.