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PART I

SPEECHES & REMARKS

VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

● Founding members

Board of Vienna Economic Forum

| | |
|---|--|
| Dr. Josef Taus, <i>Management Trust Holding AG</i> | President of Vienna Economic Forum |
| Vizekanzler a.D. Dr. Erhard Busek, <i>Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for S.E. Europe</i> | Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum |
| Botschafterin a.D. Dr. Elena Kirtcheva | Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum |
| Dkfm. Karl Fink, <i>Dep. Director General Wiener Städtische Allgemeine Versicherung AG</i> | Member of the Board |
| Heinz Sundt, <i>Director General Telekom Austria AG</i> | Member of the Board |
| Dr. Andreas Calice | Member of the Board |
| Mag. Katja Georgieva | Member of the Board |
| Dr. Andreas Brandstetter, <i>Member of the Board UNIQA Insurance Holding</i> | Member of the Board |

Members

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Alfons Graf Mensdorff-Pouilly | M.P.A. Handelsges.m.b.H. |
| Mag. Andreas Treichl | CEO, ERSTE Bank der Österreichischen Sparkassen AG |
| Dr. Boris Nemsic | CEO, mobilkom Austria AG |
| Dr. Wolfgang J. Ruttenstorfer | CEO, OMV Aktiengesellschaft |
| Veit Schalle | Fully authorised representative, REWE Austria AG |
| Vagn Sörensen | President, Austrian Airlines |
| Hanno Soravia | Soravia Group |
| Dr. Veit Sorger | President, Federation of Austrian Industry |
| Dkfm. Dr. Herbert Stepic | Vice-President of Raiffeisen Zentralbank Austria AG , Chairman of Raiffeisen International Bank Holding AG |
| Dkfm. Johann Zwettler | CEO, BAWAG AG |

● Honorary members

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| H.E. Dr. Martin Bartenstein | Federal Minister of Economics and Labour of Austria |
| Dr. Klaus Liebscher | Governor of the Austrian National Bank |
| Dr. Christoph Leitl | President, Wirtschaftskammer Österreich |
| Dr. Helmut Zilk | Bürgermeister a.D., Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Wiener Städtische Wechselseitige Versicherungs-AG |
| Dr. Karl Blecha | Bundesminister a.D. |

Ambassadors of the Countries from the Adriatic to the Black Sea

| | |
|--|---|
| H.E. Dr. Shpresa Kureta | Ambassador of the Republic of Albania |
| H.E. Mag. Daria Krsticevic | Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| H.E. Mag. Radi Naidenov | Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria |
| H.E. Prof. Dr. Zoran Jasic | Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia |
| H.E. Aleksandar Tavciovski | Ambassador of the Republic of Macedonia |
| H.E. Univ. Prof. Dr. Andrei Corbea-Housie | Ambassador of Romania |
| H.E. Dragan Velikic | Ambassador of Serbia and Montenegro |
| H.E. Ernest Petric | Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia |
| H.E. Mithat Balkan | Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey |
| Mrs. Vukica Krtolica-Popovska | Minister Conssellor, Embassy of the Republic of Macedonia to Austria |

Patrons Committee

H.E. Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel

H.E. Dr. Sali Berisha

H.E. Adnan Terzic

H.E. Sergey Stanishev

H.E. Dr. Ivo Sanader

H.E. Dr. Vlado Buckovski

H.E. Milo Djukanovic

H.E. Calin Popescu-Tariceanu

H.E. Dr. Vojislav Kostunica

H.E. Janez Jansa

Federal Chancellor of the Republic of Austria,
Chairman of the Patrons Committee

Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania

Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria

Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia

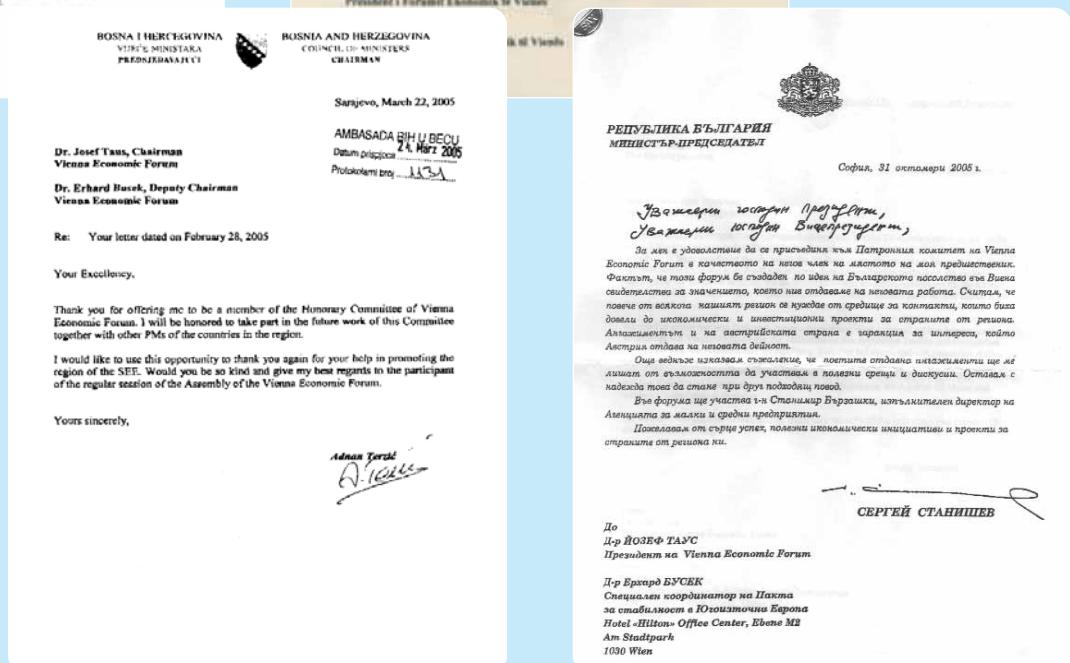
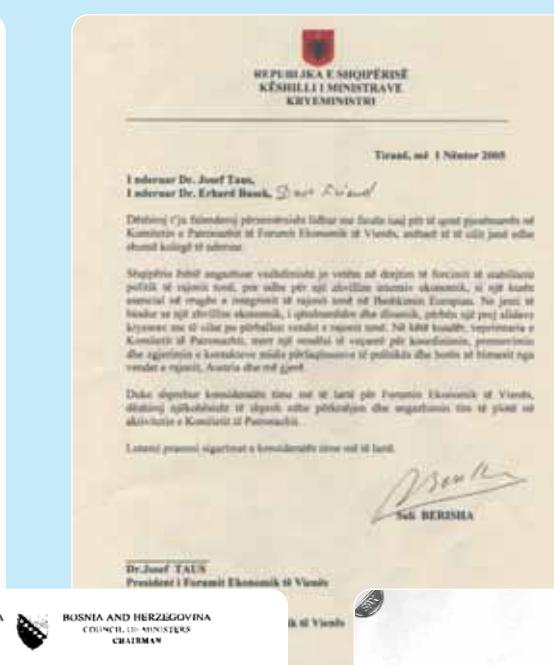
Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia

Prime Minister of Montenegro

Prime Minister of Romania

Prime Minister of Serbia

Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia





Go South East



REPUBLIKA HRVATSKE
ДРЖАВА ХВАСТКИ

Vienna Economic Forum
Präsident Dr. Josef Taus
Vize-Präsident Dr. Erhard Busch
Hotel „Austria“
Office Center Vienna M2
Am Stadtpark
1030 Wien
Österreich

Zagreb, den 25. September 2005

Sehr geehrter Herr Präsident:
Sehr geehrte Herr Vizepräsident:

Ich bedanke mich herzlich für die Einladung M. Taus des Vienna Economic Forum zu werten.

Die politische und wirtschaftliche Bedeutung ganz Südkompass als wichtigster Teil der österreichischen Außen- und Wirtschaftspolitik und auch mein persönliches Anliegen. In diesem Sinne rufe ich zur Würdigung der Potenzialität des Vienna Economic Forum beizutreten gern an.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen



Dr. Ivo Banekar

АДА НА
А МАКЕДОНИЈА
ПРАВИЛНИК

Sкопје, 21 август 2005

ијаку д-р Тавс.
ијаку д-р Бусч.

Доволниште ми изјавите да је заинтересован за уснователните поимења да стапи као покровитељ Комунист на Vienna Economic Forum тајко што се може да имаје као член на извршите на Јадранскот и Црното Море и може да биде член као за посебен интерес и промоција за Република Македонија и во предложените поимења да имаје редукција на контингент.

Република Македонија со овакви нови изјавите да поддржи приступ к членувањето подобро билој класи од востановите и поддржава политичкото корпоративно да земаат на разглед. Но такаака, поддржије да ако Vienna Economic Forum е поставено изјавите кои дојдат некоја корист за Република Македонија и во предложените поимења редукција на контингент.

Самоизјава д-р Тавс,
Самоизјава д-р Бусч, примијте моја изјава во много ладната изјавите и
много волја.

Благодарен Ви.
д-р Ѓорѓи Бусч
Председател на Владата
на Република Македонија

д-р Јозеф Тавс
Председател на
Vienna Economic Forum

д-р Ѓорѓи Бусч
Председател на
Vienna Economic Forum



THE GOVERNMENT OF MONTENEGRO
PRIME MINISTER

Podgorica, March 16, 2005

ME. Dr Josef Taus
President
ME. Dr Erhard Busch
Vice President
Vienna Economic Forum

Excellencies,
Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your letter related to further activities of the Vienna Economic Forum. I share your assessment about the Forum's role in promotion of the business and investment capabilities of the ten countries located between the Adriatic and the Black Sea, which should accelerate their economic development and give a hand to the process of their emerging into the economic mainstream of Wider Europe.

Anticipating Montenegro's possibility to make its own contribution, I am ready accepting your proposal to join the Committee of Patrons of the Vienna Economic Forum.

Being convinced in the full affirmation of the already recognizable Forum's mission, which is additionally reinforced by Austria's growing role as a monitor of the pro-active policy of the EU towards the region, I am looking forward to our future cooperation.

Sincerely Yours,

Milo Djukanovic

GUVERNUL ROMÂNIEI



PRIM-MINISTRU

Bucureşti, 1 octombrie 2005

Stimă domnule Președinte,

Vă mulțumesc pentru întâlnirea și buna urmă pe care mi le adreseați la București mandatul meu de Gel al Guvernului României și, în egală măsură, pentru interesa dumneavosă de a organiza în cursul acestui an, în România, prima cunoaștere în cadrul Vienna Economic Forum (VEF), cu tema „A Invest in Romania”.

România este nevoie de proiecte de și găzdui un eveniment de o asemenea amplitudine, care să atragă investitorii internaționali și să le ofere, nu numai pe plan regional, său și european, pentru susținere unii criterii investitoriale propice dezvoltării durabile.

Multe domenii investiției în lume economică ne impărtășim și încurajăm dezvoltarea ale organizației conduse de dumneavosă, precum cele privind prezentarea oportunităților de afaceri și investiții în Europa de Sud-Est, stimularea relațiilor de cooperare economică și culturală între România și Europa și integrarea proceselor de extindere regională în principalele direcții de dezvoltare.

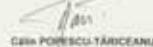
Guvernul României și bugetul nu a dată importanță cea mai mare atenție investitorilor străini și cooperării economice între țările statele trăiește Marea Adâncă și Marea Neagră.

Ce amintesc, suplimentă dumneavosă că această rezoluție să se desfășoare sub acoperirea Guvernului României și sub patronajul Prim-Ministrului României este o inițiativă care să poată fi realizată și prin persoanele de stat.

Am convingerile că un eveniment de o asemenea amplitudine necesită coordonarea autorităților inter-instituționale și implicarea de o manieră structurată a tuturor actelor relevante.

Ce amintesc, pentru susținere succesorul primei Conferențe în cadrul căreia a Vienna Economic Forum, care să se întrădureze în lumea dăta posibilitățile de organizare și care să negocieze un model pentru viitoarele Conferențe, și împreună proponem organizarea acestui important eveniment în a doua decădă a lunii iunie 2005.

Vă adreso și cu anumite cunoștințe, stimă domnule Președinte, expresă considerările mele.



Dominicul Dr. Josef Taus
Președinte
VIENNA ECONOMIC FORUM

Приложена посвідка,

Доволниште ми да Вам се описи путем записки на ръчку за приетите Комунист на Vienna Economic Forum. Всички поименни формулки и да подкрепите споменети за участък в поговорка.

Уверен съм да е склонен отблизо и внимателно разглежда за същността и то е реално Комунист на извршеният вишка за ясно и ясно изразените представи и поговорка.

Видяхе съм какви бъдещи задачи имат да упражняват на ръчку за Виенски реалистични формулки, като тие възникват генетически наследствените качества в растението и развой

известни и известни наследствености, като и да се Република Сърбия, у нас съществува традиционна форма на упражняване на поговорка.

Dr. Taus
Chairman of the
Vienna Economic Forum

Bucureşti, 1 Martie 2005

de Taus.

I am very pleased to receive your letter of invitation to the Bucharest meeting of your Vienna Economic Forum. I attach great importance to the economic development of the Western Balkans, which I hold crucial for fulfilling the European perspective of the countries in the region. I have already acknowledged the role of the Vienna Economic Forum in facilitating progress and I will continue to support its efforts for promoting investment options in the Balkans from the Adriatic to the Black Sea.

Given my schedule does not afford me the time to attend the Bucharest meeting, I wish all success in making that event as opportunity for further advancing the agenda of the Vienna Economic Forum, which is of our common interest.

With sincere regards,

PROGRAM

November 7th, 2005

7:30 am **REGISTRATION** (until 9:00 am) Raiffeisen Hall

9:00 am Moderation **Dr. Erhard Busek**, *Founding member and Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum*

WELCOME SPEECHES

Dr. Herbert Stepic, *Chairman of Raiffeisen International Bank-Holding AG, Vice President of RZB AG, Founding member of Vienna Economic Forum*

Dr. Josef Taus, *Founding member and President of Vienna Economic Forum*

Dr. Elena Kirtcheva, *Founding member and Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum*

9:15 am **OPENING REMARKS**

Dr. Martin Bartenstein, *Federal Minister of Economics and Labour of Austria, Honorary member of Vienna Economic Forum: Austria and the growing importance of South East Europe*

STATEMENTS

- **Dr. Vlado Buckovski**, *Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia, Member of the Patrons Committee of Vienna Economic Forum*
- **Milo Djukanovic**, *Prime Minister of Montenegro, Member of the Patrons Committee of Vienna Economic Forum*
- **Dr. Othmar Karas**, *Member of the European Parliament, Vice President of the EPP/ED-Group*
- **Dr. Veit Sorger**, *President of the Federation of Austrian Industry and Founding member of Vienna Economic Forum*
- **Dr. Erhard Busek**, *Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South East Europe, Founding member and Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum*

KEYNOTE SPEECHES – INVESTORS REPRESENTATIVES

- The role of small and medium-sized enterprises for the economic development and integration

Dr. Christoph Leitl, *President of Eurochambers and President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, Honorary member of Vienna Economic Forum* **Discussions, 11:30 am, at ROUND TABLE 1**

- Insurance business in the growth market CEE

Dkfm Karl Fink, *Dep. Director General –Wiener Städtische Allgemeine Versicherung AG, Founding member, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum* **Discussions, 11:30 am, at ROUND TABLE 2**

- The importance of telecommunications for the countries in the region

Heinz Sundt, *Director General Telekom Austria AG, Founding member, Member of the Board of Vienna Economic Forum* **Discussions, 11:30 am, at ROUND TABLE 3**

- The real estate development and the investment strategy of international funds

Hanno Soravia, *Soravia Group, Founding member of Vienna Economic Forum* **Discussions, 11:30 am, at ROUND TABLE 4**

- Challenge of banking sector in South East Europe

DDr. Regina Prehofer, *Member of the Board BA-CA, Member of Vienna Economic Forum* **Discussions, 11:30 am, at ROUND TABLE 2**

11:10 am **COFFEE BREAK**

11:30 am **ROUND TABLES**

1st Keynote Speech: Small and medium-sized enterprises

Room 1

Panel chaired by **Dr. Rudolf Gruber**, *President of the Supervisory Board EVN AG, Member of Vienna Economic Forum*

General Statement: **Iuliu Winkler**, *Minister of Economy, Romania*

Bojan Dimitrjevic, *Minister of Commerce and Tourism, Serbia*



Representatives of Austria, Romania, Albania, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Lithuania, Cyprus

2nd Keynote Speech: Cross-border financing arrangements and investment climate

Raiffeisen Hall

Panel chaired by **Mag. Peter Lennkh**, *Member of the Managing Board Raiffeisen International Bank-Holding AG, Member of Vienna Economic Forum*

General Statements: **H.E. Fatmir Besimi**, *Minister of Economy, Macedonia*

H.E. David Sopota, *assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia*

Representatives of EBRD, World Bank, RZB, Erste Bank, BA-CA, Meinl Bank, UNIQA Insurance Holding, Wiener Städtische Allgemeine Versicherung AG, Representatives from Croatia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Japan, Switzerland, Germany, Slovenia, Turkey

3rd Keynote Speech: Telecommunications and investment climate

Room 2

Panel chaired by **Dr. Boris Nemsic**, *CEO, mobilkom Austria AG, Founding member of Vienna Economic Forum*

General Statements: **Dr. Andrija Lopmar**, *Minister of Maritime and Transport, Montenegro*

Iulzim Basha, *Minister of Public Works, Transportation and Telecommunication, Republic of Albania*

Representatives of telecommunication companies from the countries of the Region and representatives from Montenegro, Albania, Austria, Turkey, Croatia, Bulgaria, Japan, Netherlands, Serbia, Slovenia, Moldova

4th Keynote Speech: Infrastructure projects and investment climate

Room 3

Panel chaired by **DI Otto Musilek**, *Managing director, OMV Gas, Founding member of Vienna Economic Forum*

General Statements: **Dragan Doko**, *Minister of Economy, Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Valeriu Ostalep, *Deputy Foreign Minister, Moldova*

Representatives from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova Hungary, Austria, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro present cross-border projects in the region

1:30 pm LUNCH BUFFET

2:30 pm Moderation **Dr. Elena Kirtcheva**, *Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum*

SUMMARIES OF THE DISCUSSIONS

by the Panel Chairmen **Dr. Rudolf Gruber**, **Mag. Peter Lennkh**, **Dr. Boris Nemsic**, **DI Otto Musilek**

Dr. Burkhard Hofer, *CEO EVN AG, Member of Vienna Economic Forum*

The Importance of the Energy Market in the Region

3:00 pm Moderation **Dr. Andreas Brandstetter**, *Member of the Board, UNIQA Insurance Holding, Founding member of Vienna Economic Forum*

Q AND A SESSION with

Prime-ministers **Dr. Vlado Buckovski**, **Milo Djukanovic** and

Ministers **Iulzim Basha**, Albania, **Dragan Doko**, Bosnia-Herzegovina, **Fatmir Besimi**, Macedonia, **Dr. Andrija Lopmar**, Montenegro, **Iuliu Winkler**, Romania, **Bojan Dimjtrjevic**, Serbia, **David Sopota**, ass. Minister, Croatia,

Valeriu Ostalep, Deputy Minister, Moldova

Dr. Herbert Stepic, *Chairman of Raiffeisen International Bank-Holding, Vice President of RZB AG, Founding member of Vienna Economic Forum*

4:20 pm CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Andreas Brandstetter, *Founding member of Vienna Economic Forum*

COCKTAIL given by Vienna Economic Forum for all participants.

Working languages English and German. Simultaneous translation will be provided.

PREAMBLE



The Vienna Economic Forum – a link in the common Europe

For the second time representatives of governments, enterprises, scientists and friends of South East Europe followed the invitation of Vienna Economic Forum to talk about the political, economic and social state of the region. The quality of the event has improved because the mutual trust is the reason that the problems are gone into directly. This is also a good prerequisite for a network, which step by step shall develop out from Vienna Economic Forum.



