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ASB FINALISES PROJECT TO DEVELOP RURAL TOURISM IN THE BORDER AREA OF KNIN AND BOSANSKO GRAHOVO WITH FUNDS FROM THE EC

Under the CARDS 2004 programme, the Office of the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB) in the Republic of Croatia has recently implemented a project to develop rural tourism in the border area of the town of Knin in Šibenik-Knin County, Croatia and the town of Bosansko Grahovo in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) with funds from the European Commission (EC). This project was implemented in co-operation with the civil society organisation (CSO) "Hoću kući" Knin and the municipality of Bosansko Grahovo. The value of this project was € 159,000 of which € 142,000 was provided by the EC and € 17,000 by ASB.

The aim of this project was to develop rural tourism for the economic and social revitalisation of rural areas of the municipalities of Knin and Bosansko Grahovo, to improve the quality of life as well as to decrease the demographic challenges in these rural areas because the economic situation in these municipalities has been difficult since the war, burdened with high unemployment, a lack of industrial development and communal infrastructure and constant migration to larger towns. In addition, this project promoted economic and social development in the wider area of Knin and Bosansko Grahovo, fostered greater cross-border co-operation between regions in BiH as well as enhanced capacities of local stakeholders to manage regional border development in co-operation with partners across the border.

At least 24 rural households from the Knin region and Bosansko Grahovo, 10 unemployed youth and women over 40, local associations and institutions in Bosansko Grahovo (hunting, fishing, mountaineering associations, tourist associations) as well as local authorities from these areas received education, training and technical assistance (preparation of business plans, assistance in business registration, support in business set-up, loans and grants applications) for the development of rural tourism to help them use their natural resources and cultural historical monuments for economic purposes. Within this project, ASB also assisted its project partners and local stakeholders in preparing promotional materials such as bilingual catalogues for rural tourism (5,000 copies), tourist maps of the Knin and Bosansko Grahovo area (5,000 copies) and web sites promoting rural households and traditional handicrafts.

During the implementation of this project, project partners and project beneficiaries from both municipalities participated in six tourism fairs in Croatia and BiH where they presented tourist offers of the Knin and Bosansko Grahovo areas highlighting traditional handicrafts, souvenirs, and local cuisine at their stands to attract tourists to their areas and improve economic prospects.

ASB also organised two study visits for the rural households involved in this project which proved to be very successful. The first one was a four-day study visit to Istria in June 2008. During this visit, the participants visited 14 rural households and private entrepreneurs in inland Istria involved in rural tourism (wine production, accommodation in old rural houses, biking, hiking, horseback riding, herb collection, canoeing, rural hotels, cheese production,



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The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders. The European Commission is the EU's executive body.

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traditional food, sports camps, ethno-museums, and the like) where they received information, positive and negative experience – lessons learned, and became aware as to how this model could be applied in the Knin and Bosansko Grahovo areas. The second one was a study visit to Varaždin organised for unemployed youth and women over 40 from Knin and Bosansko Grahovo in June 2008. They visited three handicrafts fairs in Varaždin where they also had their own stands displaying traditional handicrafts promoting traditional values and marketing opportunities. They learned how to start projects, how to obtain subsidies and grants from the state and local government and how to market their products and services.

This project provided the opportunity for ASB to implement development projects in Croatia building on its previously implemented development and social infrastructure projects under the formerly EU-funded projects such as the Tourism Development Project in the municipality of Petrinja which was implemented in partnership with the Tourist Association of Petrinja and the Town of Petrinja in 2008.

Since 1996, ASB has implemented projects valued at € 83 million in Croatia with funding from the European Union and individual member states. ASB rebuilt more than 4,235 housing units for DPs and refugees and carried out numerous projects in the fields of mine-clearance, technical, social and economic infrastructure, sustainability measures and capacity building.

For further information please contact:



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