



Republic of Serbia  
Ministry of Economy and Regional  
Development



International  
Labour  
Office

## PRESS RELEASE

### **18 percent of the Serbian youth population will benefit from the Youth Employment Policy and Action Plan of Serbia for 2009-2011**

BELGRADE, 30th October 2009 (ILO News) – 18 percent of the Serbian youth population aged 15 to 30 will benefit from the Youth Employment Policy and Action Plan of Serbia for 2009-2011 adopted by the Government of Serbia in September 2009 and presented today at the national conference entitled „Youth Employment in Serbia: A national challenge“ in Belgrade.

The development of the Action Plan was coordinated by the Employment Department of the Ministry of the Economy and Regional Development with the technical assistance of the International Labour Office (ILO) project on *Youth Employment Partnership in Serbia*, financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with US\$ 1.2 million.

"What emerges clearly from the work of this conference is the pressing need to put employment and youth employment at the centre of economic and social policies" said Ms Ljiljana Džuver, Assistant Minister for Employment.



"Young people need to be supported in realizing their full potential as workers, consumers and active members of society. Young people are a "treasure" that no country can afford to waste" – added Ms Snežana Samardžić Marković, Minister for Youth and Sport.

„The Government of Serbia recognizes that addressing the youth employment challenge requires coordinated and concerted action over a number of policy areas – such as economic and fiscal policy, enterprise development, education and labour market policy – and calls for preventive and curative approaches that address at the same time labour supply and demand“ added Mr. Ilić, General Director of the National Employment Services of Serbia.

To this end, the *Action Plan on Youth Employment* outlines five strategic objectives and a number of key outcomes to be pursued for the promotion of full, productive and freely chosen employment for young people:

- 1) Strengthening the (youth) labour market governance system;
- 2) Improving the employability of young people;
- 3) Fostering youth employment through private sector development
- 4) Improving decent work prospects for youth;
- 5) Promoting labour market inclusion through targeted measures.

The time frame of the *Action Plan on Youth Employment* is three years (2009-2011), to allow its alignment to the mid-term budgetary planning framework as well as to the objectives of the *Employment Strategy* of Serbia. The total cost to implement the Action Plan is estimated at approximately €27.8 million. More than €17 million (e.g. 60% of the total cost) is already available and budgeted either through the policy measures envisaged by the Government of Serbia or through donor-funded technical cooperation programmes, while the remaining €11 million – required to achieve all the targets set – will be raised through technical cooperation projects.

"The current job crisis is hitting young people much harder than other groups. Lessons from prior, similar crises showed that labour demand for youth contracts much faster, and recover much slower, than for adults. Against this backdrop, therefore, it is necessary to pool resources to increase the range and scope of interventions targeting young people" – said H.E. Ms Armando Varricchio, Ambassador of Italy in Serbia on behalf of the Italian government, donor of the ILO project.

### **Italy is the third main international donor to Serbia**

Ambassador Armando Varricchio also presented the Italian Development Cooperation – a crucial instrument for Italian foreign policy – which has been operating for decades in different parts of the world fighting poverty and inequality through financial and technical assistance, supporting emerging countries to strengthen their democratic institutions and promote human rights, the rule of law and the principles of good governance.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, *Cooperazione Italiana allo Sviluppo* has become one of the main actors in the field of humanitarian assistance and it is among the most active organizations in promoting political stability and socio-economic development in the Western Balkans. This is clearly reflected in the role of Italy as the third largest international donor to the Republic of Serbia, with over €200 million invested in aid and assistance programmes.

The Local Technical Unit of the Italian Cooperation in Belgrade – established in 1995 and directed by Ms Anna Zambrano – implements several projects in the field of local development, social welfare and health care, education, public administration, protection of cultural heritage, support to private sector development and investments, with particular emphasis on small and medium-size enterprise development as an engine of growth.

“*Cooperazione Italiana* fully acknowledges the importance of supporting the exercise of young people’s rights, especially the right to decent work. The Youth Employment Policy and Action Plan (2009-2011) is, in this sense, a key step in the achievement of the goal of an inclusive, democratic and equal society” – concluded Mr Armando Varricchio.

### **The ILO promotes youth employment**

In June 2005, government, employers’ and workers’ representatives from 178 countries agreed, at the yearly International Labour Conference of the ILO, that the best strategy for tackling youth employment requires an integrated approach. The approach should combine supportive macro-economic policies, targeted measures, address labour demand and supply as well as the quantity and quality of employment through multi-stakeholder action.

The ILO’s Youth Employment Programme (YEP) operates through a global network of technical specialists at its Headquarters in Geneva and in more than 60 offices around the world. It provides assistance to countries in developing coherent and coordinated interventions on youth employment ([http://www.ilo.org/global/About\\_the\\_ILO/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/lang--en/index.htm)).

In Serbia the ILO project on *Youth Employment Partnership in Serbia* started to operate at the end of 2007. It has two main components. The first component relates to technical assistance to the development of a youth employment policy and action plan. Such work led to the adoption by the Government of Serbia of the Youth Employment Action Plan (2009-2011). The second component aims at assisting the National Employment Service to implement, monitor and evaluate active labour market programmes targeting disadvantaged youth. These programmes target young unemployed registered with the employment offices of

Subotica, Bor, Kraljevo, Novi Pazar and Pozarevac. The programmes are co-financed by the ILO Project and the Government of Serbia.

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For further information about the activities of the Local Technical Unit of the Italian Cooperation in Belgrade, you are welcome to contact its Press Office (Tel. +381 011 3629349; e-mail: [pressutl.belgrado@esteri.it](mailto:pressutl.belgrado@esteri.it)).

For further information about the ILO project on *Youth Employment Partnership in Serbia*, please feel free to contact Ms Valli Corbanese, Project Coordinator (Tel: +381 11 3242-667; email: [empbalkans@ilo.org](mailto:empbalkans@ilo.org))