In earlier times under “normalization” was understood a sad circumstance, that after citizens' movements the old totalitarian conditions should be restored. We experience now a normalization of the completely different type, namely the matter of course that South East Europe is a part of Europe. No doubt, the economy plays here the leading role. It is able not only to discover the market, to carry out investments and to make connections but it also contributes to work out the common with a region in order to prepare it for the community of Europe. This is an excellent development which on the one hand appears natural but requires anyway some power to convert it into reality. Contribution of everyone who supported the organization of this event and especially however the Ambassador of Bulgaria in Austria Mrs Elena Kirtcheva is that this way is gone. Though we have to have in mind: The job is not yet done!

Finally we thank as Austrians that this necessary process takes place here. Once more the good geopolitical place of our country becomes visible but also the talent of the residents to lead people to each other. We wish further successfullness.

VORWORT

Vienna Economic Forum – ein Bindeglied im gemeinsamen Europa

Zum zweiten Mal sind Vertreter von Regierungen, Unternehmensrepräsentanten, Wissenschaftler und Freunde von Südosteuropa der Einladung des Vienna Economic Forum gefolgt, um über die politische, wirtschaftliche und soziale Befindlichkeit miteinander zu reden. Die Qualität der Veranstaltung hat sich verbessert, indem eine größere Vertrautheit nun dazu führt, dass direkt auf die Probleme eingegangen wird. Das ist auch eine gute Voraussetzung für ein Netzwerk, das sich Schritt um Schritt aus dem Vienna Economic Forum heraus entwickeln soll.

In früheren Zeiten hat man einmal den Begriff „Normalisierung“ für den traurigen Umstand verwendet, dass nach Bürgerbewegungen wieder die alten totalitären Zustände herbeigeführt werden sollten. Wir erleben hier eine Normalisierung der ganz anderen Art, nämlich die Selbstverständlichkeit, dass Südosteuropa ein Teil Europas ist. Die Führungsrolle der Wirtschaft steht hier außer Zweifel. Sie ist nicht nur in der Lage, den Markt zu entdecken, Investitionen vorzunehmen und Verbindungen herzustellen, sondern sie trägt auch dazu bei, die Gemeinsamkeit mit einer Region herauszuarbeiten, um sie auf die Gemeinsamkeit Europas vorzubereiten. Das ist eine großartige Entwicklung, die einerseits selbstverständlich anmutet, aber doch einige Energiebedarf, um sie in die Wirklichkeit umzusetzen. Es ist ein Verdienst aller Mitwirkenden, besonders aber der Botschafterin Bulgariens in Österreich, Frau Elena Kirtcheva, diesen Weg gegangen zu sein. Allerdings verdient auch festgehalten zu werden: The job is not yet done!

Im übrigen danken wir als Österreicher, dass dieser notwendige Vorgang gerade bei uns stattfindet. Damit wird einmal der gute geopolitische Platz unseres Landes, aber auch das Talent der Bewohner, Menschen zueinander zu führen, sichtbar. Weiter viel Erfolg!

WELCOMING ADDRESS



by the Federal Preisident of the Republic of Austria Dr. Heinz Fischer
for the 2nd Vienna Economic Forum
Vienna, 7 November 2005

It is with great pleasure that I extend my wholehearted welcome the participants of this year's Vienna Economic Forum taking place in Austria's capital.

I would have wished to attend your meeting personally, my time schedule, however, makes it impossible for me to be present at your important gathering today.

The Vienna Economic Forum, founded only in April 2004, has already proved to make a valuable contribution to enhance economic cooperation in the countries from the Adriatic to the Black Sea. The high-ranking participants of this meeting also emphasise the significance this institution has already reached.

Austria appreciates that this Forum is based in Vienna – a traditional gateway for trans-national economic activities between the countries of South Eastern Europe.

As Federal President of the Republic of Austria I send you my best wishes for successful deliberations and the realization of your economic endeavours.

Dr. Heinz Fischer
Federal President of the Republic of Austria

IMPRESSIONS



Registration starts early in the morning



Nothing works without the excellent commitment of students that come from the Vienna Economic Forum region



Mr. Hanno Soravia, Soravia Group, during Registration



*Dr. Stepic and Dr. Kirtcheva
welcome Vienna Economic Forum guests*



*(from left to right)
Dr. Christoph Leitl, President of Eurochambers and President of
Austrain Federal Economic Chamber
H.E. Federal Minister Dr. Martin Bartenstein,
H.E. Milo Djukanovic, Prime Minister of Montenegro,
Dr. Erhard Busek, Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum,
H.E. Iuliu Winkler, Minister of Economy of Romania*



*(from left to right)
Dr. Josef Taus, Heinz Sundt, Dr. Christoph Leitl, Dr. Herbert
Stepic, H.E. Dr. Martin Bartenstein, Dr. Elena Kirtcheva,
H.E. Milo Djukanovic, H.E. Dr. Vlado Buckovski,
Dr. Erhard Busek, H.E. Dragan Doko, Dr. Walter Rothensteiner,
H.E. Bojan Dimitrjevic, H. E. Iuliu Winkler*

WELCOME SPEECHES, OPENING REMARKS & STATEMENTS

WELCOME SPEECH



I am very happy to welcome you to the 2nd Vienna Economic Forum. First of all I would like to welcome all our customers who have attended this event. And secondly I would like to welcome a few distinguished participants. H.E. Dr. Vlado Buckovski Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia, H.E. Mr. Milo Djukanovic Prime Minister of the Republic of Montenegro and the Deputy Prime Minister of Montenegro H.E. Branimir Gvozdenovic. Than I have a long row of eight Ministers whom I would like to welcome as a group: H.E. Minister Fatmir Besimi from Macedonia, H.E. David Sopota from Croatia, H.E. Bojan Dimitrjevic from Serbia, H.E. Andrija Lompar from Montenegro, H.E. Valeriu Ostalep from Moldova, H.E. Iuliu Winkler from Romania, H.E. Dragan Doko from Bosnia and Herzegovina, H.E. Lulezim Basha Minister from Albania. I am very happy also that Dr. Bartenstein the Federal Minister of Economics and Labour of Austria is with us and will address us soon. I would also like to welcome Dr. Christoph Leitl, President of Eurochambers and President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber at the same time I am happy to welcome Dr. Veit Sorger, President of the Chamber of Industry. Finally Dr. Erhard Busek, Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact, Dr. Josef Taus, President of the Vienna Economic Forum. Finally I would like to welcome Dr. Othmar Karas, Member of the European Parliament and in the row of the organizers Dr. Elena Kirtcheva the Founding Member and Secretary General of Vienna Economic Forum who has organized the whole exercise.

Now we have been working very hard to get the conference rooms ready for this event. I told to my friends when they asked me about the previous conference that it looked like the grave of Tutankhamen, you know: very dark and secret. Now it's more modern and technical. But I think the venue has been very well chosen for two reasons: first of all Austria, Vienna. Austria is the largest investor in South East Europe. I think this is important to mention. We have the number one position in four countries of South East Europe. In Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we are number two in Romania.

We have more than 3000 Austrian investments in the area and last year in three countries the single largest investments were coming from Austria by the way also from Raiffeisen International in Albania. Now Raiffeisen is a front runner in South East Europe. We have in three countries the largest banks in further three countries we rank among the three largest institutions. We employ more than 11.500 people and we are active in banking services through 540 branches. Now, if you look at the region of South East Europe, the prospects have witness several key developments in recent weeks which make us very optimistic. First of all, the start of the EU membership negotiations with Croatia is a very important break through. Second the start of the negotiations on the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Serbia and Montenegro. Third, the recommendation of the European Commission to start negotiation on a Stabilization and Association Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina and only two days from now, on the 9 of November the European Commission is scheduled to issue its verdict on the membership application of Macedonia.



Now although a number of challenges remain, the break through in the EU integration process should also pave the way for further foreign direct investments and that is the subject of today's convention.

Now, South East Europe is already high on the agenda for investment. If you take the total share of investments in South East Europe in comparison to the total investments in Central and Eastern Europe it is 12% where as the last two years the growth p.a. was 26 last year and 30% share in the year before.

So you see that South East Europe is more or less very dynamic progressing in the interest of foreign direct investments. While more than 70% of the foreign direct investment into South East Europe are

still going to Bulgaria and Romania, that means two countries only, the countries in the Western Balkans are recording a steady increase over the last years.

Still there are challenges for the future. Privatisations are more or less fading out, there is not very much to be privatized at least in most of the countries. That means Governments have to look for green field operations and there they are in competition with all the other markets around. And second the name of the game is to find investments in the producing industry and not in the service industry only, because in the last years the majority of the investments were going to financial industry, to tourism and trade and not to forget telecommunication. So production is needed, production to give employment to as many people as possible.

Governments are specifically challenged to provide for infrastructure the legal environment and to reduce 'red tape' and find investors for export or industries. That I think is the name of the game. The prerequisites are existing: the people are intelligent, in most of the countries well trained and they are hungry to perform their future. Finally don't let us forget that the purchasing power in South East Europe is above the GDP per capita as almost all the countries you have additional influx of remittances from other countries, from foreign labour which also helps to create the economies of the countries.

How quickly the countries of the West Balkans will be able to find their niche in the division of labour within the European economy depends first of all on the continues willingness of the EU to provide the region with the perspective of the EU membership and second the country's willingness to embrace and push forward the political and the economic and institutional reforms.

Now ladies and gentlemen, when I am asked if I would recommend the region South East Europe for investments I would compare the situation with the one I had as well most of you had this morning. You were stopped at the street crossing at the street light, and that is what I would call the market in front of us, because the South East European markets are the closest. The light was already dark green because the markets are ready for investments, there is not very much to be changed, although there are still the people who are waiting, and than somebody was blowing the horn that other gais first, and passing by and made the investment already or would make their investments rather way. So all I can say on this question is: Please jump on your gas and get to South East Europe because that is an area that is waiting for investments and has all the prerequisites you can think about.

Thank you for coming to 2nd Vienna Economic Forum.

WELCOME SPEECH



Excellencies,
 Ladies and Gentlemen!

Now you have an impression that Austrians can speak English.
 I will try to convince you that we are also able to speak German.
 So I want to speak my few sentences in German.

Zunächst einmal möchte ich Sie herzlich im Namen des Vienna Economic Forum begrüßen, und ich möchte mich vor allem bei der Raiffeisen Zentralbank bedanken, dass sie uns so wie das letzte Mal auch diesmal Gastfreundschaft gewährt. Die RZB ist eine der großen Investoren in Mitteleuropa und Osteuropa, und ich glaube, dass sie

dort einen sehr guten Job macht, um wieder einmal ein englisches Wort zu gebrauchen.

Das ist die zweite größere Tagung, wir haben sie wieder nach Wien einberufen. Wir bedanken uns, dass Sie so zahlreich hier erschienen sind. Lassen Sie mich nur einige Sätze dazu sagen.

Erstens, in den südosteuropäischen Ländern wird der wirtschaftliche Umstellungs- und Aufholprozess mindestens 10 bis 20 Jahre dauern. Sie müssen in dieser Periode im Durchschnitt ein reales Wirtschaftswachstum mindestens zwischen 4 und 6 Prozent erreichen, sonst können sie nicht aufholen. Das ist eine sehr harte Vorgabe. Ich glaube aber, dass sie gute Chancen haben, das zu erreichen.

Zweitens, sie können das nicht nur mit staatlichen Maßnahmen machen. Sie brauchen Unternehmen und vor allem Unternehmer, die bereit sind, diese nicht immer leichte Arbeit und auch riskante Arbeit auf sich zu nehmen, mit der kleinen Chance, einmal mehr zu verdienen als die anderen.

Es müssen viele Unternehmer sein, die aus ihren Ländern kommen – Landsleute von ihnen. An den Westen gerichtet: sie werden in diesen Jahren große Kapitalimporteure sein. Sie müssen investieren, investieren und investieren. Das können sie aus eigenem nicht schaffen, das konnten wir auch nicht. Und daher werden sie viel Kapital, wenn es geht von anderen EU Ländern, brauchen, das ist ja schon gezeigt worden.



Was sie brauchen, sind vielleicht „Joint-ventures“- gemeinsame Unternehmen von Mittelständlern. Was sie brauchen werden, sind nicht allein die riesigen transnationalen Unternehmungen, sondern sie brauchen regionale Konzerne, die über die Landesgrenzen hinausgehen. Das ist eine viel schwerere, aber auch interessantere Arbeit.

Drittens: Warum haben wir in Österreich das Vienna Economic Forum gegründet? Ich möchte hier nicht chauvinistisch argumentieren, aber die kleinen europäischen Industriestaaten, so wie Österreich, haben einen kleinen Vorteil: Wir wollen nur „Wirtschaft“ machen, haben keine politischen Ambitionen und Zwänge. Wir wollen nur korrekt und ordentlich behandelt werden.

Die Überlegung, die hier eine Rolle spielt, wenn wir Südosteuropa betrachten, so gibt es ungefähr 50 Millionen Einwohner. Das ist eine große Masse, das sind sehr viele Menschen, und wie mein Freund Stepic schon vorher gesagt hat, sie müssen in die Produktion, selbstverständlich. Aber es gibt so schöne Landschaften für den Tourismus, und das sage ich als Österreicher, wo mehr als 10% unseres Sozialproduktes aus dem Fremdenverkehr kommt.

Lassen Sie mich aber zum Ende kommen. Ich soll hier nur ein paar einleitende Bemerkungen machen. Das reicht nun. Ich wünsche, dass die Tagung erfolgreich ist, dass Sie etwas mitnehmen, dass die österreichischen Teilnehmer auch etwas mitnehmen und dass jeder sagt: „Ich bin da nicht umsonst hingegangen“, sondern das ist der Auftakt für viele weitere Gespräche, für viele weitere Aktivitäten. Das ist der Sinn. Weit weg von der Politik, nur im ökonomischen Bereich. Natürlich kann man Ökonomie nicht ohne Politik betreiben. Es wäre ein Unsinn, das zu glauben, politische Stabilität ist die Voraussetzung für wirtschaftlichen Aufstieg.

Darum geht es, und – da so viele prominente Politiker in diesem Raum sind: Die Politik muss diese Stabilität schaffen, die Rahmenbedingungen für die Wirtschaft festschreiben.

Ich darf mich noch mal bedanken, dass Sie gekommen sind, und hoffe, dass wir eine erfolgreiche Tagung haben werden.

WELCOME SPEECH



Exzellenzen!
 Verehrte Damen und Herren!

Es ist mir eine besondere Freude, Sie alle auch in diesem Jahr als Teilnehmer am 2nd Vienna Economic Forum begrüßen zu dürfen! Erlauben Sie mir, Sie kurz über die Aktivitäten von Vienna Economic Forum in diesem einen Jahr zu informieren.

Wie vor einem Jahr angekündigt, findet die Hauptkonferenz des Vienna Economic Forum am ersten Novembermontag jedes Jahres hier, in der Raiffeisen Zentralbank, Am Stadtpark in Wien statt. Die Sommerkonferenzen des Forums werden in den Hauptstädten der einzelnen Mitgliedsländer im Juni jedes Jahres veranstaltet.

Der gute Anfang des 1st Vienna Economic Forum vor einem Jahr und die Zuversicht zur Weiterentwicklung der Idee hatten als Ergebnis die Entstehung eines in seiner Art einzigartigen Patronanzkomitees, dem die Premierminister der Länder der Region unter dem Vorsitz von Bundeskanzler Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel angehören. Die Mitgliedschaft im Patronanzkomitee entsteht ad functionam. Das gleiche Prinzip gilt auch in Bezug auf die Botschafter der Staaten der Region, die Mitglieder des Ehrenkomitees sind.

Ich bin sehr froh, meine Damen und Herren, dass wir alle heute die Patronen von Vienna Economic Forum, S.E. Premierminister der Republik Mazedonien Dr. Vlado Buckovski und S.E. Premierminister von Montenegro Milo Djukanovic begrüßen dürfen und darf Ihnen, Exzellenzen, wie auch Ihren Exzellenzen, den Ministern aus Albanien, Bosnien-Herzegowina, Kroatien, Mazedonien, Rumänien, Serbien und Montenegro und Vertretern aus Bulgarien, Slowenien, der Türkei und Moldau versichern, dass Ihre Länder im Mittelpunkt der Interessen der Forumsmitglieder stehen.

Seiner Exzellenz, Herrn Bundesminister Dr. Martin Bartenstein möchte ich für die Unterstützung der österreichischen Regierung besonders danken. Danken dafür, dass in Wien, im Herzen von Europa, das Vienna Economic Forum zu einem wichtigen Ereignis im wirtschaftlichen Leben wird.



Die erste Außenkonferenz in diesem Jahr, meine Damen und Herren, Vienna Economic Forum – Bucharest Meeting, fand am 20. Juni 2005 unter der Patronanz des Premierministers von Rumänien statt und wurde sowohl von den Teilnehmern als auch von der rumänischen Regierung als erfolgreich beurteilt. Erschienen ist der Bericht über das Vienna Economic Forum – Bucharest Meeting, der den Unterlagen für das 2nd Vienna Economic Forum beigeschlossen ist. Anschließend an das heurige Forum wird auch ein Schlussbericht herausgegeben.

Es steht eine Entscheidung des Vorstandes des Vienna Economic Forum bevor über die nächste Sommerkonferenz des Forums im Juni 2006 unter der Patronanz des entsprechenden Premierministers und unsere Mitglieder werden rechtzeitig darüber informiert.

Hier möchte ich gern unseren Gründungsmitgliedern und allen fördernden Mitgliedern für das persönliche Engagement und den persönlichen Einsatz danken. Ohne diese Persönlichkeiten wäre das Vienna Economic Forum kaum denkbar gewesen. Mein besonderer Dank gilt unserem Präsidenten Dr. Taus und unserem Vizepräsidenten Dr. Busek wie auch unserem Hausherrn Dr. Stepic.

Dankeschön an Sie, die Teilnehmer am 2nd Vienna Economic Forum – in diesem Jahr begrüßen wir neben den Vertretern der Länder von der Adria bis zum Schwarzen Meer auch solche aus Frankreich, den Niederlanden, Großbritannien, Deutschland, Japan, der Schweiz, Ungarn, der Tschechischen Republik, Schweden, der Slowakei, Zypern, Litauen, Moldau, der Ukraine.

Ich würde mich sehr freuen, wenn Sie alle nach diesem Forum und den Gesprächen, die Sie hatten, zufrieden mit den Ergebnissen nach Hause fliegen.

Verehrte Damen und Herren,

Das Vienna Economic Forum wird im Jahr 2006 seine aktive Arbeit für die Präsentation der Investitionsmöglichkeiten in den Ländern der Region fortsetzen. Es wird sich vor allem um das Erwecken des Investoreninteresses österreichischer und anderer internationalen Firmen für die Mitgliedsländer konzentrieren, und besonders für die Länder, die mit dem Forum ein Memorandum of Understanding abgeschlossen haben.

Das 3th Vienna Economic Forum findet am 6. November 2006 statt. Entsprechend den Wünschen von vielen Mitgliedern und Teilnehmern wollen wir das Forum auf zwei Tage erweitern und den zweiten Tag gezielt konkreten Ländern und Schwerpunkten widmen.

Exzellenzen!

Verehrte Damen und Herren!

Ich wünsche uns allen neue Impulse für die gute Zusammenarbeit in der Region von der Adria bis zum Schwarzen Meer und dem 2nd Vienna Economic Forum viel Erfolg!

OPENING REMARKS



Danke vielmals Dr. Busek!

I think it is my turn to address the audience in English.
 Dear Prime Ministers – Dr. Vlado Buckovski and Milo Djukanovic!
 Dear Ministers from the countries from the region,
 Excellences!

Ladies and Gentlemen!
 Dear President of Vienna Economic Forum!
 I would also like to address as well Dr. Stepic, our host!
 And Ambassador Kirtcheva, you have been addressed as the driving force I can not more than just confirm that.

