

12th eSEEurope Working Group Meeting
Cavtat, 10 June 2004

Minutes of the Meeting

1. Introductions and Opening Speech and Input of the Republic of Croatia to the processes of eSEEurope Initiative

H.E. Mr. Miroslav Kovacic, *State Secretary in Central Government Office for e – Croatia*, opened the meeting by thanking ITU Centre of Excellence for Europe and CIS countries and INA Academy for organizing the benchmarking workshop, underpinning the importance of this issue for the region. **Mr. Kovacic** added that working on development of Information Society is not an easy task, yet the benefits outnumber the difficulties by large. These endeavors thread the path for integration into EU and towards creating more competitive economies. He said that new Government in Croatia, which came to office end last year, is developing their activities around eEurope 2005 action plan.

In Croatia, activities of the cabinet level state body for information society are line with the adopted eSEE ToR. In terms of ICT Strategy, it was decided to put together an operational working plan rather than to produce a new strategy. This action plan has been prepared based on EU standards, and it is as concrete as possible in terms of deadlines and implementation mechanisms. Although there is still a lack of legal infrastructure, lack of compatibility of different parts of Government that often employ different and expensive information systems, a substantial effort is being made to address this issue. In this regard, a centralized IT procurement and systems solutions by means of which all major software is purchased through their office through the web based catalogue is operational. Although the office has been accused of wrecking Croatian IT vendors because of low prices, this activity is very beneficial because through centralized purchase one is able to exert control and to do a more coherent and coordinated effort in this field.

The Office is planning to introduce new legislation next year. Emerging partnerships with the private sector are under way, especially in the domain of e-business. In addition, e-Health project that in its pilot phase includes four major Croatian hospitals, should be implemented in the end of this year.

Mr. Kovacic concluded by saying that major difficulties arise from the lack of standards and lack of systematic development. Bridging the digital divide is being addressed and he expressed hope that they will be able to rely on the EC even more in this respect in the future.

Dr. Marijana Vidas Bujanja, *The Chair of eSEE Initiative*, thanked the hosts, particularly to **Dr. Dijana Simic**, *Deputy State Secretary in Central Government Office for e – Croatia*. The Chair also thanked **Mr. Jens Toyberg- Frandzen**, UNDP BiH Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator, **Mr. Richard Harris** from European Commission and INA Academy for participating in the meeting.

The Chair said that this is first eSEE Working Group Meeting in an enlarged Europe and that eEurope 2005 is the only active Action Plan. The breakthrough of eSEE Initiative related to the signing of the joint SEE statement at EU Ministerial Budapest conference for IS and our successful share in the conference conclusions point that this is ripe and mature Initiative. In addition, numerous activities were completed since our last meeting in March. eEnvoys participated in recent e-Government training in Tallinn, Estonia and the Benchmarking workshop. ICT Sector Status Report that is funded by UNDP BiH in cooperation with UNV and other UNDP offices in the region is currently being finalized.

The Chair praised the public awareness work that is intensified by eSEE Secretariat, hosted by UNDP BiH Country Office with assistance of UNDP RBEC Bratislava. Of particular importance for the Initiative is the launch of the 1st issue of eSEE Newsletter, as another way of communicating the progress of the eSEE Member States.

Please note that e-Envoys and Appointed Senior Policy Officials of the eSEE member states have presented their reports on the overall progress of eSEE Agenda fulfillment with special emphasis on certain commitments. The above progress reports are summarized in the Matrix of Fulfillment of eSEE Agenda.

A delegation of UNMIK was also present, including representatives from the Ministry of Transport & Communications, Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo.

2. 1. Adding the political pressure: Letter to eSEE Prime Ministers by Erhard Busek

Mr. Jani Bogoevski, *Expert WTII of the Stability Pact for SEE*, said that eSEE Initiative was very well presented at the recent Portoroz Regional Table Stability Pact meeting. **Mr. Bogoevski** emphasized that there were many activities that the working group carried out between the last two regional table meetings, with special appreciation of the e-Governance activities in Estonia and Benchmarking workshop in Cavtat.

With regards to the letter, the core of which was drafted by the SP while one country specific eSEE Agenda priority target already achieved and one priority that was still not fulfilled by the Member States was inserted by e-Envoys/ ASPOs, **Mr. Bogoevski** said that more up to date and final comments are expected to reach him, to submit for signature of **Dr. Erhard Busek** and to then officially send these letters to the Prime Ministers.

