

Belgrade, May 10, 2011

EU Boosts Competitive Serbian Companies

The European Union through its' project Support to Enterprise Competitiveness and Export Promotion (SECEP) in Serbia has organised the third „Meet the Buyer“ event in Kragujevac on May 10th as direct support to Serbian companies to enter global supply chains. In cooperation with Kragujevac “Auto Compo Net” automotive fair, SECEP provides opportunities for local suppliers to meet international buyers in person, to see their purchasing requirements and to begin negotiations.

Twelve multinational automotive supplier companies agreed to send their buyers to the event in Kragujevac and the list includes Bosch, Knorr Bremse, Magna, Methode, SILA, PMC. More than 200 companies from Serbia and South East Europe have announced their participation at the Auto-Compo net fair. “Meet the buyer” is unique opportunity to support the development of Serbian competitive suppliers able to meet the supplier requirements of multinational corporations.

This concept was new to Serbia but SECEP helped in hosting two events, staged in Belgrade by SIEPA and in Kragujevac a year ago. These events were a success and after the third at Kragujevac in May 2011, SECEP will help organize a fourth in October 2011.

“Meet the Buyer” is central to the SECEP mission to improve competitiveness and export performance of Serbian companies. This is being done through a series of individual company assessments, business improvement projects, international consultant support and workshops tailored to the specific needs of Serbian SMEs engaged in SECEP's supplier development programme.

Supplier Development is one part of SECEP's activities while the two other major parts are focused on cluster and export support and capacity building of state agencies. The SECEP project is undertaking a programme of internationalisation for the six prioritised clusters. Internationalisation aims to develop Serbian clusters' ability to not only export, through actions such as market analysis and partner search but also to network outside of Serbia with clusters in other countries together with linkages to CEFTA countries.

SECEP, an EU funded project with a total budget €3.5 million, is supported by the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, SIEPA, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Serbian Agency for Regional Development.

SECEP's overall objective is to support the development of a market economy and socio-economic cohesion in Serbia by improving the international competitiveness and export performance of SMEs. The EU has invested €50 million for Serbian SMEs (including €20 million in direct credit lines) until 2006 with additional €6.5 million from IPA 2007 and 2008.