I would also like to welcome at that point my friend Dr. Erhard Busek, not only as a participant at the meeting, but he is playing an eminent role in South East Europe as a coordinator of the Stability Pact. We all know that wherever we go and we have to meet for important meetings and wherever important decisions have been taken during the last years, Erhard Busek is there.

It is only the 2nd Vienna Economic Forum, which plenary takes place here in Vienna in this modern surrounding, but yet we have the feeling that this is turning into a good tradition. Austria's participation in today's meeting certainly also have to be looked upon as we are the incoming chair of the European Union, taking over from 1 January 2006. I will not surprise you by saying that one of our central focuses during these six months of Presidency will be the accession process of the countries in South East Europe. This is not only of a very great importance for the European Union, but also for Austria.

Austria and the growing importance of South East Europe

Let me now address few core issues. First core issue:

SOUTH EAST EUROPE AS A GROWTH REGION

Some of you would have not expected that South East Europe would become not only "A", but "THE" growth region. The growth champion in Europe and it has gone through this development for the past few years. With a real growth over 23% over these years, and what is most surprising but this growth of 23% have been made over the last 4 years, of course on accumulated basis. That has been significantly more than the growth rates of the ten new Member States of the European Union. There are growth rates of 16%. Last year average GDP growth by 6.5% marked the highest growth rate in the region so far; by compares to the European Union of the 25 the growth rate came up to 2.5%. Within the region there are of course differences: Romania, Serbia and Montenegro were the growth champions last year with a GDP growth rate of 8.3% and 7.5% respectively. Thanks to the stable exchange rate to the Euro and especially against the US Dollar, at least during the last 12 months South East Europe was the only world region that managed to gain some income rises by some 50% since year 2000 and by that opens the world record. This process is expected to continue in 2005 and also the next year 2006.

South East Europe shall remain Europe's most dynamic region over the years to come. Without doubt inclusion of the whole region into the European integration process has proven a pre-dominant engine of this development. The accession perspective opened to all states of the Western Balkans by the European Council in 1999 and underpinned at the summit EU-Western Balkans in Thessaloniki in 2003, is the most effective incentive for progress in domestic reform processes. What would have been completely out of reach only a few years ago, is today's reality: all South East European countries enjoy a clear perspective for accession or – as is the case of Bulgaria and Romania – even a concrete date for accession. Austria of course has always supported this policy.

EU INTEGRATION PROCESS

Let me now address the integration process country by country and add some to what Dr. Stepic said some earlier.

Bulgaria and Romania

As I said Accession negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania were successfully completed at the European Council on 16th and 17th December 2004. Accession Treaties were signed on 25th April 2005 in Luxemburg. Accession of both States to the European Union is scheduled for 1st January 2007.

Both countries are currently preparing for EU membership and have to fulfil a number of conditions. Their preparations for accession are being thoroughly scrutinized by the European Commission. The European Commission presented on 25th October 2005 the Monitoring Reports for Romania and Bulgaria. Both Bulgaria and Romania have continued to make progress in adopting and implementing EU legislation and have reached considerable degree of alignment 15 months before the envisaged accession date. Nevertheless, further efforts are needed, especially in judiciary and fight against corruption. The Commission intends to present to the Council and Parliament in April-May 2006 a Final Monitoring Report. In such case, final decision on the date of membership lies with the Council of Ministers, which than would, under Austrian Presidency, have to pass an appropriate decision.

Considering the excellent political and economic relations between Austria and both states and their significance as economic partners, Bulgaria's and Romania's accession to the European Union according to schedule would be in Austria's best interest.

Croatia

Regarding Croatia, I would like to state that this country is excellent example of what progress is possible to achieve when democratic and market economy reforms are being consistently implemented. Moreover, it shows that each country is the master of its own approximation process towards the European Union, depending on its reform endeavours and reform progress.

Croatia has always been recognized as being the country which has proceeded farthest along the stabilization and association process of the EU. Like Macedonia, it concluded a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU, which entered into force on 1st February 2005. Accession negotiations with Croatia (and Turkey) started on October 3, 2005. Austria had always advocated speedy commencement of negotiations. During Austria's EU Presidency, the acquis screening procedure will continue and we shall work toward swift progress in negotiations.

Macedonia

Regarding Macedonia this is the country where the first SAA (Stabilization and Association Agreement) entered into force (1st April 2004). Thereby, a solid framework was created for further pursuing and intensifying approximation toward the European Union. Submission of the accession application (22 March 2004) was an ambitious step and now, the ball is in the EU Commission's court. The Commission's statement ("Avis") on Macedonia's application is expected to be published this month.

Albania

Albania asked for a commencement of negotiations on a SAA (Stabilization and Association Agreement) as early as 1995, which were then opened in January 2003. The 2005 SAP progress report (SAP = stabilization and association process) has been called a yardstick for Albania's SAA-maturity. The Agreement is about ready in technical terms, while formal conclusion remains a more or less political question.

Bosnia und Herzegovina

Since decision was taken on a Stabilization and Association Process (SAP), Bosnia and Herzegovina has been striving for more intense relations with the EU. The result of a feasibility study of November 2003 makes commencement of negotiations on a SAA dependant on significant progress in 16 different areas.

Serbia and Montenegro

With the EU foreign ministers' Agreement in October 2004, on a EU Commission's proposal whereby separate negotiations of partial issues of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Serbia and Montenegro may be entered into in view of the malfunctioning union of states, a standstill of institutional relations with the European Union could be ended.

The EU Commission published its long awaited Feasibility Study on 12th April this year, in which it recommended commencement of SAA negotiations on the basis of the so-called "twin-track-approach". Four weeks ago again, on October 10, 2005, the formal opening of SAA negotiations was celebrated in Belgrade.

Bilateral and economic relations between Austria and South East Europe

As I said we have always put our growing focus on those relations and this is resembled by the development of foreign trade figures. Last year Austria's exports with South East European region increased by total of almost 20%, precisely 19.1%, to very significant 3.6 Billion Euro. Also this year so far we have an increase of 11% to report with similar figures on the import side. Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia have a predominant position in our businesses with that region.

But allow me now to focus on the today's core issue:

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND AUSTRIA'S ROLE THERE



South East Europe's importance for the Austrian economy is on the increase not only as a market for goods, but even more important as a place for investment. To date, Austrian enterprises have invested some 9 Billion Euro in the region (accumulated investment as of 2004, incl. well-known large scale investment in Bulgaria and Serbia and Montenegro). In the region, Austria ranks the top among foreign investors.

With investment of some 3 Billion Euro, Austria is leading foreign investor in Bulgaria by long way. This is – among others – due to the purchase of Mobiltel, Bulgaria's leading mobile telephone operator, an enterprise estimated at around 1.6 Billion Euro by Telekom Austria.

In Croatia again Austria continues to hold uncontested top position. Austrian enterprises have there invested some 2.5 Billion Euro in Croatia to date (share: 26%) and last year - despite marked decline of direct investment flows by 52% in Croatia – a 30% investment share was reached.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina some 500 Million Euro have been invested and in Serbia and Montenegro 1 Billion Euro with the share of 23% of foreign direct investments.

Austria ranks among the most important investors in Romania. After takeover by OMV in July last year in Romania and most recent acquisitions this year: Omnisig – Wiener Städtische, Astra – UNIQA, Tiriac – Bank Austria. Austria, with overall investment of some 1.9 Billion Euro and a share of 12%, is top foreign investor. Overall, more than 3,000 companies with Austrian capital share are registered in Romania. The Erste Bank has very good chances at the moment to place the largest foreign acquisition ever made by an Austrian company: The 61.88% in the Romanian Banca Commerciale Romana (BCR) to be privatised is estimated by analysts to amount to 3.4 Billion Euro, the total value would thus be 5.5 Billion.

Therefore Austria according to our figures is the top investor in already five South East European countries. Once again: Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour and the Austrian Government as a whole has to support these initiatives, and therefore initiated a number of foreign economic policy measures in order to straighten the potential and the pre-accession strategies of the South East European countries toward the European Union.

May I add and address only two of them, where the first has very much to do with the today's topic. The outset of this first initiative originally comes from the OECD. Austria has been very active in the 'Investment Compact' – a main initiative of the Stability Pact for improving the investment climate. Since early 2002, Austria has been holding the chair together with the OECD. During this time, the 'Investment Compact' has developed very favourably and now is one of the Stability Pact's success stories as Dr. Erhard Busek once said and as well as an exemplary project of the OECD in third countries.

In July 2002 at a conference in Vienna, the Ministers for Economy of the region signed the "Vienna Investment Declaration".

Thereby they or we committed themselves or ourselves to make joint efforts for improving and adapting investment regimes toward EU and OECD standards. This triggered the so-called „Vienna Process“, Annual Ministerial meetings, which take stock of the implementation and initiate new measures in the region. The last meeting took place in Sofia, Bulgaria with Bulgaria being the co-chair.

I would like to mention the second initiative just in few words. This is the establishment of the Energy Community South East Europe, the Secretary of which will be placed in Vienna. Austria has increased its role as a centre of international energy policy. The most important international energy organisation alongside with OPEC, IAE, and Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership are being located in Vienna.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me say that South East Europe's development is a reason for a great optimism. Once again the region is on the right track and has increased its economic weight on the whole. Cooperation, association and – in the long run – an accession to the European Union will generate interesting market potentials also in the future. This development provides a sound basis for Austrian companies to continue their successful path. South East Europe remains among the most promising regions for Austrian companies, for Austrian business as a whole.

Let me repeat once again that the region shall be a main focus during Austria´s EU Presidency. The Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs is planning a Conference on South East Europe/Western Balkans as part of the informal meeting of foreign ministers on 10-11 March 2006 in Salzburg. And this again underlines our great interest and our great support for everything happening in South East Europe today.

Thank you very much!

IMPRESSIONS



(from left to right) H.E. Lulzim Basha, Minister of Transport and Telecommunications of Albania,
H.E. Branimir Gvozdenovic, Deputy Prime Minister of Montenegro,
H.E. Milo Djukanovic, Prime Minister of Montenegro,
H.E. Dr. Vlado Buckovski, Prime Minister of Macedonia,
H.E. Dr. Martin Bartenstein, Federal Minister of Economics and Labour of Austria



H.E. Bojan Dimitrijevic, Minister of Commerce and Tourism of Serbia,
H.E. Iuliu Winkler, Delegate Minister of Commerce of Romania,
H.E. Dr. Adrija Lompar, Minister of Maritime and Transport of Montenegro,
H.E. Fatmir Besimi, Minister of Economy of Macedonia



The Plenum



*Dr. Veit Sorger,
Heinz Sundt,
Dr. Josef Taus,
Dr. Christoph Leitl*



*H.E. Dr. Martin Bartenstein,
Dr. Wolfgang Rothensteiner,
Dr. Christoph Leitl,
Dr. Herbert Stepic
and Dr. Elena Kirtcheva*



Dr. Herbert Stepic with H.E. Milo Djukanovic

STATEMENT



Dear Mr. Taus,
 Dear Mr. Busek!
 Dear Mr. Stepic!
 Your Excellencies!
 Dear friend Djukanovic!
 Distinguished guests!
 Ladies and Gentlemen!

I believe that you all will agree with me that the efforts of the South and Eastern European countries to create new reality in

the region are successful. In the past few years there is a new climate in the Balkans – climate of mutual trust, transparency and cooperation, promoted by the country leaders, graded by the same principals, values and strategic goals. Climate that marginalises extremists and radicals at the political scene, is replacing possession with history with dedication to the future. That climate offers clearly open prospective, which is not only geographically, but also economically, historical, cultural and civilisation part of Europe. The countries in the region between the Adriatic and the Black Sea are full committed to achieve democratic principals and values, European Union is based on. And we have come to stage, in which economic development and standard of living are finally top priorities in our development policies. Moreover it is clear to all of us that there is no sustainable economic development and prosperity without foreign investments in the region.

On this occasion I would like to honour the Vienna Economic Forum for its contribution in promoting the investment opportunities in the region of South-East Europe.



Ladies and Gentlemen,
 I am very proud that my country – Republic of Macedonia – is among the major contributors to such new climate in the Balkans. Macedonia has achieved great results in implementation of political reforms just in few years of time. It has been example of political and interacting consolidation and at the same time it exports stability in the region. I am convinced that these results will be the best reference for polarisation of the Euro-Atlantic commitments. The day after tomorrow, on the 9 of November I expect Macedonia to receive positive opinion by the European Commission for awarding EU-candidate country status.

Distinguished guests!
 For many years Macedonia has had strong macro-economical framework with low inflation rate and price stability that is corresponding with EU Member States. Nevertheless the economic growth was lower than projected. The

creation of precondition for higher economic growth that will result in the job creation is top priority of the Macedonian Government. The economic program has been adopted and priority measures for achieving these objectives have been defined. We believe that implementing favourable business framework and climate is the precondition for enhancing economic activity and attracting foreign investment. The Government of Macedonia works very hard on implementing the structural reforms and on opening to foreign investors. Labour market reform with adopted new regulation will provide more flexible labour force market. Reforming judiciary will provide enhance court efficiency, security, rule of law, straitening the fight against corruption and organised crime. Public administration is straitening its capacity and efficiency in implementation of the “one-stop-shop” – registration system that will eliminate administrative barriers.

We will provide and define protected property rights to the investors; we will create a Real Estate Register and a Public Register for companies with not functional bank liabilities. This will create trust in business activities. The bankruptcy process will

also be faster. Financial reforms encouraging the foreign banks to entering the Macedonian market will result in further improvement of the efficiency and stability of the banking system. Through increased public investments in quality infrastructure we will provide the necessary precondition for realisation of investments. The Government will support restructuring of the companies and will give the important position to the expansion of the micro-businesses. Guaranty Fund that has been established recently should provide easier access to finance for small and medium sized enterprises.

I would like to mention the tax and other incentives that the Government offers to foreign investors. In this context it is important to stress that although Macedonia is a small country it provides 550 Million consumers market for companies working on its territory by signing Free Trade Agreements.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Results achieved in the first 8 months of 2005 are the best evidence that Macedonian economy is going to the right direction. In the first 9 months of 2005 industrial production growth is 8.2%, compared to the same period of the last year. Unemployment shows small but encouraging decreasing trend. Total trade balance has increased by 20% and export growth 27.4%, while import growth amounts 50%. This fact shows that Macedonian integration in the global economy is increasing. We have received positive assessments for our efforts in implementing structural reforms from the key international institutions – IMF and the World Bank. According to the latest report on Business Climate prepared by the World Bank only Slovenia from all the countries in the region is rated better than Macedonia. According to Standard & Poor Macedonia also enhanced its credit rating in 2005.

Increasing interest among famous world companies for investing in Macedonia is another indicator that Macedonia is on the right way. Luk Oil entered Macedonia in Oil business. We have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation announcing the involvement of the German company Siemens in several business projects in Macedonia. ING Bank from Holland announced its entrance in the Macedonia banking sector. Just to mention some of the many international companies interested in business activities in our country.

All of this gives us right to believe that Macedonia is becoming favourite destination in the world business matter. I believe that the list of foreign investors in Macedonia will be longer and longer. At the same time the past results give us straight and optimism with even greater commitment to look on the realisation of the objectives projected in our economic agenda.

Thank you very much for your attention!

STATEMENT



Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with pleasure that I accepted to be part of the Committee of Patrons of the Forum and to participate in today's conference devoted to spurring investment into the South East Europe. This topic is particularly important now that the region has become more stable and more attractive to foreign investors. All the countries of South East Europe are on the road of European integration, although in different status and phase of their institutional relationship with the EU. This has resulted in a growing awareness of the importance of our mutual links in all the areas – from free trade, investment, energy,

infrastructure, to joint action in fighting corruption and all forms of organized crime. Regional cooperation is reaffirming itself as the catalyst of economic transition and development. At any rate, regional cooperation is the founding principle and philosophy of the EU. It is particularly important for small economies such as those of the Western Balkan countries, since only thus can we meet the challenges of an increasingly tough international competition and capitalize on the considerable development and investment potential of our region. The more so, as in a situation of a multifaceted globalisation the credibility and attractiveness for investment and trade are more and more tied to the regional context and less to the situation in individual countries. Also, regional cooperation is an important evolutive step towards adoption of the principles of functioning and conduct applicable in the EU.

Montenegro's development is based on the principle of integral market and she is committed to progressive revoking of all measures restricting free flow of people, goods, services and capital in the region. We abide by the premise that we cannot politically aspire towards speedy accession of the EU and at the same time keep protectionist measures in our mutual co-operation. From the beginning we have focused our activities on developing a comprehensive and targeted strategic approach conducive to building a reliable and attractive business and investment environment. We are doing this by building institutional capacity and strengthening the rule of law and market principles. Also, we are developing and upgrading the infrastructure and creating prerequisites for its effective linking with regional and international corridors. Because when we try to see which are the key elements distinguishing the investment environment in different countries, we tend to focus on assessment of the regulatory and institutional framework, the judiciary, administration, access to finance. Also on physical infrastructure and ancillary services. We have set up a new Investment Promotion Agency and this important job was done in consultation with specialized institutions of the World Bank – FIAS and MIGA. As is the case in other countries, the role of the Agency is also to provide reliable service to the private sector and investors.



In general we can say that there is now a relatively stable macro-economic environment across the region with significant progress of reforms in all the fields. Yet, the level of FDIs in the countries of the Western Balkans is still below the potential that is being offered to investors as a result of these reforms, especially now, when the privatisation process in almost all the countries of the region is drawing to a close. This is partly due to insufficient support that investors had in the previous period. Also to some major regional infrastructure constraints, as well as to insufficient coordination and cooperation in harmonising regulatory frameworks and rules for free flow of people, goods, services and capital. However, I will repeat this, the level of institutional relationship with the EU has

proven to be the most important indicator and signpost for investors. The cases of Bulgaria and Romania confirm this. We believe that a near perspective of their accession of the EU has had a determining impact on the dominant investment flows in these countries.

Now, the Western Balkan region has entered a phase of greater stability, development and integration. This is particularly important, as we are approaching the year of important decisions, the year of democratic finalising of key political processes. Firstly, the complex Kosovo problem, as the one remaining security issue in the region. The Montenegro Serbia relationship is in essence a different issue, which guarantees its democratic epilogue – and this is crucial. Next spring Montenegro will be organizing a democratic and transparent referendum, abiding by the highest European standards and practice. In this way we want to take full charge of our European future. We are strongly confident that any solution that is based on exercise of democratic rights and on full application of democratic standards and procedures is conducive to strengthening both internal and wider stability. The Montenegrin referendum will have such an impact, as well as the withdrawal from a non-functional institutional arrangement, since only functional solutions can contribute to stability.

As I have already pointed out, European and Euro-Atlantic perspective is the framework and the choice of all the countries of the region. Therefore the confirmation of the EU that integration of the Western Balkan countries remains a top priority is very important. For our part, we must all in region be more determined in adopting the logic of business that relies on healthy competition and free market. We must all together develop the principle of integral market, i.e. simultaneous functioning of all the markets – of goods, services, labour, capital, information. Consequently, we must act more efficiently towards removing non-tariff barriers to trade and ensuring a more dynamic trade liberalisation process in the region, including new sectors, such as services, investments, intellectual property, etc. In this light the realization of the initiative on putting in place a single Free Trade Agreement, which has, within the South East Europe Stability Pact, been supported by the ministers of Western Balkan countries, is certain to promote trade and direct investments in the region. This will ensure greater harmonisation, transparency and consistency in the implementation of rules and procedures. The activities of the OECD Investment Compact for South East Europe are also conducive to this end.

The Energy Community Treaty we have recently signed in Athens with the EU is rightly considered historic and compared in terms of its role to the role that the European Community for Coal and Steel had in bringing about the European integration process and today's EU. We are conscious of the importance of the Treaty for peace, stability and development of our region, as well as the EU and we are determined to make complex and demanding adjustments in the field of energy, environment and competition.

Thank you for your attention.

STATEMENT



Exzellenzen!
 Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren!