Line of Action: e-Envoys agreed to send **Mr. Bogoevski** the final updates and changes to this letter by the end of next week, if any. The letters shall then be taken to **Dr. Busek** for signature.

2.2. New time frames to update eSEE Agenda

Suggestion: **Mr. Bogoevski** suggested to organize Ministerial Conference in the beginning of 2005. New deadlines of eSEE Agenda should be endorsed then by the Ministers.

Line of Action: It was agreed that e-Envoys/ Appointed Senior Policy Officials will take back to their countries a proposal to agree on the revising of dates of eSEE Agenda. As a result of these expert consultations, they will send the Secretariat the suggestion for new time frames.

Upon receipt of all the suggestions, a common deadline will be agreed for all the Member States, and will then be attached as an Annex to eSEE Agenda.

Suggestion: **Mr. Yuri Misnikov**, *Regional ICT 4D Coordinator in UNDP RBEC Bratislava*, suggested that after the above mentioned expert consultations, the new time framework should be endorsed on a political level by the eSEE Ministers at a mini summit, to secure the political will and commitment and to make the legitimate for governments.

The group supported the idea. The date and venue is still to be decided.

Suggestion: **Mr. Mario Apostolov**, *UNECE*, said to keep in mind the possibility of holding the above discussed summit in Macedonia, as a back to back event to the summit envisioned and planned by the late President Trajkovski for IS in Macedonia.

Suggestion: **Mr. Bogoevski** suggested the group for future eSEE meetings, to chose an Information Society related topic and to discuss it in detail in each eSEE meeting.

Dr. Diana Simic, *Deputy State Secretary in Central Government Office for e –Croatia*, said that later today **Ms. Marija Simunovic** from the *Supreme Court of Croatia* will introduce the transparency project from Croatian Courts, and that this is already in line with the above suggestion of **Mr. Bogoevski**.

Suggestion: **Mr. Sergiu Sytnic**, *Appointed Senior Policy Official for Moldova*, suggested the group to add more attention to e-Government in our Agenda in the future.

Information: **Dr. Simic** said that 1st preparatory meeting for the WSIS II, will be held in Tunis, Jasmine Hammamet, and that she will continue to actively participate in this process.

3.1 Report on e- Governance training in Estonia, Tallinn 31 May- 5 June 2004

Mr. Zoran Puric, *e-Envoy of Serbia*, thanked e-Governance Academy, Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to UNDP for enabling the eSEE group and other representatives from the Region to participate in the training.

The high expectations were met in entirety, with professional lecturers and wide spectrum of relevant, informative and inspiring presentations and excellent organization.

The training consisted of lectures that extended to afternoon visits to the sites and projects to witness their functionality in practice.

Of particular relevance were those lectures that tackled the issue of how Estonia over the past ten years has overcome the obstacles on legislative and political level. Among other things, Public administration reform was successfully implemented while interoperable information systems were developed. The *Tiger Leap* project whereby

schools were connected to Internet is of peculiar importance. The concept of e-card and the set of privileges attached to it point to another success story. **Mr. Puric** said that thanks to the training, he made connections and key contacts, which will enable him to explore and maximize applicability of the Estonian experience in Serbia.

Ms. Natalia Mociu, *Engineer at the Information Society Development Directorate of Moldova*, said that few specialists from Moldova attended a similar training in **January**. As a follow up to this training, a similar project on computerization of all schools is now in the first stage of implementation in Moldova.

The Chair commented on usefulness of such trainings, and encouraged the group to foster an exchange process.

Mr. Yuri Misnikov, *ICT for Development Regional Coordinator in UNDP RBEC Bratisava*, expressed satisfaction that eSEE group has taken the full advantage of the training in Estonia. eGovernance Academy is also providing local training programs for, civil servants and local capacity trainings for all interested parties, not only in Estonia but also in other countries.

3.2 Report on ITI Conference and eSEE Benchmarking Workshop in Croatia, Cavtat 07 –10 June 2004

Dr. Simic thanked INA and ITU for grants and organization. Twenty- three participants registered through eSEE Secretariat and twenty- six participants applied through ITI Conference. Around thirty participants were present at all times, while certain lectures were attended by over fifty participants. There were five methodological sessions and seven case studies presented, in total.

