



PRESS RELEASE:

FIC urges leaders to adopt needed economic reforms

White Book 2008 tackles business registration, tax reform, work and construction permits

Sarajevo, 04.12.2008: Today the Foreign Investors Council (FIC) presented the White Book 2008 urging leaders to adopt much needed economic reforms. The White Book is a publication produced on an annual basis by the FIC and its purpose is to provide BiH authorities with a prioritized agenda of reforms in order to address the key obstacles to investment in the country and to support BiH on its way to joining the European Union.

The FIC is concerned primarily with improving business, legal and regulatory issues. The White Book 2008 tackles four key areas: registering a business, obtaining work and residence permits for foreign employees, reforming taxes and obtaining construction permits. The FIC Members identified a short list of priority reforms that can realistically be implemented within the next 12 months. (List attached)

Tie Sosnowski, FIC President and CEO of Triland Development stated that "some improvements in the business environment have been made over the past year, but other countries in the region have committed to reform far more aggressively than BiH". In addition, he said that "it is clear the current global financial crisis has already begun to affect the BiH economy. The true impact of the financial turmoil spreading across the world on the economy and the citizens of BiH is still yet to be determined. Therefore it is even more crucial that all the stakeholders act quickly and decisively to enact much needed reforms in order to provide a more attractive business environment for both foreign and domestic investors."

Mr Alexander Zsolnai, Chief Financial Officer at Raiffeisen Bank and a Member of the FIC Board of Directors added that "reforms are even more important at the current juncture, especially with the world economy entering a recession. It is essential that all levels of the government are focused on improving the competitiveness of the BiH economy, especially as companies based in BiH face a major slowdown in their key export markets in the region and the EU."



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Improving the Business Environment in BiH

FIC Members hope that the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union will mark the beginning of a new era in BiH and that the government officials will accelerate reforms in order to ensure that the business environment is predictable and transparent. The FIC Membership will spare no effort in assisting BiH in moving forward economically.

Established in 2006 as a non-profit business association, the FIC aims to be the single voice of foreign investors in BiH. The FIC strives to promote pro-business initiatives and deliver practical support to all investors to improve the business environment in the country. By now, the FIC published two White Books outlining the priority solutions for obstacles to investment and economic growth in BiH. At the moment the FIC has 27 members and their total investment in Bosnia and Herzegovina exceeds 8 billion KM.

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