Es gibt die Vier Freiheiten innerhalb der Europäischen Union und nämlich die Freiheiten des freien Kapitalverkehrs, des Personenverkehrs, des Warenverkehrs und des Dienstleistungsverkehrs. Diese werden wir aber leider noch lange nicht erreichen. Ich finde das Binnenmarktkonzept richtig und erfolgreich, aber noch nicht vollständig umgesetzt. In ihm liegt die ökonomische Chance für Wachstum, Beschäftigung und soziale Sicherheit. Jedes neue EU-Mitglied hat den Binnenmarkt erweitert und die EU als wirtschaftlich als Global Player gestärkt. Politisch globaler Player sind wir leider

noch nicht. Wir müssen es aber werden und daher müssen wir das Binnenmarktkonzept fortsetzen, die Erweiterung fortsetzen, den Ratifizierungsprozess des Verfassungsvertrages fortsetzen und erfolgreich zum Abschluss bringen. Wir haben den Euro noch nicht in der Mehrheit der Staaten, sondern in der Minderheit der Staaten.

Meine Damen und Herren!

Wenn wir die Europa-Politik auf die wirtschaftlichen Fragen reduzieren, dann sind wir schnell fertig. Die Beschäftigung steigt wegen des Binnenmarktkonzepts und auch der Erweiterung. Die Erweiterung gibt uns die Chance auf eine Antwort auf die Globalisierung – die Sicherheitszone wird erweitert, die Demokratiezone wird erweitert, die Stabilitätszone wird erweitert, Europa wird größer und ein stärkerer Faktor in der Welt.

Ich möchte aber an dieser Stelle sagen, die Bewusstseinslage bei den 455 Millionen Bürgern Europas entspricht mehrheitlich keineswegs diesen Fakten. Viele machen die Stimmungslage zur Faktenlage und nicht umgekehrt, spielen mit den Stimmungen, Ängsten und Emotionen der Menschen. Ich appelliere daher an Sie: Spielen Sie Ihre Innenpolitik nicht gegen die EU-Politik aus! Machen Sie die Europa-Politik zu Ihrer Innenpolitik und lassen Sie die Bürger mit ihren Fragen, Sorgen, Ängsten und Hoffnungen nicht alleine! Sagen Sie den Menschen, für die Sie Verantwortung tragen, dass die Europäische Union kein Zentralstaat ist, keine Oase der Seligen oder dass dort undemokratisch diktiert wird, sondern dass die Mitgliedstaaten, die Bürger Europas – wir alle die Europäische Union sind. Wir sind bei jeder Entscheidung dabei, wenn wir wollen, und wir sind direkt oder indirekt von jeder Entscheidung betroffen. Wir dürfen nicht vergessen, dass die Europäische Union nicht bloß ein ökonomisches, sondern vor allem ein junges, politisches, ein noch nicht fertiges Projekt ist.

Die Europäische Union, und das unterscheidet uns im hohen Ausmaß von den Vereinigten Staaten, besteht derzeit aus 25 stolzen Nationalstaaten. Wir haben 21 Amtssprachen und keine gemeinsame Sprache. Die Identität der Europäischen Union ist durch die jeweilige nationale Souveränität geprägt. Die Gefahr nationalistischer Reaktionen auf das Projekt „Föderalismus“, „Bundesstaat“, „politische Union“ bleibt all zu real.

Die EU ist das erfolgreichste politische Projekt zur Integration unseres Kontinents. Die Europäische Union ist aber nicht Europa. Die Frage, ob sie es werden soll, beziehungsweise überhaupt werden kann, müssen wir uns stellen und so rasch wie möglich beantworten. Die kurzfristige Antwort wäre sicherlich ein klares „Nein“. Die Erweiterungen seit 1995, die ein Geschenk der Geschichte und vor allem des Jahres 2004, des Himmels sind, machen sie aber immer mehr zu ihren Sprechern in der Welt. Die EU ist ein politisches Projekt, das alle Politikbereiche im gemeinsamen Interesse und alle Bürger Europas, so steht es im Verfassungsvertrag, in Vielfalt geeint, umfassen muss. Wir haben nicht die Aufgabe bloß einen großen Supermarkt zu errichten, die Erweiterung der Europäischen Union ist ihre Chance. Wenn sie nicht nur wirtschaftlich begründet werden, sondern gesamt-politisch und demokratisch legitimiert sind. Dafür sehe ich zum Abschluss 5 Voraussetzungen:

Die Einbindung der Bürger in dem politischen Prozess; ehrliche, umfassende Information und Kommunikation; die Darstellung des Europäischen Mehrwertes, wo die EU drinnen ist, müssen die 12 gelben Sterne sichtbar darauf sein. Information schafft Bewusstsein.

Eine lückenlose Einhaltung der Gemeinschaftsregeln, die auch Ausdruck der Wertegemeinschaft sind. Nur die Einhaltung und Respektierung des Rechtsbestandes der Europäischen Union schafft Berechenbarkeit und damit Vertrauen.

Die Kommission ist sich einig bei der Vorlage der Modelle der Zusammenarbeit, die auch eine institutionelle Kooperation vor dem Vollbeitritt ermöglichen.

Das Bekenntnis zur nahfältigen sozialen Marktwirtschaft als das Europäische Ordnungsmodell.

Der föderale Bundesstaat muss gedacht werden und die Debatte um die Zukunft der Europäischen Union, ihre Rolle, Ziele, Aufgaben, Grenzen, redlich und engagiert zu entfachen. Warum gibt es die Debatte bis heute eigentlich nicht? Warum fangen wir damit nicht eigentlich endlich an? Es würde sich für alle Beteiligten lohnen.

Ich danke Ihnen!

STATEMENT



Sehr geehrte Premierminister,
 Exzellenzen,
 meine Damen und Herren,

ich möchte sie herzlich im Namen der IV bei der diesjährigen Tagung des Vienna Economic Forum in Wien begrüßen.

Aus Sicht der österreichischen Industrie ist es sehr erfreulich, dass Spitzen aus Politik und Wirtschaft Wien für diesen Meinungsaustausch gewählt haben. Ich durfte bereits einige von Ihnen gestern im Haus der Industrie persönlich kennen lernen und darf hierzu auch anmerken, dass ich mit großem Interesse die wirtschaftliche und politische Entwicklung Südosteuropas verfolge. Seien Sie versichert: Die Industriellenvereinigung ist sich der Bedeutung dieser Region für den gesamten europäischen Kontinent bewusst.

Nach dem Zerfall des Eisernen Vorhangs 1989 haben viele österreichische Unternehmen die Chance, sich in den neuen Märkten der Länder Osteuropas zu engagieren, in beeindruckender und erfolgreicher Weise ergriffen. Österreichische Unternehmen haben enge wirtschaftliche Beziehungen aufgebaut und dadurch ihre Wachstums- und Ertragschancen in einem europaweit konjunkturell sehr schwierigen Umfeld gewahrt.

Ausgezeichnete Chancen bestehen nach wie vor für Unternehmen sowohl für eigene Investitionen durch die Nutzung von Kostenvorteilen als auch vor dem Hintergrund des anhaltenden Wirtschaftswachstums für Projektentwicklungen und Zulieferungen. Österreichische Betriebe zählen nunmehr seit Jahren zu den TOP Investoren in vielen Ländern der Region.

Der Beitritt der mittel- und osteuropäischen Länder überwindet die künstliche Teilung des europäischen Kontinents und verleiht dem Friedensprojekt EU eine neue Dimension und Stabilität.

Die Erweiterung der Europäischen Union mit dem 1. Mai 2004 bedeutete daher für uns Österreicher den formalen Abschluss einer Entwicklung und zugleich den Beginn der Zukunft in der Mitte eines politisch und wirtschaftlich neugeordneten, entgrenzten, stabilen und stabilisierenden Mitteleuropas als einer Kernregion der Europäischen Union, dessen Dynamik sich positiv auf die politische und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der südosteuropäischen Länder auswirkt.



Das grundlegende Ziel der Politik für Südosteuropa ist die Schaffung der Voraussetzungen, dass durch Integration ein militärischer Konflikt unvorstellbar wird, – d.h. die Ausdehnung des Raums des Friedens, der Stabilität, des Wohlstands und der Freiheit, der in den letzten 50 Jahren durch die EU und ihre Mitgliedstaaten konstituiert wurde, auf die Länder dieser Region.

Auch für Österreich handelt es sich um ein langfristiges Engagement für Frieden, Stabilität und Wohlstand, wobei im Mittelpunkt dieses Engagements die Anerkennung steht, dass der Schlüssel für den Erfolg bei den Ländern der Region selbst liegt. Das Instrument zur Unterstützung der

inländischen Reformprozesse, die diese Länder eingeschlagen haben, ist der Stabilisierungs- und Assoziierungsprozess (SAP) der Europäischen Union. Es ist dies ein schrittweiser Ansatz auf der Grundlage von Handelspräferenzen, Dialog, technischer Beratung und schließlich von Vertragsbeziehungen, der diesen Ländern langfristig die Aussicht auf die vollständige Integration in die EU-Strukturen bietet.

Entscheidend für die weitere Entwicklung in Südosteuropa wird die Schaffung eines sicheren Umfeldes, die Förderung nach-

haltiger demokratischer Systeme sowie die Förderung des wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Wohlstands sein und auch Österreich muss dazu seinen Beitrag leisten. Die Integration dieser Länder in die europäischen Strukturen sind die großen Herausforderungen der kommenden Jahre. Für die österreichische Wirtschaft ist die Region Südosteuropa eine Zukunftsregion.

Das starke Interesse für diese Region zeigt sich auch in Zahlen. Laut einer Statistik des Wiener Instituts für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche (wiiw) erreichten die ausländischen Direktinvestitionen im Jahre 2004 8,8 Mrd. Euro. Die Hauptzielländer waren die EU-Beitrittskandidaten Rumänien und Bulgarien. 2003 beliefen sich die FDIs hingegen auf 5,8 Mrd. Euro und 2002 waren es 3,5 Mrd.

Österreich ist wie kein anderes Land eng mit einer Region wirtschaftlich verflochten, welche längerfristig eine Wachstumsregion sein wird, gleichzeitig aber weiterhin mit tiefgreifenden makroökonomischen und strukturellen Problemen zu kämpfen haben wird.

Der Integrationsprozess Österreichs mit der Region Osteuropa und zunehmend auch mit der Region Südosteuropa ist bereits sehr weit gediehen. Handelshemmnisse wurden bereits im vergangenen Jahrzehnt weitgehend abgetragen. Die hohen Kapitalinvestitionsstöcke belegen die bereits bestehende grenzüberschreitende Produktionsvernetzung.

Das Gewicht der neuen EU-Mitglieder in Zentral- und Osteuropa und der Kandidatenländer in Südosteuropa wird in Österreichs Außenwirtschaftsbeziehungen im nächsten Jahrzehnt aufgrund des höheren Wachstums- und Integrationspotentials weiter zunehmen. Die Region wird auf absehbare Zeit weiterhin signifikant geringere Einkommens-, Lohn- und auch wohlfahrtstaatliche Niveaus aufweisen. Österreich muss handeln, um diesen Herausforderungen gewachsen zu sein: durch höhere Qualität der Produkte, bessere Infrastrukturausstattungen, forcierte Humankapitalbildung, weitere Deregulierung und verstärkte Investitionen in Entwicklung und Forschung kann es Österreich gelingen, mit der Entwicklung Schritt zu halten. Ich bin überzeugt davon, österreichische Unternehmen werden den eingeschlagenen Weg in Südosteuropa weiter erfolgreich beschreiten. Die Dynamik der Länder Südosteupas wird sich nicht nur auf die Region selbst positiv auswirken. Sie wird auch einen wichtigen Beitrag leisten, die Europäische Union wettbewerbsfähiger in einer globalisierten Welt zu machen.

Ich danke für ihre Aufmerksamkeit.

STATEMENT



If you allow me on behalf of the Stability Pact for South East Europe not to deliver a long speech, but to make some remarks concerning the investment opportunities and the frame work conditions. I skip everything that was already said and therefore I am focusing on some points which are very important for the future. We have now a network of 30 Free Trade Agreements including several with Kosovo. That is a success story and the consequences at the International trade have doubled. It is a success story but it's not enough.

So far we are interested to move to a single Free Trade Agreement for the whole Region. I think it might be a training exercise for the Common Market and I am asking all the politicians to support it and all of the business community to give their input so that we will be able to do it.

I have to mention also the Bilateral Agreements and mutual promotion and protection of investments and avoidance of double taxation. I think this is also a very important condition for a common good development.

In general the investment climate has improved across all main indicators, across the finance infrastructure, taxes, regulation, crime and corruption but the job is not yet done. For sure the perspective of the EU Membership I think is the one condition.

In general I think there are very good news for investment prospects in South East Europe and I want to mention some of them. 8 Billion Euro foreign direct investments for Security in 2004, but is not even distributed. Not necessary to mention, we all know which the countries are, where it is more and where it is less. What we want to do on the basis of the Advisory Council for South East Europe which is done by the Stability Pact is to do more business missions and I think to enhance the economic development by Greenfield Investment. It is more difficult for sure to attract. Therefore it is necessary to emphasise the role of regional cooperation. I think that is extremely important under the global aspects. It should not be expected that is a separated investment from one country to the other. I think a lot of enterprises are looking to the whole region.

What do we need – better infrastructure. The financial demands in South East Europe for infrastructure are enormous. The European Commission has estimated the potential investment requirement of 60 Billion Euro between now and 2015 for road and railway requirements. The World Bank has estimated that 50 Billion USD will be required in the next 15 years to rehabilitate existing power plants and construct new ones and this is on the top USD 10 Billion required for investments in transmission and distribution. In this context I want to mention the Danube Cooperation Process and I am asking the countries to do more. There are no argument any more not to use Corridor Number 7 – the river Danube – for transport, cooperation of the ports, ecological matters and tourism. I think this is of extremely importance. Maybe this conference can be the kick-off. All these demands must be placed in the context of the limited boarding capacity of the South East European countries and

for sure the Danube grounds are decreasing. But we are keeping the Infrastructure Steering Group by the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Development Bank of the Council of Europe and they made the deliberate message that some money is not used, there is enough money available, what we are missing are developed projects, not titles. We need developed projects, we need regional cooperation in order to reduce the costs and to have more efficiency, and the third very key element is: we need enhanced public-private partnership. I think this topic we have to focus on to get more investment. It is possible.

Regarding the regional cooperation I would like to emphasise that we



have several good examples of regional cooperation. As it has been already mentioned by Dr. Martin Bartenstein – the Treaty on the Energy Community is now signed. Now we have to implement it. I think there are a lot of possibilities for investment and also business. Also the joint promotion activities by all the investment promotion agencies are extremely important.

The Stability Pact who is involved in each and every of these initiatives is the key initiator and supporter in these objectives and I think we have to use it with its various instruments: there is the Trade Working Group, the Infrastructure Steering Group, the Investment Compact, the Business Advisory Council. So may I ask you to hurry up, to hurry up in politics to do the changes, but also I am asking the business community in the countries and outside to hurry up, because South East Europe is the opportunity.

Looking from the Black Sea area to the East Mediterranean area to Central Asia the Stability Pact offers its support there. I think there are a lot of opportunities existing, so please use them.

Thank you very much!

IMPRESSIONS



H.E. Dr. Martin Bartenstein and Dr. Herbert Stepic



Dr. Walter Rothensteiner, Dkfm. Karl Fink, Mag. Michael Palzer



Dr. Herbert Stepic with H.E. Dr. Vlado Buckovski

KEYNOTE SPEECHES

The role of small and medium-sized enterprises for the economic development and integration



Meine sehr geehrten Damen und Herren!

„There are a lot of chances just use them“

Erhard Busek hat zu Ende gesprochen, hier schließe gleich ich an. Viel ist gesagt worden. Die wesentlichen Bedeutungen österreichischer Investments in dieser Region sind von Minister Bartenstein ausführlich dargestellt worden. Ich kann daher wirklich dem Appell zum Zeitsparen folgen und hinzufügen: Nützen Sie die Beziehungen der Wirtschaftskammern untereinander! Meetings wie diese hier sind dazu da jeweils eine Situationsaufstellung aufzuzeigen, aber das konstante Arbeiten an den bilateralen Beziehungen müssen wir machen - einerseits über die

Regierungen, anderseits über die Interessenvertretungen. Alle Länder, die heute da zusammen gekommen sind, sind in der Europäischen Wirtschaftskammer Mitglieder. Sie sind es gewohnt miteinander umzugehen, miteinander die Dinge zu analysieren, aber vor allem an den Dingen miteinander und konsequent zu arbeiten.

Das betrifft auch Österreich. Wenn Minister Bartenstein die vorrangige Rolle, die Spitzenrolle, die Österreich an den Handelsbeziehungen, aber auch an den bilateralen Investments, an den „Joint ventures“ darstellt, dann ist das kein Zufall. Das ist nicht nur Sympathie, die wir für unsere Nachbarn hegen, wir haben selbstverständlich viel Sympathie, weil wir auch jahrhunderte-lange Beziehungen und damit auch eine gemeinsame Kultur, eine gemeinsame Lebensart entwickelt haben, aber das Geschäftsinteresse ist ein nüchternes und das kann nur zustande kommen, wenn auch die Voraussetzungen dafür vorhanden sind.

Eine starke „Wirtschaftskammern“ hat konkrete Aufgaben. Ihre Aufgaben bestehen in einem ständigen Business-Dialog, sie sollen Menschen zusammen bringen und hier insbesondere die des Mittelstandes. Es ist aufgezeigt worden, dass große Unternehmen ihre eigenen Netzwerke, ihre eigenen Regeln haben. Industrie, Finanzwelt – sie sind alle organisiert. Das fehlt oft dem Mittelstand. Das sind die kleinen Unternehmen, an denen eine ganze Menge an Innovation, an kreativem Potential drinnen liegt. Das ist das Wachstumssegment. Dort sind die Chancen der Zukunft, aber die Chancen muss man entwickeln. Die Chance Europas im globalen Prozess ist die Innovation, ist die Kreativität, ist das Entwickeln vom Know-how, von neuen Dienstleistungen und vom raschen Umsetzen, das Implementieren. Da sind die Kleinen allemal stärker als die Großen. Daher sind die Kleinen auch die Chance für Europa in wirtschaftlicher und in der Folge in sozialer, in gesellschaftlicher, in ökologischer Hinsicht. Daher haben wir daran zu arbeiten, um diese Chancen, die darin liegen, zu nutzen.

Mein Vorschlag ist: diese „Wirtschaftskammern“, die in einem ständigen Austauschprozess sind, in einem Netzwerkprozess, dazu zu bringen Chancen immer wieder zu analysieren und neu zu nutzen. Die österreichische Wirtschaftskammer ist mit ihren 101 Außenwirtschaftsstellen in der ganzen Welt vertreten. Davon ist ein wichtiger Teil in dem Raum von der Adria bis zum Schwarzen Meer präsent. Sie ist anwesend, sie ist kompetent, sie kann Brücken schlagen zwischen Unternehmungen und zwischen Menschen. Wir können Erfahrungen austauschen indem wir schauen, wo die Stärken liegen, wo die besten Erfahrungen sind, wo die besten Beispiele sind und diese Beispiele umsetzen. Daher haben wir regelmäßige Meetings, regelmäßige Kontakte, regelmäßige Informationsveranstaltungen und ich kann Ihnen nur sagen: Nutzen Sie sie, Kommen Sie, Sie sind jederzeit willkommen, genauso, wie wir allen Einladungen in Ihre Länder gerne folgen werden.

In diesem Sinn bin ich überzeugt: Die Kleinen und Mittleren können Großes leisten in Europa und in der globalen Welt.

Insurance Business in the growth market CEE



Exzellenzen!

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren!

Willkommen in Wien!

Ich freue mich sehr, dass es wieder gelungen ist, dieses hochrangige Treffen von Politik und Wirtschaft hier in unserer Stadt zu organisieren.

Mein Thema ist naturgemäß das Versicherungsgeschäft.