One of conclusions that emerged from presentations and discussions is that although region specific indicators should certainly be determined, they should as much as possible be in line with eEurope indicators. The region specific element should be drawn from eSEE Agenda and from National development strategies. Other issues that were discussed are methodology, data sources, ad hoc surveys, data quality and availability, data to be analyzed and it was suggested not to choose indicators that can not be measured and data that can not be found.

Question: Mr. Apostolov, asked whether the Benchmarking indicators were identified?

Suggestion: Ms. Nera Nazecic, *Head of eSEEurope Secretariat*, said that ICT Sector Status Report will, as part of the study, nominate the set of region specific indicators. These indicators can then be used and further developed by the eSEE Benchmarking Taskforce.

Suggestion: Dr. Simic said that the eSEE Benchmarking Taskforce should be encouraged to connect and to intensify their work. In regards to the indicators, they should be linked to the policy, and also by looking at NISP and seeing what is being fulfilled so far.

Suggestion: Mr. Ioannis Konstas, *Coordinator in INA/SETA*, suggested that benchmarking seminars of this nature should continue in future. Participants from Belgrade have offered to host the next meeting.

4. Case Study: Croatian e-Judiciary System

Ms. Marija Simunovic, *Croatian Supreme Court*, introduced the first programme financed by EU, Obnova fund for reconstruction aimed at enhancing transparency of the judiciary. This is a web based centralized content management application for all the courts in Croatia (<http://sudskapraksa.vsrh.hr/supra/Default.asp?Menu=Pocetna>). After the process of making anonymous all the parties involved in the process, all court decisions reached from 1993 onwards are now public and easily accessible to all. In the intranet part, the full names of all the parties are available for internal use of the judges and all other who have access. The project is ranked as a true best practice and has found many useful applications.

5. Discussion on National Strategy for Building a Framework for E-Business

Mr. Apostolov presented the concept paper, inviting the working group to contribute their knowledge and experience to further improve it. Valuable input was already given by INA and EC, and UNECE is relying on further cooperation with them in order to make the Strategy entirely applicable in SEE region. There are still several areas where the document needs further upgrading. The idea behind this paper is to create a compatible basis for e-business also by absorbing the relevant issues from *Acquis Communautaire*. E-business implies integration of systems and processes. It is evident that we need to analyze and re-engineer business processes on both company and macro economic levels. A pressing need to foster creation of adequate telecommunications infrastructure, enticed the issuance of a strong recommendation to include broadband connectivity. There is also a focus on infrastructure, primarily institutional, particularly in relation to what has already been done. A legal basis for e-business has been outlined, and there is still a room for improvement in this area. Data protection, secure contract formation, e-signature are some of the priorities addressed in the Strategy. A goal was also to tackle the EU integration issue. There is a strong recommendation to employ the use of international standards for e-business. 1st policy recommendation is that e-business and e-business standards, governments should create an environment which will allow SME to participate in activities that they were not involved before.

The Chair thanked **Mr. Apostolov** for presenting this useful document for the countries from SEE region, which will be used as a tool to re-engineer the business processes, build legislation infrastructure to make e-business available to all the companies, and to decrease the existing digital divide between small and big companies.

Suggestion: Mr. Misnikov said that it is important to create such guidelines for government senior officials in e-business. e-Envoys should disseminate these Guidelines in governments once it is finalized. Consultation should be held in each Member State to determine the ways of helping the businesses.

Line of Action: The Chair asked the Secretariat to disseminate this document to ICT Forums for comments. The deadline for receiving comments is set for 1st August.

Suggestion: Mr. Slavko Maric, *Appointed Senior Policy Official for Bosnia and Herzegovina*, said that the document should elaborate in detail on the topic of educations of managers in SMEs, as unnecessary risks are often taken in business due to the lack of proper education. In addition, we do not have a possibility to present

concrete solutions for SMEs. Lastly, we could add a little more emphasis on possibility of use of open source software as many of those enterprises have financial problems to buy this expensive software.

Suggestion: Mr. Bogoevski said that eSEE Initiative could connect to the Investment Compact Initiative for SMEs, who work on developing SMEs and base our cooperation on finding out what ICT could offer to SMEs in terms of training and development. We are already in contact with Initiative for telecommunication liberalization, and although the representative could not attend this meeting, we will keep them in the loop in our future work. At the recent Entrepreneurship and Employment conference, it was discussed that we have more employment in ICT sector than in any other part of economy.

Suggestion: Mr. Apostolov suggested to present the *UniDoc* project in our next meeting.

The Chair encouraged this idea.

