

**Speech of ambassador Josep M. Lloveras,
Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in
Serbia at the official launch of phase two of the EU
"Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme
in Serbia" at the Tourist high school in Belgrade**

Belgrade, 30 September 2008

Dear Minister, Principal, students

It is my pleasure to be here today at the Tourist high school.

Taking into account that you are being trained in the tourist sector, I am certain that you all understand English. However, I will address you in Serbian and I hope you will understand me.

I am very pleased to launch the new phase of the Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme in Serbia.

Why does the European Union assist the vocational education? Because it is one of the basic conditions for social and economic development in the country.

A large number of young people in Serbia are unemployed. Among other, this is also because young people lack necessary qualifications and professional skills. In order to compensate this, the European Union has, since 2003, been providing support to secondary vocational training schools and to date 20 million EUR have been invested in their development. Half of this budget has been used for equipment handed over to secondary schools in Serbia. The remaining amount is aimed for training of high school teachers and principals.

However, this is not all. It is my pleasure to announce that the European Commission has yesterday adopted the IPA 2008. funds for Serbia amounting to 168 million EUR.

Four million EUR are aimed for vocational education training, while one million EUR is aimed for tourist development. These funds will provide continuous support in these areas.

Taking into consideration that we are today in a school for tourism, I wish to dedicate a few lines to this important sector. Serbia has tourist potentials, and the development of services in this sector will contribute to the creation of new jobs in this sector. Tourism can help Serbia in presenting itself in the best possible way, in attracting investors and investment. This is why educating workers in the tourism sector is extremely important. That is why we have contributed to your education to make it of a good quality and modern.

Dear students, your school is one of many throughout the Serbia that benefits from vocation-educational training. I hope that you and your teachers would enjoy work in new vocational cabinets. I'm pretty sure that knowledge and skills that you will get here will help you to find job quickly after graduation.

I wish you successful school year.