Als Gründungs- und Vorstandsmitglied des Vienna Economic Forum und als Vertreter der führenden österreichischen Versicherungsgruppe in Zentral- und Osteuropa werde ich zwei Themen näher behandeln. Zum einen möchte ich über das exzellente Wachstumspotential in dieser Region sprechen, zum anderen werde ich darauf aufbauend kurz auf die Geschäftstätigkeit der Wiener Städtischen in der Region eingehen.

Ich begebe mich sofort in medias res und komme zu den Wachstumsraten. Wie sie sehen, hat sich die Gesamtwirtschaft in Zentral- und Osteuropa hervorragend entwickelt. Es wird in Zukunft auch ein beträchtliches Wachstum in dieser Region erwartet. Gemessen am realen Bruttoinlandsprodukt ist die durchschnittliche Wachstumsrate in den zentral- und osteuropäischen Ländern mehr als dreimal so hoch wie in den Eurostaaten.

Als Beispiel hierfür möchte ich Ihnen die Länder Bulgarien, Kroatien und Rumänien etwas detaillierter zeigen. Beachten Sie, dass die Wachstumsraten dieser Länder deutlich über jenen der Eurozone liegen. Auch in den nächsten Jahren wird ein steigendes Wirtschaftswachstum erwartet. Auf dieser Basis besteht auch für die Versicherungswirtschaft ein sehr hohes Wachstumspotential.

Sie können erkennen, wie sich diese erfreuliche gesamtwirtschaftliche Entwicklung auf die Versicherungswirtschaft auswirkt, beziehungsweise welche Wachstumschancen für die Zukunft daraus resultieren. Betrachten wir zunächst die Versicherungsdichte, das ist die Versicherungsprämie pro Kopf in den einzelnen Ländern. Während die durchschnittliche Prämienhöhe pro Kopf in Europa bei rund \$ 3.000 liegt, in Österreich bei \$ 2.160, betragen die gesamten Prämien pro Kopf in Zentral- und Osteuropa im Schnitt rund \$265. Es ist davon auszugehen, dass sich diese Werte schrittweise an das europäische Niveau anpassen werden. Dieser Prozess wird jedoch noch einige Jahre andauern, was in der Versicherungswirtschaft zu kontinuierlich über dem westeuropäischen Niveau liegenden Wachstumsraten führen sollte.

Wenn Sie die so genannte Versicherungsdurchdringung – das heißt das Versicherungsprämienverhältnis zum BIP – betrachten, sehen Sie in den Ländern Zentral- und Osteuropas noch beträchtliches Potential. Während in Europa durchschnittlich 8,08% des BIP für Versicherungsprämien aufgewendet werden, in Österreich sind es rund 6%, ist dieser Betrag mit 3,3% in den CEE-Ländern wesentlich geringer.

Nun kurz zur Wiener Städtischen.

Der Wiener Städtische Konzern ist der größte österreichische Versicherungskonzern und hat seine Chancen mit einer ausgezeichneten Position in Zentral- und Osteuropa genutzt. Neben der ausgezeichneten Position auf unserem Heimmarkt Österreich expandieren wir vor allem in die aufstrebenden Länder der CEE-Region und sind derzeit in 15 Ländern der Region vertreten.

Als eines der ersten österreichischen Unternehmen hat die Wiener Städtische bereits 1990 mit der Beteiligung an der Kooperativa in der damaligen Tschechoslowakei den Grundstein zur Expansion nach CEE gelegt. Nach diesem ersten erfolgreichen Schritt wurde das Engagement der Gruppe in der Region kontinuierlich und zielstrebig vorangetrieben. Derzeit kümmert sich die Wiener Städtische um die Sorgen von rund 11 Mio. Kunden.

Rund ein Drittel der Konzernprämien werden im Ausland erwirtschaftet. Hier erkennt man gut die wesentliche Bedeutung, die die Gruppe der Entwicklung in der Region beimisst. Kein anderer westeuropäischer oder US-amerikanischer Versicherungskonzern erwirtschaftet einen höheren Anteil seiner Konzernprämien in CEE. Die hohe Profitabilität des Konzerns zeigt sich durch eine Ergebnisprognose von rund EUR 200 Mio. (nach IFRS) für das Jahr 2005. Auch hier ist das Wachstum besonders beeindruckend. Die Wiener Städtische Gruppe nimmt bereits in vielen Märkten einen Spitzenplatz unter den Versicherungskonzernen ein. So belegen wir in Österreich und Rumänien den ersten, in der Tschechischen Republik und der Slowakei den zweiten, in Ungarn den vierten (Kfz-Bereich) und in Kroatien und Serbien den fünften Rang auf dem Versicherungsmarkt.

Zusammenfassend kann gesagt werden:

Die Wiener Städtische hat in der CEE-Region in den letzten 15 Jahren weit über EUR 2 Mrd. investiert und damit über 10.000 Arbeitsplätze geschaffen und gesichert. Sämtliche eingenommenen Versicherungsbeiträge wurden wieder in den jeweiligen Ländern ausgegeben, und alle Gewinne wurden wieder in den Ursprungsländern reinvestiert. Wir denken, dass wir damit einen Beitrag zum Aufbau der Volkswirtschaften leisten und die Erhöhung des Wohlstandes in der Region wirksam unterstützen. Wir werden das auch in Zukunft so halten.

Wir glauben, dass sich die erfolgreiche wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der letzten Jahre auch in den kommenden fortsetzen wird.

Wir sehen in den Versicherungsmärkten weiterhin ein hohes Wachstums- und Ertragspotential. Aufgrund des Wirtschaftswachstums erhöht sich der Wohlstand der Bevölkerung. Dies führt wiederum zu einer erhöhten Nachfrage nach Versicherungsdienstleistungen. Die private Vorsorge wird immer mehr an Stellenwert gewinnen und somit vor allem der Bedarf an Lebens- und Krankenversicherungsprodukten steigen.

Danke für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit!



Es ist die Haltung gegenüber unseren Kunden,
die uns zur größten österreichischen Versicherungs-
gruppe in Zentral- und Osteuropa gemacht hat.

Das Vertrauen seiner Kunden gewinnt man, indem man immer ein Ohr für Ihre Anliegen hat. Wir haben auch für Sie jederzeit ein offenes Ohr. Rufen Sie uns an unter 050 350 350 oder informieren Sie sich unter www.wienerstaedtische.at

IHRE SORGEN MÖCHTEN WIR HABEN

WIENER STÄDTISCHE
Member of Vienna Insurance Group

The Importance of Telecommunications for the Countries in the Region



Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren!

Ich freue mich, heute – beinahe zum Jahrestag des ersten Forums (8. November 2004) – an dieser zweiten Veranstaltung des Vienna Economic Forum in Wien teil zu nehmen.

Ich finde es sehr wichtig, den länderübergreifenden Dialog und die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Wirtschaft und Politik zum Thema Wachstum und Wettbewerbsfähigkeit zu stärken, um gemeinsame Synergien und Potentiale zu erkennen und zu nutzen. Die Länder Südosteuropas und Österreich verbindet nicht allein die geografische Nähe, sondern – und davon bin ich überzeugt – ein gemeinsames Kultur- und Mentalitätsverständnis. Das ergibt eine Win-win Situation, die sich bereits vor eineinhalb Jahrzehnten mit dem Fall des Eisernen Vorhangs aufgetan hat, und die nach einer Anpassungsphase Mitte der 1990er Jahre von beiden Seiten prosperierend genutzt wird.

Das Wachstum Südosteuropas liegt weit über dem westeuropäischen Durchschnitt und wird auch in den kommenden Jahren Hoffnungsmarkt sein.

Das Wirtschaftswachstum in Südosteuropa hat sich bereits 2003 auf durchschnittlich 3,9% beschleunigt. Das Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche (WIIW) prognostiziert in den südosteuropäischen Ländern bei entsprechenden Investitionen für 2006 eine weitere Beschleunigung auf durchschnittlich 4,7%. Österreich liegt in einigen Ländern dieser Region bei den Auslandsdirektinvestitionen an vorderster Stelle. Die Investitionen sind über alle Branchen gestreut – die rund 997 österreichischen Niederlassungen setzen sich aus Finanz-, Industrie- und Dienstleistungsunternehmen zusammen – und belegen die engen wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen zwischen Österreich und den Ländern Südosteuropas recht eindrucksvoll.

Laut Österreichischer Nationalbank gingen Ende 2003 bereits 36% – 14,1 Mrd. Euro – aller ausländischen Direktinvestitionen in die Region Südosteuropa. Das ist ein Anteil der Höhe der Direktinvestitionen Österreichs in die EU-14 (37%) entspricht. Bemerkenswerte Zuwächse haben die Länder Bulgarien (25%), die Slowakei (31%) und Slowenien (26%) verzeichnet.

Telekom Austria hat sich bereits sehr früh auf die Märkte in Südosteuropa konzentriert. Lassen Sie mich Ihnen kurz die Telekom Austria Gruppe vorstellen, Ihnen einen Überblick über unsere Entwicklung seit dem Börsengang und über unser Engagement in Südosteuropa geben.

Die Telekom Austria Gruppe ist in zwei strategischen Geschäftsbereichen tätig: Wireline (Festnetz, Datenkommunikation und Internet) und Wireless (Mobilkommunikation).

Der Marktanteil in der Festnetsprachtelefonie (inkl. dem Interneteinwahlverkehr) liegt bei 55,2%. In der Mobilkommunikation in Österreich haben wir einen Marktanteil von 41%. International ist die Telekom Austria Gruppe mit der Mobiltel in Bulgarien, mit VIPnet in Kroatien, Si.mobil in Slowenien und mobilkom liechtenstein in Liechtenstein am Mobilfunkmarkt tätig; in der Tschechischen Republik mit Czech Online als Internet Service Provider. Die Kundenzahl im Segment Wireline beträgt rund 3 Mio. Kunden, im Wireless Segment sind es fast 5 Mio. Kunden.

69,8% des Telekom Austria Aktienkapitals befindet sich im Streubesitz. Die ÖIAG und damit die Republik Österreich hält 25,2% der Telekom Austria, 5% des Aktienkapitals sind Umtauschanleihen, die die ÖIAG bereits im Juli 2003 platziert hat. Wir sehen die breite Streuung der Aktien sehr positiv. Der hohe Streubesitz ermöglicht uns eine direkte Kommunikation mit den Finanzmärkten und intensiven Kontakt mit unseren Aktionären.

Um Ihnen die dynamische Entwicklung der letzten Jahre vor Augen zu führen habe ich die Finanzkennzahlen des letzten Jahres in Relation zum Jahr 2000 gesetzt:

Das Finanzjahr 2004 war ein signifikanter Meilenstein zur Erreichung unserer strategischen Ziele. Wir konnten 2004 das stärkste Ergebnis seit dem Börsengang erwirtschaften und gleichzeitig konkrete Weichen für das weitere Wachstum setzen. Trotz des höchst kompetitiven Umfelds konnten wir die Umsätze in den vergangenen fünf Jahren um durchschnittlich 2% erhöhen und erzielten 2004 erstmals einen Umsatz über 4 Milliarden EUR.

Das EBITDA erhöhte sich 2004 im Vergleich zum Jahr 2000 um rund 50% auf beinahe 1.570 Mio. EUR, das bedeutet eine positive Aufwärtsentwicklung des EBITDA von durchschnittlich 10% pro Jahr.

Das Betriebsergebnis stieg von -38 Mio. EUR im Jahr 2000 auf 452,7 Mio. EUR im Jahr 2004.

Das Nettoergebnis steigerten wir von -286 Mio. EUR im Jahr 2000 auf 227,3 Mio. EUR im Jahr 2004. Die Nettoverschuldung sank 2004 erstmals unter 2 Mrd. Euro. Das Finanzergebnis 2004 lag deutlich über den Erwartungen, das heißt wir konnten unser bestehendes Geschäft 2004 optimieren. Beide Segmente trugen so zu höheren Umsätzen und Erträgen bei. Trotz des schwierigen Umfeldes gab es einen Umsatzzuwachs im Festnetz und der Mobilfunkbereich verteidigte bravurös seine Position.

Die wirklich solide Geschäftsentwicklung ermöglichte Aktienrückkäufe und eine hohe Dividendausschüttung und gibt uns ausreichend Raum für künftige Expansionen.

Bereits 1998 haben wir begonnen, uns im Wireless Segment auf die Wachstumsmärkte Südosteuropas zu konzentrieren:

- Im Wireless-Segment ist es uns in den vergangen Jahren bereits gelungen, in die Mobilfunkmärkte Kroatien (1998), Slowenien (2001) sowie Liechtenstein (2000) zu expandieren und diese Märkte erfolgreich in die Gruppe zu integrieren. In Kroatien zählt VIPnet zu den erfolgreichsten Unternehmen der Branche. Mit 1,3 Mio. Kunden verfügt VIPnet in Kroatien über einen Marktanteil von 46%. In Slowenien ist Si.mobil mit 363.300 Kunden und einem Marktanteil von 23,3% einer der zweitstärksten Mobilfunkbetreiber Sloweniens. VIPnet und Si.mobil steuerten 2004 über 20% zu den Gesamtumsätzen des Wireless-Segmentes bei.
Darüber hinaus sind wir mit unserer Mobilfunktochter mobilkom liechtenstein der zweitstärkste lokale Mobilfunkbetreiber in Liechtenstein. Mit rund 2.500 Kunden im Jahr 2003 erreichte mobilkom liechtenstein einen Marktanteil von rund 13,1% und besticht – im Vergleich zu den anderen Mobilfunkunternehmen von Telekom Austria mit einem überproportional hohen Durchschnittsumsatz pro Kunde von 80,3 Euro.
- Mit dem Erwerb der Mobiltel in Bulgarien im Juli 2005 ist uns der bislang größte Expansionsschritt in Südosteuropa gelungen. Mobiltel ist ein sehr erfolgreiches Unternehmen und mit mehr als 3,2 Millionen Kunden Marktführer in Bulgarien.

Wie groß der Impact von Informations- und Telekommunikationstechnologien auf das Wirtschaftswachstum ist, hat die EITO (European Information Technology Observatory) in ihrer Studie 2005 dargestellt. IKT macht weltweit ca. 6% des BIP aus und wächst wesentlich schneller als der Gesamtmarkt.

Investitionen in den Sektor für den Informations- und Telekommunikationsbereich sind eine entscheidende Voraussetzung für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung der Region und wirken gleichzeitig wie ein Hebel auf das Wachstum in Volkswirtschaften.

In den südosteuropäischen Ländern ist die Dynamik der Informations- und Telekommunikationsmärkte besonders hoch. In Bulgarien liegt das IKT Wachstum sogar im zweistelligen Bereich (11,5%), in Ungarn oder Tschechien 8%, berichtet die EITO in einer aktuellen Studie (EITO Studie vom 17. Oktober 2005).

Wir werden auch in Zukunft unsere Akquisitionsmöglichkeiten in Südosteuropa genau prüfen. Interessante Märkte sind Bosnien-Herzegovina (Eronet) und Serbien (Mobtel). Beide Länder weisen, wie vorher erwähnt, ein hohes Wachstumspotential und eine geringe Mobilfunkdurchdringung auf und ermöglichen es, die Telekom Austria Gruppe zu stärken.

In den kommenden drei Jahren planen wir ein Investitionsvolumen von bis zu 2 Mrd. Euro für Akquisitionen im Wireless-Segment zu verwenden.



Go South East

Zusammenfassend und damit möchte ich zum Abschluss nochmals auf den Titel meiner Keynote eingehen, spielt der Telekommunikationssektor in Südosteuropa eine ganz wesentliche Rolle, für die Region, da die Investitionen das Wirtschaftswachstum beschleunigen und für uns, da die Länder Südosteuropas Hoffnungsmärkte sind, die uns weiteres Wachstum ermöglichen – eine Chance, die wir gemeinsam nutzen müssen.

Ich danke Ihnen für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit und wünsche der Veranstaltung noch einen erfolgreichen Verlauf!

The real estate development and the investment strategy of international Funds



Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

wir, von der Soravia Gruppe definieren uns über eine ausgesprochene „First Mover Mentalität“. Wir nehmen dieses unternehmerische Risiko in Kauf, uns auf ein Terrain zu begeben, wo vorher noch keiner war und wir damit unsere eigenen Erfahrungen machen müssen. Sicher, das ist nicht immer einfach und wir sind auch schon auf die Nase gefallen, aber wir sind wieder aufgestanden und haben unsere Lehren daraus gezogen. Wir haben vor 10 Jahren begonnen in Bulgarien, Rumänien und in der Slowakei Bauträger Projekte zu entwickeln, als andere noch gar nicht mal daran gedacht haben in diese Länder zu investieren.

Wenn man vorne dabei ist, erwirbt man sich aufgrund seiner Absichten einen Vertrauensbonus in diesen Ländern. Es gilt aber auch diesen Bonus zu erhalten, indem man eine langfristige Zusammenarbeit anstrebt und zu seinem Wort steht, auch wenn der Wind mal nicht so optimal bläst. Und der Erfolg gibt uns Recht.

Ein weiterer wichtiger Bestandteil des Erfolgs ist das Vertrauen der Banken. Nur so ist es möglich, mehrere Hundert Millionen Euro in die Hand zu nehmen. Wir haben zuerst bei kleineren Projekten gezeigt, dass wir das Kapital gut investiert haben und sind an der zunehmenden Herausforderung gewachsen. Daher möchte ich mich ganz besonders bei der Creditanstalt und der RZB für das ausgesprochene Vertrauen bedanken.

Schlussendlich sind es dann noch die Menschen, die vor Ort für die Soravia Gruppe tätig sind. Uns war von Anfang an wichtig, ein Team aus den Leuten vor Ort aufzubauen. Daher kommt für uns der sonst übliche „Geschäftsführertourismus“ nicht in Frage. Die Leute vor Ort sind hervorragend ausgebildet, sind hoch motiviert und kennen die hiesigen Marktbedingungen. Sie sind ein wichtiger Eckpfeiler unseres Erfolgs und daran lassen wir sie auch teilhaben, indem wir Ihnen die Möglichkeit bieten, 10% an der örtlichen Soravia Gesellschaft erwerben zu können. Dieses Beteiligungsmodell hat sich bewährt und das wollen wir auch in den Ländern, in denen wir uns künftig mehr engagieren wollen so handhaben, etwa Mazedonien, Montenegro, Bosnien und Herzegowina oder Serbien.

Erfolgreiche Projekte bleiben zum Glück nicht unbemerkt. Die lokalen Politiker haben bald bemerkt, dass erstklassige Bürohäuser auch internationale Firmen anlocken, die wiederum weitere Investitionen nach sich ziehen. Das erleichtert dann die Zusammenarbeit bei Folgprojekten.

Aber es gehören nicht nur Bürogebäude zu unserem Angebotsportfolio. Mit der Komplettsanierung des Hotels Vienna Hilton, oder dem in Rekordzeit errichteten „Shopping Palace“ in Bratislava, dem größten Einkaufszentrum der Slowakei, haben wir bewiesen, dass wir sehr vielseitig erfolgreich sind. Die Inbetriebnahme des Shopping Centers hat gezeigt, dass die heimische Bevölkerung von dieser Art der Shoppingmöglichkeit begeistert ist und aufgrund der liberalen Öffnungszeiten sogar für Österreicher sehr attraktiv ist.

In der Slowakei gibt es weder ein Reglement der Handelsflächen noch der Öffnungszeiten. Die Vision der Politiker dort ist ein 24 Stunden Einkaufsbetrieb und damit sind sie uns Österreichern sehr viel voraus. Bei uns werden die Regeln von der Sozialpartnerschaft erstellt, in der Slowakei regelt sich der Markt selbst mit wenig Einflussnahme der Politiker. Das imponiert uns sehr.

Zum Abschluss noch ein Appell an die Zukunftsmärkte. Große Investment sind nur dann möglich, wenn ausländische Unternehmen am Anfang involviert sind. Diese sollten sich aber sukzessive zurückziehen und dem lokalen Management das Ruder überlassen.

Ich wünsche allen Damen und Herren noch eine interessante Tagung und vielen Dank an Frau Kirtcheva!