6. eSEE Secretariat Update and Report on ICT Sector Status Report

The Chair and the Working Group thanked the Senior Management for accepting the suggestions of the working group and for extending the deadlines.

Ms. Nazecic informed the group that the Secretariat has intensified work on PR activities.

1. The first issue of eSEE Newsletter was launched,
2. Web site appearance and content has been improved
3. eSEE Initiative as topic was attached to BiH ICT Strategy PR radio campaign, reaching the audience of thousands
4. Throughout the process of ICT Sector Status Report creation, excellent awareness region-wide about the eSEE Initiative and the ToR for CLSB and Guidelines for NISP was provided. The awareness was raised in Government, public, private, education and NGO sectors.

The primary purpose of *ICT Sector Status Report* is to provide strategic support to eSEE Initiative by monitoring progress of eSEE Member States in the fulfillment of eSEE Agenda. The goal is to review and analyze the existing policies and strategies impacting the ICT Sector and to give strategic support to policy makers. Moreover, the goal is to outline description of domicile and international funded ICT related projects and foster exchange of best practice in SEE region. An analysis of overall situation in ICT sector in eSEE Region in Business, Public, Government, Education, International Organizations and NGO sector will also be provided. A set of Benchmarks for measuring Information Society will be proposed. Through this project, the existing eSEE Network and build the new regional network of contacts for future work will be strengthened.

Project deliverables are: 1. Country / Area Reports that consist of general assessment and analysis of ICT related country facts, 2. Fashioning of Regional ICT Sector Status Report

The following steps were taken so far: UNDP regional network was animated to support the process. On a parallel track, cooperation with UNV was developed. This was

followed by questionnaire design, recruitment and training of interviewers, survey and data processing was the next series. The next step was the recruitment of national consultants and regional coordinator, who after agreeing on the structure of the Country Report worked in parallel with the process of data collection, basing their draft reports on various sources available. The process involved consultation of national statistics offices, ministries, CRAs, International Organizations studies, etc. NCs have integrated the survey results into their work and adjusted their reports accordingly. INA has contributed a chapter on communications infrastructure. After consultative process with the regional coordinator, consultants produced their Country/Area reports. The last report came in on 1st June 2004.

It will take another 2 weeks for regional coordinator to complete the Regional Report. The report will be sent for review to e-Envoys/ NCs, ASPOs, INA and other interested parties. It will take additional 2 weeks for proof reading, layout design, DTP and print.

Structure wise, country report template was designed to make reports more comparable to each other and more compatible in terms of assembling them in the regional report. The template also defines an overall structure of regional report that covers the following issues:

1. The Country ICT/ IS Policy and Strategy Status
2. The Assessment of Country's Readiness for Information Society
3. In-Depth Description of ICT Environment (Development Pillars)
 - 3.1. Legislation, Policy and Regulatory Environment
 - 3.2. ICT Infrastructure and Services
 - 3.3. Digital Divides
 - 3.4. E-Governance
 - 3.5. ICT for Business and E-Business
 - 3.6. E-Education
 - 3.7. E-Health
 - 3.8. ICT Industry
4. Future Developments
 - 4.1. Alternative Trends
 - 4.2. Important Events in Near Future
 - 4.3. Benchmarking

First results of the Study indicate that SIBIS indicators are not so inapplicable for the Region. They will be revised to better fit our peculiar situation. While we propose to adopt the EU (SIBIS) methodology in order to be compatible with EU standards, SEE countries should only compare to each other to determine with what speed are we making the progress individually and as a region.

Although the project is unfolding in a very satisfactory way, we have encountered some obstacles. One typical obstacle was general reluctance to disclosure of data, encountered both in survey and country report drafting process. Although missing data is an indicator in itself, we also faced the challenge to reconcile the varying levels of availability of data across different countries, with some areas having a very good coverage, and other areas not. The relationship of quality and quantity needs attention as some reports abound with data without analysis, others offer a clear picture that is not backed with data.

In terms of improvements for future work, if greater resources are available consultants should then be involved in the process from the start. Research can also be improved should more resources be available, and generally all the steps require more time.

Recommendation is to continue conducting the research consistently in regular time intervals in order to reach continuity of prompt measuring the speed of our progress.

