

## **Minić: We will be working on improving the investment climate in the region**

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Over the last two months of 2011 alone, Regional Cooperation Council organised 57 regional conferences addressing various topics from justice, IPA funds and education to media cooperation. The RCC is pleased with the achieved and assesses regional cooperation in 2011 as very successful and much better than in previous years.

One of this year's priorities is improvement of investment climate, said **Jelica Minić**, Deputy Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council.

**RFE: Over the last year, Regional Cooperation Council organised number of regional conferences addressing various topics from improvement of the work of justice and alignment of education sector with the labour market to the role and function of public service media in the countries of the region in line with the EU standards. Concrete actions were agreed at these conferences. Could you list just a few?**

**Minić:** When it comes to justice, a monitoring mechanism has been established – a system of indicators and measuring the success – which the administrations, i.e. ministries of justice and home affairs, accepted. The use of the mechanism is to start this year and it is a big step forward in this area which is also explicitly mentioned in the EC Report on the progress of regional cooperation.

Regional Cooperation Council has initiated numerous topics within the Social Agenda for Western Balkans, one of which is alignment of the education system with the labour market needs – and this is a substantive intervention. We have just initiated this debate and intend to continue it but also to initiate the issues of the reform of pension and health systems, as well as development of social entrepreneurship which has a substantive role in tackling social issues, and is also an important mechanism of self-employment; we also intend to continue with the launched cooperation of media at the regional level. This relates to electronic media, public service media. The European Commission announced that it would support sustainable development of public service media in the region with around one million EUR. There is also a documentary programme which should help to better know one's neighbours, open dialogue, improve tolerance – and so there are many initiatives related to media cooperation.

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**RFE: What are your plans for 2012, which topics will be the priority?**

**Minić:** A very important event for the Regional Cooperation Council was the transfer of the South East Europe Investment Committee from the OECD to the RCC in November 2011. This is one of the areas where we will have to invest extensive efforts to truly assist closer cooperation among the countries of the region in improving investment climate. Furthermore, we will continue working on the Social Agenda and there are already some initiatives regarding improvement of air and rail transport infrastructure and those regarding environment infrastructure. As regards security cooperation, we also have the initiatives which are significantly improving the trust among the countries at multilateral level; and we have launched some large-scale projects in the area of building human capital such as the Joint Strategy for Research and Development for Innovation on Western Balkans; and there is of course the parliamentary cooperation – these will be some of the focuses of our work.

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**RFE: How would you assess the present level of cooperation of the countries from the region as compared to the period when the RCC was established?**

**Minić:** I believe the difference is substantial. Despite numerous still outstanding bilateral issues, multilateral cooperation in the region had truly good development trend and I believe that the RCC played a very important role in this. New interest structures are being created in the area of economy, culture, science, education and even in administrative cooperation, cooperation among civil society organisations... It is a very vibrant regional scene and RCC will intensify its engagement here as regards local communities, civil society, and especially regional initiatives already active in our region – these are numerous, around fifty. I would perhaps especially highlight the fact that we noted that more than 57 regional events in or related to South East Europe were organised over the course of two months. Out of these 57 events 16 were organised in Bosnia and Herzegovina, out of which 15 in Sarajevo. Sarajevo is thus already being profiled as a centre of regional cooperation and I believe that the RCC has played an important role in this.

[http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/minic\\_radicemo\\_na\\_unapredjenju\\_investicione\\_klime/24440233.html](http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/minic_radicemo_na_unapredjenju_investicione_klime/24440233.html)

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