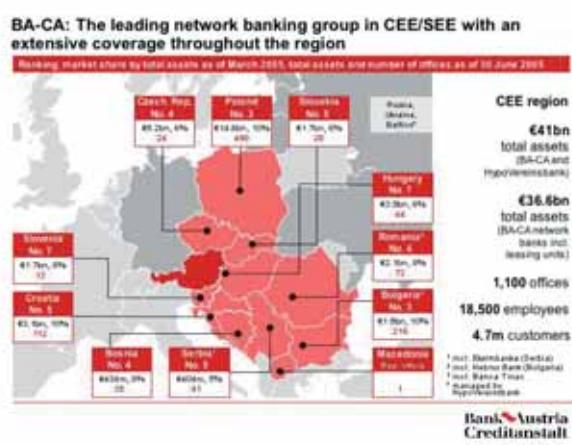
Challenges of the banking sector in South East Europe



Exzellenzen!
 Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren!

Namens der Bank Austria Creditanstalt möchte ich Sie sehr herzlich begrüßen und mich für die Einladung bedanken, hier als Keynote Speaker zu sprechen.

Die Bank Austria Creditanstalt ist in Südosteuropa, aber auch in den Ländern Osteuropas schon lange präsent. Die ersten Expansionsschritte wurden vor 150 Jahren gesetzt – damals im Gründungsjahr der Creditanstalt. Die zweite Expansionswelle hat unser Haus vor 30 Jahren gestartet, und seit 1990 sind wir praktisch in der gesamten Region Zentral-, Ost- und Südosteuropa vertreten.



Ich möchte mich im Folgenden auf den Bankensektor in Südosteuropa konzentrieren. Banken sind ein Spiegelbild der Wirtschaft; das Wachstumspotenzial und die Herausforderungen für die gesamte Wirtschaft in dieser Region lassen sich an den Entwicklungen des Bankenmarkts sehr gut ablesen.

Sie sehen hier einen allgemeinen Überblick über den Bankenmarkt in Südosteuropa: Die Anzahl der Banken ist mit 224 relativ groß im Vergleich zu knapp 200 Banken in den neuen EU-Mitgliedsstaaten. Außerdem fällt auf, dass der Marktanteil der Auslandsbanken sehr hoch ist: 72 Prozent der Banken in Südosteuropa stehen im Eigentum internationaler Bankengruppen. Darüber hinaus ist die Bankenkonzentration groß: Die Top-5-Banken in den jeweiligen Ländern machen 63 Prozent des Gesamtmarktes aus. Mit einer weiteren Konzentration und Konsolidierung des Bankenmarktes ist in Zukunft zu rechnen.

Overview SEE banking market

| 2004 | Number of banks | Total assets EUR bn | Market share Top 5 | Total assets in % of total | Total assets in % of total EU25* | Gross loan growth 2000-2004 | Gross loan growth per capita in EUR 2000-2004 | Total deposits in % of total EU25* | Total deposits in % of total EU25* | |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|----|
| SEE 7 | 224 | 32 | 72 | 9.3 | 58 | 39 | 29 | 323 | 34 | 32 |
| MMT 3 | 209 | 399 | 75 | 68 | 78 | 34 | 18 | 822 | 45 | 4 |
| Slovenia | 14 | 14 | 14 | 64 | 64 | 46 | 11 | 1,000 | 91 | 12 |
| Euro area | 2,287 | 15,758 | 24 | 94 | 200 | 152 | 8 | 52,209 | 73 | 6 |
| MEET 10 | 16 | 2 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 40 | 17 | 17 |
| Balkans and Montenegro | 22 | 7 | 17 | 41 | 12 | 36 | 35 | 282 | 15 | 15 |
| Albania | 28 | 12 | 12 | 60 | 60 | 46 | 46 | 247 | 16 | 24 |
| Croatia | 21 | 50 | 41 | 74 | 56 | 62 | 27 | 1,081 | 80 | 10 |
| YTR 10 countries | 21 | 2 | 46 | 76 | 27 | 17 | 19 | 122 | 30 | 30 |
| Russia | 38 | 21 | 66 | 66 | 18 | 14 | 46 | 138 | 24 | 38 |
| Total | 45 | 1 | 34 | 47 | 38 | 32 | 8 | 119 | 32 | 40 |

(1) in % of total assets
 (2) Pro rata basis
 (3) Albian including loans to the state
 (4) Per annum in local currency

Source: National Banks, BA-CA Economic Department

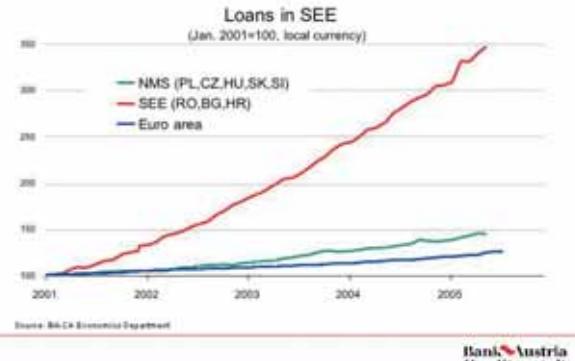
Bank Austria Creditanstalt

Beeindruckend sind die Wachstumsraten, die der südosteuropäische Bankenmarkt zeigt, und zwar sowohl auf der Loan-Seite, als auch auf der Deposit-Seite.

Bislang haben wir bei Krediten Zuwachsrate von durchschnittlich rund 30 Prozent pro Jahr seit 2000 gesehen, bei den Einlagen sogar 32 Prozent pro Jahr. Frontrunner beim Kreditwachstum waren Serbien mit einer Zuwachsrate von 54 Prozent im Vergleich zur Vorjahresperiode und Bulgarien mit 45 Prozent. Im Vergleich zur Eurozone und zu den neuen EU-Mitgliedsländern ist Südosteuropa damit deutlich DER Wachstumsmarkt im Finanzdienstleistungssektor.

Getrieben wurde das starke Kreditwachstum vor allem durch Privatkredite. Die Zuwachsrate bei den „Loans to households“ waren in den vergangenen fünf Jahren mit 53 Prozent im Jahresschnitt besonders hoch. Das künftige Potenzial ist damit aber noch nicht erschöpft. Wenngleich sich das Wachstumstempo verringern wird, liegen unsere Schätzungen für die kommenden Jahre weiterhin bei zumindest 20 Prozent Plus bei Privatkrediten.

SEE - strong credit growth in recent years



Bank Austria Creditanstalt

Loans to households: strong growth continues, potential still exists

| Country | Loans to Households | | Loans to Businesses | | Loans to Households | |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| | Value in Mio. € | % chg. vs. 2005 | Value in Mio. € | % chg. vs. 2005 | Value in Mio. € | % chg. vs. 2005 |
| Austria | 299 | -0.1 | 295 | -0.7 | 295 | -0.1 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 0.1 | -0.1 | 0.1 | -0.1 | 0.1 | -0.1 |
| Bulgaria | 3.1 | 40 | 3.1 | 12 | 3.1 | 10 |
| Croatia | 0.1 | 74 | 0.1 | 12 | 0.1 | 10 |
| Cyprus | 0.1 | 25 | 0.1 | 10 | 0.1 | 10 |
| Greece | 0.1 | 20 | 0.1 | 10 | 0.1 | 10 |
| Hungary | 0.1 | 30 | 0.1 | 10 | 0.1 | 10 |
| Macedonia | 0.1 | 30 | 0.1 | 10 | 0.1 | 10 |
| Montenegro | 0.1 | 30 | 0.1 | 10 | 0.1 | 10 |
| Romania | 0.1 | 30 | 0.1 | 10 | 0.1 | 10 |
| Serbia | 0.1 | 30 | 0.1 | 10 | 0.1 | 10 |
| SEE Total | 16.3 | 5.2 | 5.0 | 12 | 32.3 | 20 |
| EU total | 16.3 | 5.2 | 5.0 | 12 | 32.3 | 20 |
| EU minus SEE | 16.3 | 5.2 | 5.0 | 12 | 32.3 | 20 |
| EU minus SEE | 16.3 | 5.2 | 5.0 | 12 | 32.3 | 20 |

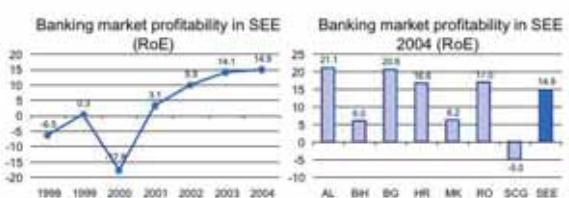
(1) Per annum in local currency

(2) Forecast

Source: National banks, BkA-C Economic Department

Bank Austria Creditanstalt

Profitability



Bank Austria Creditanstalt

Wie sieht es nun mit der Profitabilität der südosteuropäischen Banken aus: Insgesamt arbeiten die Banken sehr profitabel. Nur bei Serbien, wo der Bankenmarkt komplett neu strukturiert und aufgebaut werden musste, zeigt sich eine Minusposition. Alle anderen Länder weisen bei der wichtigen Bankenkennzahl „Return on Equity“ hervorragende Ergebnisse auf. Auch die „Cost Income Ratio“ ist besser als in der Eurozone oder in den neuen EU-Ländern.

Zusammenfassend ist Südosteuropa sicherlich der am schnellsten wachsende Bankenmarkt in Europa. In den kommenden

Profitability of top banks in SEE*

| | NMS** | SEE*** | Euro area |
|--|-------|--------|-----------|
| Return on equity after tax (% of equity capital) | 15 | 20 | 11 |
| Return on assets after tax (% of total assets) | 1.5 | 2.0 | 0.5 |
| Net interest income (% of total assets) | 3.3 | 4.6 | 1.2 |
| Loan loss provisions (% of total assets) | 0.30 | 0.48 | 0.26 |
| Cost/income ratio (% of total income) | 62 | 59 | 64 |

* Unweighted average, top 7 to 10 banks per country, market share 72%
**PL, HR, CZ, SK, SI
***MK, BG, RO

Source: BIC-Economic Department

**Bank Austria
Creditanstalt**

Jahren werden wir noch einiges im Bereich Bankenprivatisierung sehen – vor allem in Rumänien und Serbien. In den übrigen Ländern sind die meisten Privatisierungen bereits abgeschlossen. Darüber hinaus wird es – wie schon erwähnt – zu einer weiteren Konzentration und Konsolidierung des Bankenmarkts kommen. Wir müssen auch damit rechnen, dass sich die Margen in der Region verringern werden. Diese Entwicklung kann jedoch durch das steigende Geschäftsvolumen aufgefangen werden. Schließlich sollte die weitere Harmonisierung der rechtlichen Standards zu einer Verbesserung der Rechtsicherheit für Kunden und Unternehmen führen.

Soweit mein kurzer Überblick über die Bankensituation in Südosteuropa. Ich kann mich nur dem anschließen, was Herr Dr. Busek vorhin schon gesagt hat: Südosteuropa ist eine absolute Wachstumsregion und bietet ein unglaubliches Chancenpotenzial.

Danke für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit!

IMPRESSIONS



*DDr. Regina Prehofer, Member of the Managing Board, BA-CA AG,
Dkfm Karl Fink, Dep. Director General of Wiener Städtische AG,
Dr. Rudolf Gruber, President of the Supervisory Board of EVN AG,
Dr. Willibald Plessner, CEE Managing Partner
Freshfield Bruckhaus Deringer*



*Dr. Erhard Busek, Vice President of Vienna Economic Forum,
surrounded by journalists*



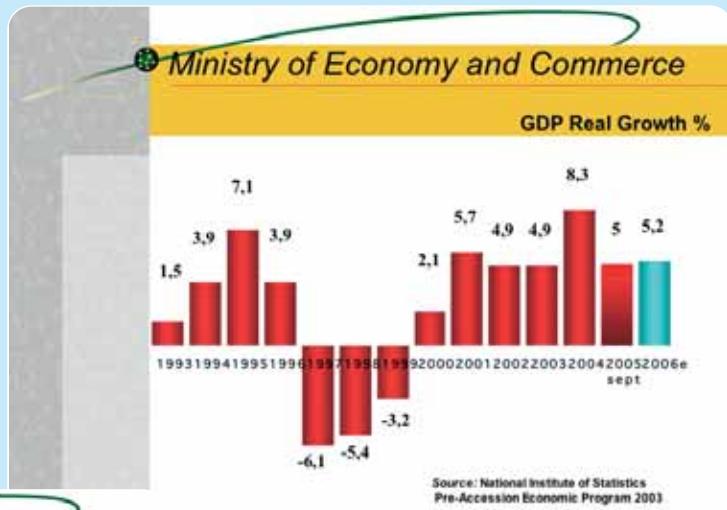
*H.E. Dragan Velikic, Ambassador of Serbia and Montenegro,
Dr. Boris Nemsic, CEO mobilkom Austria AG and
Hanno Soravia, CEO Soravia Group
during the coffee break*

PART II

ROUNDTABLES & PRESENTATIONS

PRESENTATION 1

Romania – better prepared for the European path



Tax reduction, basic principle of the Romanian Government fiscal policy

- Aiming to stimulate private initiative, de-tension business environment and reducing hidden economy, the Romanian Government has put in practice the following measures:
 - 16% flat tax on income and profit;
 - Profit tax reduced from 25%, with deductible expenses for research and development, investments in human resources and investments in medical infrastructure;
 - Income tax reduced from 18 – 40%, determining visible increase in purchasing power of population.
 - Tax on dividends for natural persons maintained at 5 % and for legal persons at 10%.
 - Social contribution gradually reduced, starting with 2006, to reach 39.5 % in 2008, against 49.5 % at present.
 - VAT level (19 %) will be maintained for a certain period of time.

Major Investments and Privatization in Romania

| Investments | | Privatizations | |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| RENAULT Automotive | | OMV Energy | |
| HYPARLO Retailing | | LNM Metallurgy | |
| RAIFFEISEN Banking | | OTE Telecommunication | |


Main target:
Investment in infrastructure development

Important projects for regional and cross border cooperation:

- Nabucco
- Constanta – Trieste Pipeline
- Corridor no. IV (Berlin/Nürnberg-Prague-Budapest-Arad-Bucharest-Constanta-Istanbul-Salonic)
- Corridor no. VII (Danube river and channel Danube-Black Sea)
- Corridor no IX (Helsinki-St. Petersburg-Moscow-Kiev-Chisinau-Bucharest-Dimitrovgrad-Alexandropolis)




NABUCCO Project

- Natural gas transport pipeline from Turkey to Austria on the route Bulgaria - Romania - Hungary
- Included in the TEN (Trans European Network) Programme of the European Union
- Pipeline length - 2.841 km
- Transport capacity - 25,5 bcm (base case) - 31 bcm (high case)
- Benefits of the NABUCCO Project:
 - the major gas reserves of the Caspian Sea and Middle East can become accessible through the development of the Nabucco project
 - diversification of gas supply sources
 - access to low cost gas reserves
 - enhancing of the supply security
 - stimulation of the competition on the gas market

PRESENTATION 2

Prospects and recent Developments in Turkish Economy

OUTLINES OF THE TURKISH ECONOMY

Since 2000, Turkish economy has been experiencing a significant transformation towards a sound-market-oriented economy. As a result of the stabilizing efforts after 2001 financial crisis, macroeconomic fundamentals of Turkey improved rapidly. Central Bank of Turkey (CBT), using "implicit inflation targeting", brought annual inflation down to single digit level from over 60%. Annual CPI inflation as of September 2005 refers to historically low level. Furthermore, disinflation process will likely continue in consistent with the targets under the assumptions that the economic program will strictly be implemented and there will be no deviation from the fiscal discipline.

Disinflation process in Turkey in the last three years experienced along with rapid economic growth thanks to the wise fiscal and monetary policy implementations along with the structural reform agenda. After the decline of GNP by 9.4% in 2001 because of the economic crisis, cumulative growth rate for the consecutive three years has reached 26% as a result of implementing economic policies. Albeit, growth rates seem to be moderated in the first half of 2005, 4.4 percent year-on-year real GDP growth indicates a fairly robust growth. Like in 2004, private consumption and private investment were the engines of the growth in the first half of 2005. However, both components slowed from the robust rates seen in 2004 and exhibited a 4.2 percent and 10.8 percent year-on-year growth respectively. Public sector expenditures and investment spending which had no contribution to growth as a result of fiscal tightening in the previous years, recorded 4.2 percent and 32.6 percent real growth in the first half of 2005 respectively.

Driven especially by the mergers in the financial sector and privatization implementations, Turkey is expecting a record high level of foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2005. The USD 2.8 billion of FDI in 2004 was a record high level, but 2005 figures are expected to be much above.

After confirming that Turkey met the Copenhagen political criteria for democratization and the rule of law by EU Commission, the membership negotiations with the EU has officially started on October 3, 2005. Together with the IMF program, EU-Turkey negotiations will be a lasting anchor for structural transformation and welfare creation in the long run. Therefore, further improvement in the macroeconomic fundamentals in the following years is to be expected.

THE REFORM PROCESS

During the last several years, the Republic of Turkey has been going through a very comprehensive process of economic reform and restructuring. With the strong backing of a single party government, the Turkish economy has gained enormous momentum and endurance especially in the last three years.

The Government places a particular emphasis on structural reform efforts. Starting from the financial sector, and with the accelerated privatization process, sweeping reforms including agriculture and social security, energy and telecommunication sectors have been successfully carried out by the Government. These are focused particularly on the reform of the public sector itself through measures in a number of topics ranging from public financial management to transparency and good governance.

Macro-economic indicators have been following a positive trend. Major objectives of the programme, namely, decreasing the inflation to one digit numbers, providing a higher and more stable economic growth and realizing structural reforms have been achieved.

The current Government's economic program continues to deal with the root-causes of Turkey's underlying economic problems. The economic program focuses on restructuring the financial sector at large and removing the obstacles for private-sector-led growth.

Thanks to the strict implementation of the program, recovery has now resumed and the Turkish economy has become much more institutionalized. Economic agents are now more conscious of the importance of sustaining the program and the results it can deliver.

FOREIGN TRADE

Within the context of globalization, Turkey has been pursuing an outward-oriented development scheme and export-led growth since 1980. By virtue of the comprehensive structural adjustment program, among other measures, restrictions on imports have been lifted, safeguard practices reduced and foreign exchange transactions liberalized. By abandoning import substitution policies, Turkey has experienced major developments in its foreign trade.

On the path of becoming a completely open economy, Turkey has been searching for new markets and networks within a broader spectrum extending from the Far East to Latin America. The external trade volume in 2004 was 160 billion dollars, and GNP was 301 billion dollars. This means that the external trade volume exceeded % 50 percent of the GNP last year.

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

When Turkey is taken as a center and a circle of four-hour flight distance is drawn, this circle covers one fourth of the world's GNP and one fourth of the world's population. Easy access to these huge markets is also something that makes Turkey an attractive place for foreign investors.

In parallel to the political and economic realignments unfolding in the world, the ongoing privatization program and huge energy and infrastructure projects have rendered Turkey more attractive to foreign investors over the recent years. With its dynamic economy, large internal market, competitive industry and skilled labor force, Turkey offers numerous opportunities for foreign investors.

PRIVATIZATION

Turkey's privatization efforts have recently gained a significant momentum. Privatization portfolio includes major state economic enterprises such as Türk Telekom, State Tobacco, Salt and Alcohol Enterprises, Turkish Electricity Distribution Company, Turkish Airlines, iron and steel mills and sugar factories. This process is ongoing.

Privatization in Turkey not only aim to minimize state involvement in economic activities and to relieve the financial burden of state economic enterprises on the national budget, but is also geared towards the development of capital markets and the re-channelling of resources towards new investments.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN TURKEY

Turkey has also embarked on grand infrastructure projects both within and outside its territory.

