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**REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
GOVERNMENT
Ministry of Public Administration
and Local Self-Government
July 11th, 2018
6 Birćaninova St, Belgrade**

DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

- Ambassador and Head, Mr Sem Fabrizi -

Your Excellency,

As you are already aware of, National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Law on Amendments to the Law on Local Self-Government on June 20th, 2018. One of the principal tendencies and the main goal of this Law is improvement of cooperation among the units of local self-governments. The Amendments included provisions which enable and facilitate the process of programmatic and financial networking of municipalities on many issues pertinent to their development, including reducing risks from natural disasters, particularly floods. The Amendments are the result of the process which has been initiated some time ago, in the form of a pilot initiative, launched by the Public Investment Management Office (PIMO), along with the City of Kraljevo, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, which enjoyed full support of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, as well as UNDP, through the Project: "Southeast Europe Urban Resilience Building Action Network (SEE URBAN)".

SEE URBAN, the regional DG ECHO financed Project implemented by UNDP has supported these unique, grass-root efforts by the cities and towns in Serbia. This Project also served as a tool to inspire proposed Amendments, but also to support inter-municipal cooperation which was initiated. Therefore, I would like to use this opportunity to thank you, on behalf of my Ministry and the local self-governments in Serbia for the support which SEE URBAN has provided in finding ways for efficient cooperation modalities for local self-governments, for the purpose of strengthening their resilience to natural disasters.

The Amendments to the Law came as a result of the work of local self-governments-cities and towns in the Republic of Serbia, which, for over two years, are finding ways for efficient cooperation, to face natural disasters jointly. The Amendments to the new Law on Local Self-Governments enabled proper and transparent way for local self-governments to cooperate, in line with the examples of good practices and highest EU standards.

At the moment, the local self-governments in four river basins (West Morava, Kolubara, Upper Danube and Large Morava) have signed Protocols on Cooperation and are formulating joint programs with action plans for facing natural disasters. SEE URBAN project has, through open discussions, cooperation and good practice examples from EU and other countries in the region facilitated the definition of good and sustainable models of cooperation of cities and towns in the basins, which are now, after the legislative changes, possible.

I am deeply convinced that networking of local self-government units that are affected or susceptible to natural disasters needs to be continued through joint projects that we will be able to realize with your assistance. Therefore, I wish to express our genuine interest in this direction. On the basis of legislative changes, which contributed to the success of networking process among towns and municipalities, platform for support to further measures and activities of local self-government units aiming to reduce risk from natural disasters has been created. Currently, it is much more feasible since the EU is already supporting the cooperation among local self-governments. The continuation of this support shall be beneficial both, for strengthening local resilience to natural disasters, but also in a wider context of contributing to Serbian path towards a full EU membership.

Please accept the assurances of our highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

MINISTER


Branko Ružić

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