

ACTIVITY FACT SHEET

Mission for Serbia & Montenegro 2004

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE OFFICE: SERBIA

What is USAID doing to promote civil society and the rule of law in Serbia?

The landmark 2000 elections that brought a democratically-oriented coalition government to power marked the beginning of a new political era in Serbia. Civil society, independent media and independent trade unions led a popular movement for change that resulted in this remarkable transition. Today, these voices for reform, now both within and outside government, face the challenge of completing and consolidating the transition to democracy.

USAID seeks to increase the prospects for responsive governance to take root by focusing attention on the institutions most critical as advocates for reform, movers of public opinion, channels for peaceful political competition and centers of conflict resolution. Key institutions include civil society organizations that represent citizens' interests in the reform process and reduce the barriers that divide Serbian society; a vibrant independent press that provides citizens with objective perspectives on key societal issues and competes favorably in an increasingly open media market; a legal system capable of delivering impartial justice; and a political system that centers on parties that are responsive to citizens and compete for their votes via elections that are free and fair.

Key elements of the program:

Civil Society

- Strengthening civil society organizations and the civil society sector at large to advocate for citizens' interests and to advance dialogue on key issues, such as truth and reconciliation, conflict resolution and human rights
- Promoting development of an engaged, advocacy-oriented, citizen-focused and increasingly sustainable civil society sector in Serbia through grants, regional and U.S.-based exchanges and a volunteer mentor program
- Providing targeted grants to help organizations address a host of civil society issues
- Working in partnership with local NGOs to support creation of a legal and fiscal NGO framework and increase sustainability of the sector

Democratic and Independent Trade Unions

- Broadening public engagement in the reform process by promoting a critically-needed social dialogue between organized labor, company management and government
- Helping women and youth assume leadership roles
- Providing technical assistance to democratic and independent local trade unions with Nezavisnost as the project's main partner

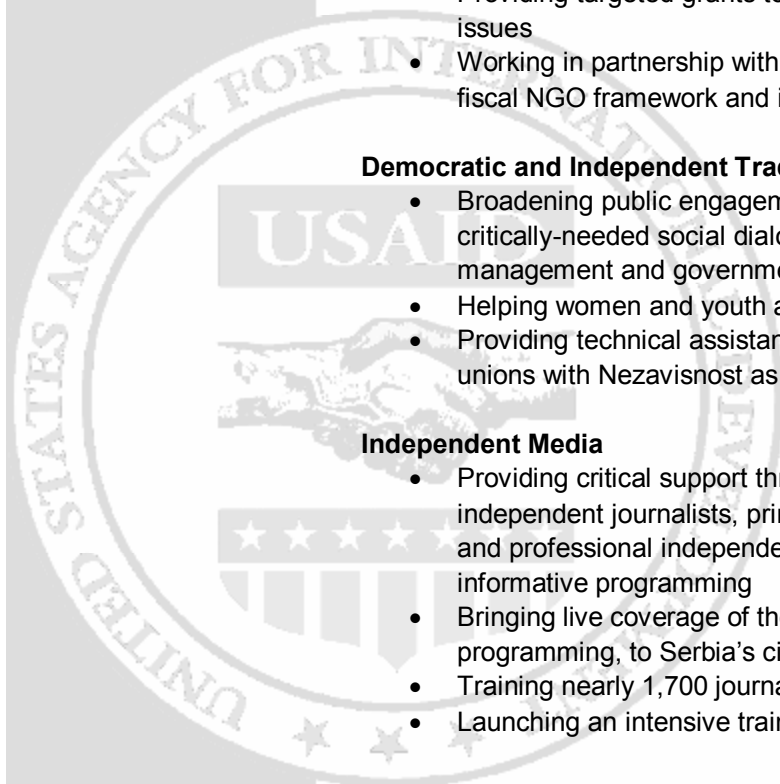
Independent Media

- Providing critical support through technical assistance, training and grants to independent journalists, print and electronic media to ensure that a vibrant and professional independent media are equipped to deliver objective and informative programming
- Bringing live coverage of the Milošević trial, including hard-hitting editorial programming, to Serbia's citizens
- Training nearly 1,700 journalists and media professionals
- Launching an intensive training school that trains eight journalists per month

United States Agency for
International Development
U.S. Embassy
Kneza Miloša 50
11 000 Belgrade
Serbia & Montenegro

For additional information
on USAID activities, please
contact:

Cara Stern
Senior Program Information
Specialist
(381-11) 306-4709
csstern@usaid.gov
Or visit: www.usaid.org.yu



Political Process and Election Support

- Bolstering reform-minded political parties and civil society organizations engaged in improving the electoral process and strengthening democracy
- Working with democratically-oriented political parties to connect more effectively with voters in between elections and thereby deepen citizen engagement in the reform process
- Providing training for political party youth and development assistance for politically active NGOs
- Assisting parties in the Republic-level Parliament in improving its capacity to serve as a viable branch of government

Rule of Law

- Advancing the process of legal reform in Serbia by supporting the development of the Judges' Association and other key institutions (including associations of magistrates, prosecutors and young legal professionals) actively pushing for change in this challenging area
- Supporting legal aid efforts in Serbia's ethnically-divided and conflict-prone South
- Providing assistance to the Ministry of Justice in establishing the Special Court for Organized Crime and War Crimes, created after the Đinđić assassination as the venue for upcoming high-profile trials. Special court judges, prosecutors and staff have received equipment and software, as well as training in all aspects of managing complex trial proceedings likely to be the most visible and difficult cases ever tried in Serbian courts

Anti-Trafficking

- Supporting return and reintegration services through Serbia's shelter for trafficking victims
- Conducting public awareness campaigns
- Assisting in collecting data and disseminating lessons learned