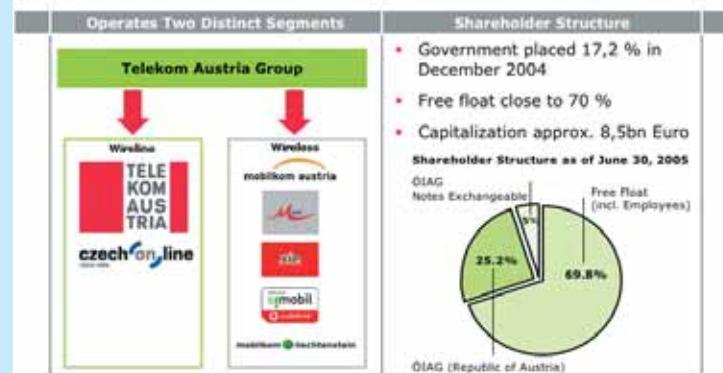
The Southeastern Anatolian Project (GAP) is the most ambitious development project undertaken by Turkey. It comprises 22 dams, 19 hydroelectric power plants, and numerous irrigation networks. The overall project will regulate 28% of Turkey's water potential, generate 27 billion kw/h of electric energy and irrigate about 17,000 square kilometers of land, thus increasing the total arable land in Turkey by 50%. It is considered one of the 9 mega projects in the world.

Taking advantage of its geopolitical position and as an emerging regional energy terminal, Turkey has also pioneered large-scale energy transportation projects, through which oil and natural gas exports of the Caspian Basin will reach the Western markets. These projects have major long-term implications for both Turkey and Europe. Materialization of these projects will transform Turkey into a hub of energy transportation lines in Euroasia.

PRESENTATION 3

The importance of telecommunications for the countries in the region

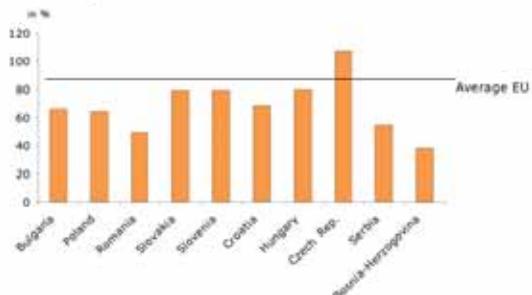
Telekom Austria Group – Segments and Ownership



Attractive International Portfolio with over 8 million Wireless Subscribers

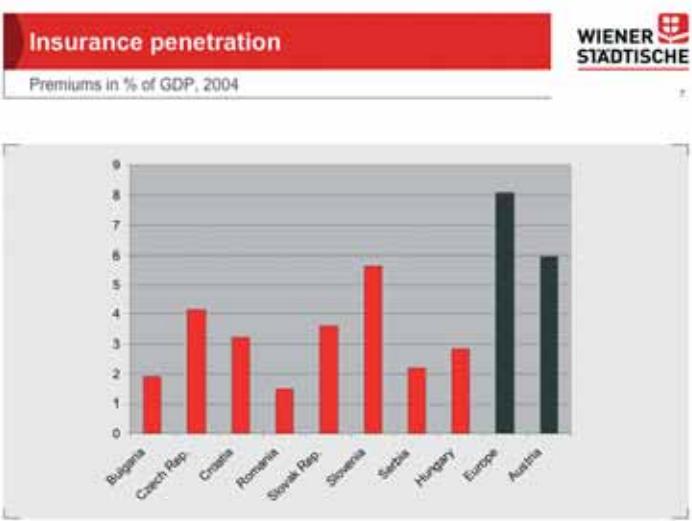
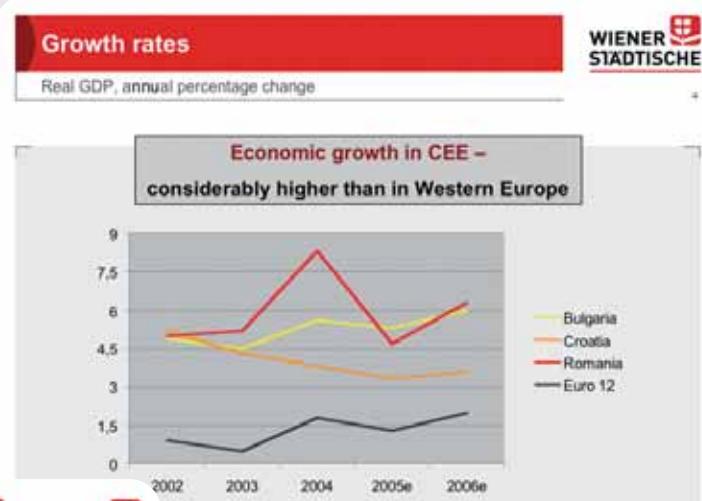
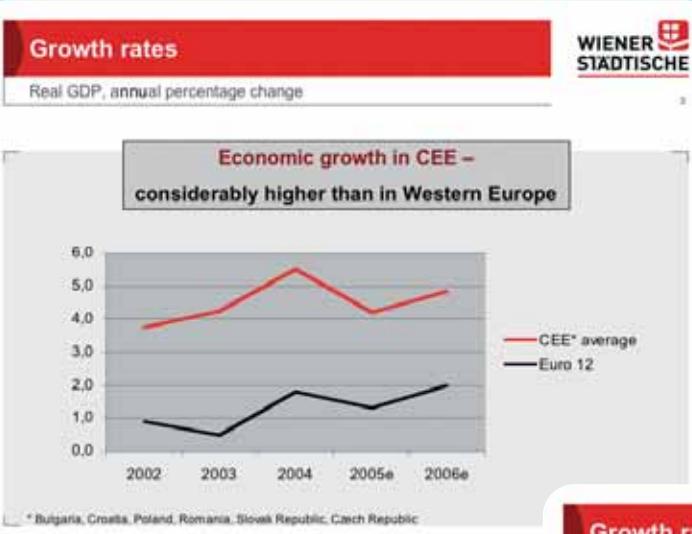


Low Penetration Rates Offer Potential for Growth Mobile Telephone Penetration CEE Countries 2005



PRESENTATION 4

Insurance business in the growth market CEE



Group overview

Wiener Städtische – august 2005

Wiener Städtische Group:

- More than 11 million costumers in 15 countries
- Operating in CEE since 1990



WIENER STÄDTISCHE

Target market CEE

Our challenge: the top 5



12

Top positions in

- Austria
 - Number 1 (Life a. Property/Casualty)
- Czech Republic
 - Number 2 (Life and Non-Life)
- Slovak Republic
 - Number 2 (Life and Non-Life)
- Romania
 - Number 2
- Croatia
 - Number 5
- Serbia
 - Number 5



PRESENTATION 5

Recent economic developments in Croatia



Handel und Investitionsergebnisse zwischen Österreich und Kroatien

- Die österreichischen Firmen sind die wichtigsten Investoren in Kroatien mit **3,1 Milliarden US\$**
- **mehr als 800** österreichischen Firmen sind tätig in Kroatien



Freizeonen

- mehr als 250 Unternehmen
- mehr als 3.000 Arbeitsplätze



- 15 Freizeonen gegründet
- Das Unternehmen kann sich an Produktion, Grosshandel, Außenhandel und Dienstleistungsgewerbe für Freizeonen beteiligen.
- Das Unternehmen muss nicht in Register der kroatischen Unternehmen eingetragen werden.
- 50% Gewinnsteuersenkung
- Verzollung in der Freizone

Quelle: Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Unternehmertum

Unternehmerzonen und Unternehmerzentren & Inkubator

• Entwicklung von Unternehmerzonen, Unternehmerzentren und Inkubator ist ein der Schlüsselpunkte für Förderung des Unternehmertums in Kroatien

Grundziele:

- Förderung und beschleunigter Bau von Freizonen in Lokalverwaltungseinheiten
- Erschließung der Freizonen
- Aktivierung von unbenutzten Einrichtungen in der Unternehmerzone



für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Unternehmertum



Massnahmen für Exportförderung und Steigerung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der kroatischen Unternehmen

PROGRAMM FÜR BILDUNG VON CLUSTER UND INDUSTRIEDISTRICTS

> Cluster-Definition

"Geographisch gebundene Konzentration der Unternehmen, die ähnlich sind, gebunden, oder sich gegenseitig ergänzen, mit aktiven Wegen der Geschäftstransaktionen, Kommunikationen und Dialog, welche die spezialisierte Infrastruktur, Arbeitsmarkt und Dienstleistungen teilen und mit gemeinsamen Marktperspektiven und Herausforderungen konfrontiert sind."

Wenn die Ziele einmal gesetzt sind und die Strategien entwickelt, wirkungsvollere Beziehungen zu Staatsverwaltung, akademischen Kreisen und anderen Zulieferindustrien sind von grösster Bedeutung



Izvor: Hrvatska Inicijativa za konkurentnost

SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE 1

Small and Medium sized Enterprises



Dr. Rudolf Gruber during roundtable 1

The discussions in Roundtable 1 were focused on the increasing importance of the Small and Medium sized enterprises in the course of stabilisation of the economies of the region. The panel was moderated by Dr. Rudolf Gruber, President of the Supervisory board of EVN AG Austria.

The panel discussions were based on the keynote address by Mr. Hanno Soravia describing the experience of one of the investment pioneers within the medium-sized enterprises in South East European region.

Under the participants in first panel were H.E. Bojan Dimitrjevic, Minister of Commerce and Tourism of Serbia, representatives of the World Bank, Raiffeisen International, as well as representatives of the governmental institutions of Albania, Austria, Bulgaria and Lithuania.

In his opening remarks Dr. Gruber underlined the importance of transfer of know-how between the countries, as well of the importance of the exchange of experience between the investors in the region. He underlined the essence of the intercultural connections on the level of administrations, and also day-to-day business participants. He mentioned that through intercultural connections of the countries in the region and the EU Member States we can speed up the development and conclude reforms in the region within the next 4 to 5 years.

After his opening remarks Dr. Gruber past the floor to Minister Dimitrjevic, who presented to the audience the recent development of the Serbian economy. He expressed the delight of the Government of the Republic of Serbia with the past results and namely the achievement of a GDP growth of 8.16% and export increase of 42% in the last year. He underlined the importance of the privatisation process and the progress of the law reforms for the future economic development of the country.

Regarding the investment opportunities in the SME sector Minister Diminrjevic drew the attention on the over 400 enterprises listed for privatisation in the fields of industry, machine construction, transport, textile and agriculture. Furthermore he announced the opportunity of purchasing share funds in some private and state enterprises. Minister Dimitrjevic announced the proceeding privatisation of 10 hotels and 600 small enterprises in the tourism sector. Concluding Minister Dimitrjevic encouraged the potential new investors drawing the attention on the positive experience made by the already presenter ones.

SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE 2

Cross-border Financing Arrangements and Investment Climate



Mag. Peter Lennkh, H.E. Fatmir Besimi, H.E. David Sopota during roundtable 2

The discussions in Roundtable were concentrated on the cross-border financing arrangements and the investment climate in the region between the Adriatic and Black Sea. The panel was chaired by Mag. Peter Lennkh, Member of the Managing Board of Raiffeisen International Bank-Holding AG Austria.

Under the numerous participants were H.E. Fatmir Besimi, Minister of Economy of Macedonia, Mr. David Sopota, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of Croatia, Dr. Artur Gherman, Representative of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Moldova and number of representatives of the domestic and foreign banks presented in the region as well country representatives and heads of enterprises interested in the financing opportunities in the region.

The roundtable began with the keynote speeches of Minister Besimi and Assistant Minister Sopota.

Minister Besimi described the recent developments of the Macedonian market. He informed the audience about the constant economic growth of the country in the recent years as well about the positive business climate. The Minister announced the Government's decision in offering to foreign investor the possibility of acquiring 100% of the shares in public units listed to privatisation. Furthermore foreign investors are allowed to purchase land in order to establish their business activities without further administrative barriers.

Two big privatisation projects in Macedonia were mentioned by the minister: the already completed deal in takeover of the property of the Macedonian telecommunication company by Deutsche Telecom amounting 323 Million Euro and the following scheduled privatisation of the energy market. Although Minister Besimi gave the opinion that the average of the Foreign Direct Investments in Macedonia with 500 USD per Capita is still quite low.

The Minister informed about the further investment opportunities in Macedonia, focusing on the energy, data transmission, tourism and agriculture sectors and specified the government measures and recent business initiatives improving the business climate. Finally minister Besimi appealed for collaboration between the Governments and the business representatives from the countries of the region.

Assistant Minister Sopota presented the recent development of the economy in Croatia. He pointed out the proved stability of the economy in the country over the last 10 years ranging Nr. 2 in CEE. The average GDP growth in the recent years in Croatia amounts 4.3%. Mr Sopota mentioned that Croatia is going through a considerable transformation and the economic structure is moving quickly toward a dynamic and competitive market-based system. Therefore a fully functioning financial system is of pivotal importance for efficient and effective investment.

Unemployment has been still one of the problems in Croatia and a clear obstacle to growth. Reaching a maximum of 17% in 2000, the unemployment rate shows a clear downward trend as a result of implemented reforms and Government programs,

and it is now at the level of 13.8%. Although Croatia's GNI outperforms other EU Candidate and Acceding Countries, the income gap with EU average still exists.

Presenting the financial market in Croatia Assistant Minister Sopta said that the financial system is dominated by banks. Over 80% of financial institutions' assets are held by banks, followed by insurance companies and investment funds. The stock market in Croatia is relatively well developed, in line with stock markets in Hungary and Slovenia, and its market capitalization reaches over 30% of GDP.

Concluding Assistant Minister Sopta presented the main economic policy goals of the Government of Croatia in medium term according to the start of negotiations for EU full membership. The Government priorities are focused on a sustainable growth and competitiveness, resulting from continued macroeconomic stability and implementation of reforms. The aim is to foster further private sector privatization, while Government investments will be directed in areas related to EU accession. Macroeconomic stability will be achieved through continued fiscal consolidation and stable monetary policy along with achieving external stability by addressing important issues of external and public debt. All of these Government's measures will significantly improve the investment climate, thus making Croatia a highly attractive place to invest.

Following that Mr. Peter Ivanovic, Director of the Investment Promotion Agency of Montenegro presented the economic development and financial market in the country. He mentioned the introduction of the Euro as official currency and its advantages for foreign investors in Montenegro. As main priority of the country's policy Mr. Ivanovic defined building up the trust of foreign investors in the securities of their investments in Montenegro. He also underlined the decrease in taxes to 9%.

Regarding the financial market Mr. Ivanovic informed that the most financial institutions in Montenegro have been already taken over by private hands. He focused the attraction of the audience of the proceeding privatisation of the telecommunication sector as one of the most attractive investment opportunities in the market at the moment.

The highlights of the discussions in Roundtable 2 were the strong interest in infrastructure and environmental investments in order to meet the EU standards. However to make it happen the countries need joint ventures and especially the cooperation with EIB, IFC and other international financial institutions. The need of reviewing the procurement laws for all countries has been identified.

In the course of the discussions Mag. Lennkh drew the attention of the participants on the financing opportunities offered by Raiffeisen International in the region. The group is presented by 8 banks in the countries between the Adriatic and Black Sea. Up to now it possesses 10 Billion Euro in assets and has 10,000 employees. Mag. Lennkh underlined that Raiffeisen International appreciates the strong economic growth in the area as well the political commitment of the governments to bring the whole South-Eastern European region into the European Union. Mr. Lennkh mentioned the pioneer's role of the banks in the in bringing entrepreneurs in the countries of the region. Focusing on the expectation of the foreign banks on the region he underlined the increasing importance of the SME businesses and the downturn of margins in the near future.

Finally Mag. Lennkh summarized that all countries in the region have a tremendous economic growth and undergo a change process toward EU membership. There are a lot of initiatives of the countries to facilitate and support international trade and FDIs. A clear competition among the countries for FDIs is to be noticed. Therefore according to Mag. Lennkh the today's forum is a good platform to make a constructive competition and maybe to unite the political desires. Summarizing Mag. Lennkh mentioned the great investment opportunities and the best prognoses for the coming years for return on the investments made at this point of time in the region.

SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE 3

Telecommunications and investment climate



H.E. Lulzim Basha, Minister of Public Works, Transport & Telecommunication of Albania and Dr. Boris Nemsic, CEO mobilkom Austria, during Roundtable 3

The roundtable about the development in the telecommunication Sector in the Region and the investment opportunities in this branch was chaired by Dr. Boris Nemsic, CEO of mobilkom Austria. Mobilcom Austria is the leading mobile telecommunication company, founded as an independent legal entity to the State.

Under the large number of participants were H.E. Mr. Lulzim Basha, Minister of Public Works, Transportation and Telecommunication of Albania, H.E. Dr. Shpresa Kureta, Ambassador of the Republic of Albania to the Republic of Austria, significant number of representatives of the Albanian enterprises, DI Michael Borze, Managing Director of BENQ Austria and Dr. Peter Goldscheider, Managing Partner of EPIC.

Dr. Nemsic started his opening remarks defining the major investments made recently in the Region and concluding that a big investment movement has been observed. Deutsche Telekom has continued its world expansion acquiring the majority of the Macedonian telecommunication company and has planned a new acquisition in Montenegro. Thereby Deutsche Telekom is represented by direct or indirect investments in three of the countries in the region between the Adriatic and the Black Sea – Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro and in 3 of the New EU-Member States- Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary. Dr. Nemsic has also announced the recent biggest investment in Bulgaria notified by some 1.6 Million Euro and namely the acquisition of Mobiltel by mobilkom Austria. Furthermore Dr. Nemsic mentioned the take over of 100% of the Romanian telecommunication market by Vodafone.

Dr. Nemsic concluded his opening speech by reminding the founding idea of Vienna Economic Forum and namely that to be a platform where investment opportunities can be defined and speed up.

Then H.E. Lulzim Basha, Minister of Public Works, Transportation and Telecommunication of Albania informed the audience about the development of the IT and telecommunication market in Albania. As Albania continues its transition to a market economy, the demand of information technology and telecommunications products is increasing. The market for IT and telecommunications products in Albania has grown 15 to 20 percent annually in recent years. Government procurement projects, including those financed by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, generated growth in this market. Increased foreign investments, primarily in the mobile telecommunications sector, are also a growth factor.

Albania is a market of only 3.3 million people but a lot of companies may wish to consider Albania as a launching point for Southeast European markets. Albania has zero or low duties on IT and telecommunications imports and does not apply market barriers to prevent the import of such products. Over the next three years, the top sales prospects for IT and telecommunications in Albania includes microwave links, fiber-optic connections, GSM infrastructure, customer care and billing systems, LAN/WAN solutions, applications software, networking software, electronic design automation, Internet software, e-business management solutions, enterprise planning, Web-design software, and banking software.

The floor was taken over by DI Michael Borze, Managing Director of BENQ Austria. He mentioned the recent acquisition of 48% of Siemens Telecommunications by BENQ amounting 20 Billion Euro. BENQ is planning increase of production capacity in the telecommunication sector within the next 10 months and a reallocation of the production in Croatia, where already 12 Billion Euro have been invested. Mr. Borze expressed his opinion that right now markets as Bulgaria and Romania are much more attractive for foreign investors as there the labour costs are around 1% of the cost of the product. According to Mr. Borze's opinion CEE is for sure the market where production will move, because the market of the 10 New EU Member States is overloaded and in the region between the Adriatic and the Black Sea there is in general high skilled and cost-efficient personnel.

In the course of the discussion over the different investment opportunities in the region Dr. Goldschneider gave the opinion that in the South-East European market there is a large number of foreign banks presented as RZB, UNICredit and branches of HVB Group, who offer good conditions for financing of reasonable investment project in the region. He also mentioned the use of the IAS (International Accounting Standards) as a precondition for the money borrowing in the region.

After a question about the future of the post services in the region and in particular in Albania, the possibilities of launching wireless technologies were discussed. Minister Basha expressed the opinion that wireless technologies are at the beginning of their establishment in even more developed IT markets than Albania. In this aspect Mr. Borze mentioned that we shouldn't underestimate the social side of the continually growing and innovating technologies, as in the near future according to Mr. Borze's opinion people would want to be disturbed all around with information. In response to this believe Dr. Nemsic said that the trend in educating people and transferring of information to the next generation is right now in the IT technologies, so he do not expect a downturn in the development and the use of new and speedy IT solutions.

Dr. Nemsic addressed the standardisation of the IT sector within the European Union and noticed the lack of a standard regulation on the Single market and the existence of 37 different markets in Europe. In respect to this fact Dr. Nemsic asked the opinion of Minister Basha about the need of united regulation within Europe. In respond Minister Basha appealed not to underestimate the dubious cartel behaviour of some mobile multinationals and that within the European market there has to be protection against monopoly.



During Roundtable 3 Mr Sani Ljubuncic, Director Investment Promotion in the Ministry of Economy of Croatia presented shortly the recent developments in the Croatian economy and telecommunication market.

Mr. Ljubuncic presented the law framework and listed the advantages for foreign investors as free transfer of capital and free transfer of profits gain in Croatia to the country of origin of the investment, equal rights for domestic and foreign investors, reviewed company law meeting the EU standards, busting measures and free zones. He showed that FDI quadrupled over the last years due to the signed arrangements with WTO, CEFTA, also due to the elimination of administrative barriers and the introduction of consequent investment incentives through the law as the reduction of the tax level from an average of 35% to 20%.

In the field of the fixed line network there are 2 network operators on the telecommunication market in Croatia. Since 2004 there have been 14 new market entries through applied licences. The line network has been already digitalized by 100% with over 15,000 km optic cable network. The market penetration in this line of business amounts 42.5% with around 1.9 Million line network customers and about 130,000 customers in the cable TV network.

On the mobile communication markets in Croatia 3 operators have been registered, the last started business activity in July 2005. The market penetration in this sector amounts 67.2% with around 3 Million customers.

Mr. Ljubuncic concluded his presentation noticing the fourth position of Croatia within South-Eastern European market in foreign direct investments (inclusive the privatisation of the mobile telecommunication market) last year amounting 2,403 USD per capita.

SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE 4

Infrastructure project and Investment climate



H.E. Dragan Doko, DI Otto Musilek during roundtable 4

The Roundtable was chaired by DI Otto Musilek, Founding Member of Vienna Economic Forum, Managing Director OMV Gas. Under the numerous participants were H.E. Dragan Doko, Minister of Economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, H.E. Valeriu Ostalep, Deputy Foreign Minister of Moldova, H.E. Juliu Winkler, Delegate Minister of Commerce of Romania, H.E. Dr. Andrija Lompar, Minister of Maritime and Transport of Montenegro.

During the Roundtable H.E. Dragan Doko, Minister of Economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina underlined that the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina is working on developing a sustainable market economy and fulfilling all conditions to start EU integration process. As a result of serious and difficult reforms during the last 2 years now Bosnia and Herzegovina is expecting new round of negotiation with EU to start until the end of 2005. To continue the reform process the Government needs to set up legal, economical and social trials. Minister Doko emphasized on the importance of further development in the private sector, public finance and privatization process. He pointed out the positive effect of regional cooperation with other South-Eastern countries and the international support for the implementation of economic reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As an example, foreign direct investment has been increasing, especially in the production and banking sector.

H.E. Valeriu Ostalep, Deputy Foreign Minister of Moldova, informed the audience about the investment climate in his country. Moldova – EU relations are the major objective of national and foreign policy. The country is in process of fulfillment of the EU conditions. Attraction of foreign investments is a priority. Currently Bilateral Agreements have been signed with 35 countries, including SEE and Commonwealth countries. Energy sector is a priority for the Government, and there is strategic interest in joining the Energy Treaty for Southeastern Europe (SEE), which Moldova is joining as observer. Diversification of energy supply sources is of great importance. Problems are faced in obtaining access to the pipeline network of energy delivery, which makes regional cooperation a priority in this field. Moldova has been operating a project for building a new pipeline to Romania. In the area of transport infrastructure priorities are the development of a modern and efficient transport system network and integration of the network roads and railroads into the European system. Moldova tries to promote some of these projects using the Stability Pact.

H.E. Juliu Winkler, Delegate Minister of Commerce of Romania was the next one to have a presentation. He said that the first Summer Edition of VEF was held in June 2005 in Bucharest and it was an honor and pleasure for the Romanian Government to host this session. He said Romania is a big and important participant on the SEE scene and it may also be considered a determinant junction between Europe, Asia and Middle East through its infrastructure of road, railway, Corridor 7 and the Black Sea. Romania has a new Government since January 2005 and it continues the efforts on improving the business climate. Further decreasing of inflation rate, reducing taxes, stimulating private policy and reducing hidden economy are among the tasks of the Government. A major objective of Romania is EU integration, joining on 1 January 2007. Country report has been positive from the European Commission. Further efforts are necessary regarding the fight against corruption, judiciary system and minorities. Major investments and privatizations in Romania include Renault, RZB, OMV, Ote telecommunication. A main target is invest-

ment in infrastructure development, supported by EU - Nabucco project, Constanza-Trieste pipeline, Corridor 4, 7 and 9. There is also a highway project in north Transylvania, not supported by the EU. H.E. Winkler was glad to report the first common meeting of the Governments of Romania and Hungary in the region on 20 January 2005. On this joint cabinets meeting 15 projects have been approved and signed by the two Governments.

H.E. Dr. Andrija Lompar, Minister of Maritime and Transport of Montenegro described shortly the economical and political situation in his country. Political stabilization is achieved, privatization is progressing, and living standard of the population is increasing. Foreign investors are interested in Montenegro, specifically in the areas of tourism and transport. Investment opportunities in the transport sector include privatization, reconstruction, modernization and building of new rail, also ports, airports, roads. The integration in EU is a main issue, also in terms of transport integration. H.E. Lompar presented a project for a Trans-European corridor passing through Montenegro. This is the Adriatic-Ionian transport corridor, carried out by Montenegro and 4 countries from the region. This highway includes 7 countries and will support the integration of Montenegro and the development of the region. The project does not get enough support from Brussels at this point, but H. E. Lompar hopes that it will be realized.

DI Otto Musilek, Director of OMV Gas and Founding Member of Vienna Economic Forum presented the importance of OMV Gas in Central and Eastern Europe. With the acquisition of 51% of Petron (Romania) OMV has become a leading integrated oil and gas group in Central and Eastern Europe. DI Musilek mentioned the key success factors for investment in SEE – strong investment climate, establishment of a common European framework, stable investment conditions, clear definition of interest rate level, security about negotiation principles and Intergovernmental Agreement. He also mentioned the importance of modernizing the existing infrastructure.

OMV Gas representatives presented the Nabucco project. This pipeline project connects Eastern Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria. The participants are OMV (Aus), MOL (Hun), Transgas (Rom), Bulgargas (Bul), BOTAS (Turkey). The feasibility study phase of the project has been completed and the route is fixed. The project is now facing the development phase, which is supposed to finish in 2007 and construction is to follow in 2008. The gas sources are the Caspian region (Azerbaijan), and the Middle East (Iran, Egypt and optionally Iraq). The outcome of the market study shows 50% for the SEE market and 50% for the EU market. There is a Nabucco gas pipeline international company (residing in Vienna) and local Nabucco companies are to be established in the participating countries.

Mrs. Slavica Korica from Investment Promotion Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina presented the investment environment in her country. Financial stability has been achieved in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with lowest inflation rate in the region, being in the past 4 years under 1%. There is large inflow of foreign banks, which possess 64% of the capital in the banking sector there. Bosnia and Herzegovina has preferential export regimes with EU countries, as well as with USA, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, Japan, Canada, Switzerland, and Norway. Bosnia and Herzegovina were the first to sign Free Trade Agreement with all countries in the Balkan region, and with Turkey. One of the most important ways to invest in Bosnia and Herzegovina is privatization, about 2/3 of investments have been done through this process. Privatization of big state monopolies (telecom companies) is expected. Mrs. Korica mentioned the major infrastructure project in the country - Corridor 5C motorway, connecting Budapest with the Adriatic Sea. Further infrastructure projects planned include the railway on the same corridor, two major ports on the river Sava, and expanding the natural gas network.

Mag. Michaela Götz, Manager of International Relations - Central Europe, Austrian Airlines, held the final presentation. AUA are good contributors in bringing foreign investments in SEE, serving 41 destinations in the regions. Mrs. Götz explained the process of liberalization in the aviation areas and agreements. The European common aviation area includes EU, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. This area is going to expand with Bulgaria and Romania when they join EU. There are also talks with the countries from the Western Balkan region. The integration of new members of the European Common Aviation Area will follow gradually in three phases beginning with ratification of the multilateral agreement by 2007, followed by transitional period and ending with the full integration. The effects of liberalization will be a market consolidation, free competition, lowering prices. National economies will benefit through better accessibility, which may enhance economic growth, and increase in tourism.

PANEL CHAIRMAN REPORT



Dr. Rudolf Gruber



Members of the panel



Mag. Peter Lennkh



Dr. Boris Nemsic



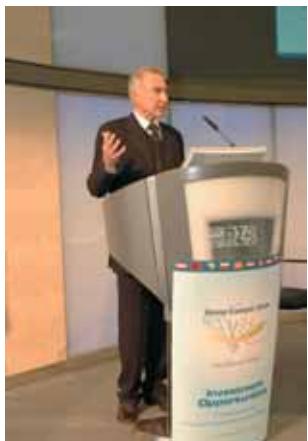
The audience



DI Otto Musilek

The Importance of the Energy Market in the Region

Vienna Economic Forum



Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren!

Es ist für mich eine große Ehre, hier vor Ihnen über die Bedeutung und die Herausforderungen der Zukunft für einen funktionierenden Energiemarkt zwischen der Adria und dem Schwarzen Meer zu sprechen. Ich möchte auch die Gelegenheit nutzen, Ihnen in diesem Zusammenhang die Zusammenarbeit mit EVN, dem Energie- und Infrastrukturunternehmen des größten österreichischen Bundeslandes anzubieten.

Sichere und kostengünstige Energieversorgung ist ein entscheidender Wirtschaftsfaktor. Wer an der laufenden Strukturveränderung der Wirtschaft und insbesondere der Industrie in Richtung Hochtechnologie teilnehmen will, muss nicht nur für die Bereitstellung ausreichender Energie, sondern auch für höchste Qualität in Bezug auf Versorgungs- und Ausfallssicherheit sowie Spannungsqualität bei elektrischer Energie sorgen.

Ausreichende Energieversorgung ist selbstverständlich auch eine der wesentlichsten Grundlagen für die Steigerung des Wohlstandes, der wir uns alle verpflichtet fühlen.

Wir stehen heute alle vor großen Herausforderungen mit der Bereitstellung sicherer und kostengünstiger Energie. An erster Stelle steht dabei die Errichtung ausreichender Erzeugungskapazitäten. Nach einer Untersuchung der Int. Energieagentur sind in den nächsten 25 Jahren Kapazitäten in der Größenordnung von 600.000 MW zu errichten, wofür Investitionen in der Höhe von 1.000 Milliarden EUR notwendig sind.

Für die Staaten Südosteuropas ergeben sich freilich zusätzliche besondere Herausforderungen:

Einerseits die Liberalisierung der Energiemarkte zur Schaffung EU-kompatibler Strukturen mit freiem Netzzugang.

Entflechtung von Transport und Erzeugung sowie unabhängigen Energieregulatoren.

Andererseits die Herstellung von zusätzlichen Leitungsverbindungen zur Ermöglichung des Austausches der Energie zwischen den einzelnen Volkswirtschaften.

Ein besonderer Meilenstein bei der Bildung eines südosteuropäischen Energiebinnenmarktes ist die Unterzeichnung des Vertrages von Athen über die Gründung der „Energiegemeinschaft Südosteuropa“. Mit diesem Vertrag wollen Albanien, Bulgarien, Bosnien-Herzegowina, Griechenland, Kroatien, Makedonien, Serbien-Montenegro, Rumänien, die Türkei und Kosovo einen regionalen Binnenmarkt für Erdgas und elektrische Energie errichten. In weiterer Folge soll der südosteuropäische Energiebinnenmarkt dann schrittweise in den der Europäischen Union integriert werden. Die mit diesem Vertrag erreichte Stabilität und Sicherheit macht Investitionen in die Energieinfrastruktur dieser Region wesentlich attraktiver. Besonders erfreulich für Österreich ist, dass das Sekretariat der „Energiegemeinschaft Südosteuropa“ den Sitz in Wien haben wird.

Damit wird auch die Grundlage dafür gelegt, dass Österreich seine vielfältigen Möglichkeiten und Erfahrungen in Zusammenhang mit der Energieliberalisierung und dem Aufbau einer leistungsfähigen Infrastruktur zur Verfügung stellen kann. Die Energiegemeinschaft Südosteuropa und die Konsolidierung der Energiemarkte bringt nicht nur eine höhere Versorgungssicherheit, sondern auch die Brücke zu großen Energieressourcen, zum Beispiel im Bereich des Kaspischen Beckens.

EBRD und die Weltbank bieten entsprechende finanzielle Instrumente, um Investitionen im Energiesektor der Region zu unterstützen, verlangen aber gleichzeitig die Erfüllung wesentlicher ordnungspolitischer Rahmenbedingungen. Besonders wichtig ist dabei auch die Erhöhung der Energieeffizienz, und zwar sowohl aus ökonomischen als auch aus ökologischen Überlegungen.



Bei der Entwicklung liberalisierter Energiemarkte können österreichische Energieunternehmen wie die EVN ihre Erfahrung einbringen; Österreich ist in Hinblick auf die Umsetzung der Marktöffnung bei Strom und Gas sicher ein europäischer Vorreiter. Und die Energiepreise für unsere Kunden zählen sowohl bei Strom als auch bei Gas zu den günstigsten in Europa.

Unser Ziel ist es, einen Beitrag zum Aufbau einer sicheren und preisgünstigen Infrastruktur in Südosteuropa und darüber hinaus zu leisten. Dabei können wir unsere Expertise in Richtung einer vorbildlichen Kundenorientierung, aber auch unsere Erfahrungen bei der Marktregulierung und der Errichtung moderner Kraftwerke einbringen.

Die ersten Erfahrungen in unseren Nachbarstaaten hat EVN schon früh auf dem ungarischen Energiemarkt gesammelt, wo wir Mitte der 90-er Jahre das regionale Gasversorgungsunternehmen KÖGAZ gemeinsam mit einem Partner erworben haben.

Anfang 2005 hat sich die EVN nun erfolgreich an der Privatisierung der bulgarischen Elektrizitätswirtschaft beteiligt und konnte mit dem Erwerb von zwei regionalen Verteilgesellschaften ihre Kundenbasis mit zusätzlich 1,5 Millionen Stromkunden verdreifachen und die Ausdehnung des Stromnetzes verdoppeln. Dieses Engagement stellt nicht nur das bislang größte und bedeutendste Investment in der Unternehmensgeschichte der EVN dar, es ist auch eine große interkulturelle Herausforderung für uns: zwei von drei EVN Kunden haben heute Bulgarisch als Muttersprache.

Das Privatisierungsverfahren des bulgarischen Staates ist im übrigen nach höchsten internationalen Standards im Interesse der Verkäufer- sowie der Käuferseite durchgeführt worden und somit zu einem echten Symbol für den angestrebten Beitritt Bulgariens zur EU geworden.

In diesem Zusammenhang freut es uns besonders, daß heute von Seiten des österreichischen Finanzministers die Förderung des bulgarischen Energieeffizienzfonds im Rahmen der Energiepartnerschaft zwischen Bulgarien und Österreich verlautbart worden ist.

So wie die EVN sich vom regionalen Energieversorger zum Multi-Utility (Infrastrukturdienstleister) entwickelt hat, wollen wir Partnern in Südosteuropa und darüber hinaus Unterstützung auf diesem erfolgreichen Weg anbieten.

Wir interessieren uns über die reine Stromverteilung hinaus für die Stromproduktion – Wasserkraft, Wärmekraft und Alternativenergie, um günstigen Strom für unsere Kunden bereitzustellen zu können; aber natürlich auch für andere Infrastrukturbereiche.

Die EVN Gruppe verfügt über hochspezialisiertes Know-how in den Infrastrukturbereichen Energie, Wasser und thermische Müllbehandlung. Über ihre 100% Tochter WTE ist EVN als führender Anbieter von kommunalen und industriellen Wasserprojekten bei derzeit rund 70 Projekten in 10 europäischen Staaten im Trink- und Abwasserbereich tätig. Derzeit errichtet EVN in Zagreb sowie in Moskau Abwasserentsorgungs- sowie Trinkwasseraufbereitungsanlagen auf Basis modernster Umwelttechnologie.

Weiters ist die EVN AG mit der Errichtung und Betriebsführung einer thermischen Abfallverwertungsanlage für die Stadt Moskau mit einer Kapazität von 360.000 Tonnen/Jahr betraut, die bereits 2007 den Vollbetrieb aufnehmen wird. Das besondere an unseren Müllverbrennungsanlagen ist die Nutzung des Prozessdampfes zur Energiegewinnung. In unserer Referenzanlage in Niederösterreich erzeugen wir aus dem bei der Verbrennung entstehenden Prozessdampf Strom für 100.000 Haushalte.

Die Finanzierung unserer Projekte im Müll- und Wasserbereich erfolgt auf zwei Wegen: EVN wird im Rahmen von ISPA-Projekten als Generalunternehmer tätig oder übernimmt im Rahmen eines sogenannten BOOT (Built – Own – Operate –

Transfer) – Modells auch Verantwortung für die Betriebsführung. Aufgrund unserer flexiblen Angebote sind wir zweifellos ein interessanter Partner für Kommunen jeder Größe.

Gestatten Sie mir abschließend eine persönliche Bemerkung: Partnerschaften mit österreichischen Unternehmen wie der EVN haben für südosteuropäische Unternehmen deutliche Vorteile. Es sind Partnerschaften auf gleicher Augenhöhe und unterscheiden sich dadurch oft von Kooperationen mit den großen europäischen Konzernen.

Die EVN möchte jedenfalls einen entsprechenden Beitrag beim Aufbau einer sicheren und preisgünstigen Infrastruktur bei Energie, Wasser und Müll in Südosteuropa leisten und langfristige Partnerschaften eingehen.

Dankeschön!



Dr. Elena Kirtcheva and Dr. Andreas Brandstetter

The Questions and Answers Session closing the 2nd Vienna Economic Forum highlighted again the huge investment opportunities in the countries from the Adriatic to the Black Sea. Most highly ranked politicians such as H.E. Milo Djukanovic, H.E. Iuliu Winkler, H.E. Valeriu Ostalep, H.E. Lulzim Basha, H.E. Dr. Adrijan Lompar, H.E. Bojan Dimitrjevic, H.E. David Sopta presented again in a very clear and focused way their different views on the great potentials in various fields of business.

Dr. Herbert Stepic, Vice President of RZB and Chairman of Raiffeisen International Bank-Holding AG expressed his very strong personal belief in the future of South East Europe and however he stated very clearly, that as far as administrative hurdles for entrepreneurs are concerned he hopes for substantial legislative improvements in the near future.

Following the very strict timetable given by the organisation, Dr. Andreas Brandstetter, Member of the Board of UNIQA Insurance group, closed the 2nd Vienna Economic Forum at 4.30 p.m.

IMPRESSIONS – Q&A SESSION with the Prime Ministers and Ministers



*Dr. Andreas Brandstetter - Moderator,
Dr. Herbert Stepic,
H.E. Iuliu Winkler,
H.E. Lulzim Basha,
H.E. Milo Djukanovic*



*(from left to right)
Dr. Andreas Brandstetter,
Dr. Herbert Stepic,
H.E. Iuliu Winkler,
H.E. Lulzim Basha,
H.E. Milo Djukanovic,
Interpreter,
H.E. Dr. Andrija Lompar,
H.E. Valeriu Ostalep,
H.E. Bojan Dimitrjevic,
H.E. David Sopta*



The Plenum





*Vienna Economic Forum
held in the newly renovated conference room of RZB*



Founding and Honorary Members of Vienna Economic Forum



*H.E. Fatmir Besimi,
Mag. Peter Lennkh,
H.E. David Sopota during the coffee break*

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