Some of major advantages that were accomplished in the process is the creation of the strong network by the consultants in their research process, a network of UNDP was energized while eSEE working group members, Chair and e-Envoys were actively involved. The process led to discovery on where we can find the ICT related data, and the lack of it, which data is reliable, valid, etc. Regional Cooperation was developed with eight consultants working together for the same Cause. All this is an indicator which shows that eSEE Initiative is able to mobilize the resources to do a more thorough project of this nature in the future. **Ms. Nazecic** invited the working group members to work together to mobilize together all the resources available for benchmarking in SEE.

7.1. EC Perspective and Support to the eSEE Initiative

Mr. Richard Harris, *Principal Administrator for SEE, DG Information Society*, said that today is an important day for Information Society in the EU due to the meeting on telecommunications and Information Society Council. An update to eEurope 2005 is required in terms of connecting EU at the high speed and the creation of broadband strategies.

After a decade no public money was planted in telecommunications sector. At present, dichotomy arises from the fact that Sweden is willing to allocate the portion of taxpayers' money for this purpose, while the current laws do not allow governments to place money in competitive fields. Therefore, a request was directed to EC to prepare the guidelines on how to make this legal. In turn, interested countries would produce a national broadband strategy that addresses the five areas, such as e-inclusion, benchmarking and tackling the possibility of market failures, reiterating that e-government e-health and e-learning are key elements of the Lisbon process.

As Croatia is more advanced than other eSEE countries, such diversity of approach is present in the EU, too. All the twenty-five countries will attend the aforementioned Council meeting, and all these countries are in different stages of development. The diversity and heterogeneity of ministries from EU Member States present in this meeting is striking. It is interesting to note that even some EU Member States do not have yet a ministry that deals solely with IS issues. However, the conscious decision, such as eSEE Initiative's endorsement of ToR for CLSB to organize in a particular way is highly advantageous.

Parliament has a final say who will be in the EC. Current interim situation, with two persons leaving to pursue career elsewhere and ten new commissioners who are attached as deputies. Commissioner Liikanen is soon leaving, and it is still an issue whether they will get an interim replacement.

Irish will chose a new president of the commission, and this person will have to present himself/herself in July to the parliaments who will have a final say. All other member states will nominate their commissioner. Up to recently, five of the biggest countries had two commissioners each, and as a result of assignment of ten new commissioners, reductions will occur. In end august, it will be known who is a new commissioner for this sector. It is likely that this person will not take office before September. The negotiation process of Turkey and Croatia will be then tackled as a priority.

Although, it is difficult to use EU money for common regional project, limited funds are available for research through CARDS programme that is open to most eSEE Member States. Therefore, bids are open to those countries that have negotiated their part.

Telecommunications liberalization and manifold EU laws are attached to it. Chapter 19 of Acquis is enforced by Directorate backed with the court of justice. There is no Acquis for eEurope action plan and as such it is simply a monitoring exercise, which is not enforced. Commissioner's role in eEurope Directorate General is to ensure that there is no exaggeration when, for example a number of computers in schools is listed to build a case of untrue and exaggerated of progress. International relations of DG IS oversee the functionality of all these processes.

Mr. Harris noted that there is no equivalent of eSEE group for telecommunications, as eSEE deals predominantly with Information Society. This could be a potential weakness because a number of countries of Western Balkans are falling backwards in this area. The only aid programme that can help is CARDS. RELEX made a plan last month and **Mr. Harris** suggested to allocate money for collective action of Western Balkans in IS and telecommunications field.

Question: Is there a way to generalize the work of eSEE group to include both, telecommunications policy along with IS.

Answer: Mr. Misnikov said that NISP Guidelines that were produced by the eSEE Working Group also include telecommunications dimension along the IS and they reflect upon the standards of the Acquis. Telecommunications component was considered as an integral part of eSEE Agenda too, and Telecommunications Taskforce has been assigned accordingly.

Line of Action: The Chair said that she will take action to intensify the work of the Telecommunications taskforce to duly address this issue.

Mr. Harris announced his plan to leave the Commission in January 2005. He committed to ensure that his replacement will continue to follow up on and support eSEE Initiative, and that his departure will not affect the continuity of cooperation.

Mr. Bogoevski thanked **Mr. Harris** for his diligent and unceasing support, expressing hope that the eSEE group will meet him at next working group meeting.

7.2. UNDP Perspective and support to eSEE Initiative

Mr. Jens Toyberg- Frandzen, *Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator in UNDP Bosnia and Herzegovina*, emphasized that ICT sector is one of a few sectors in which countries of SEE have comparative advantage and the opportunity of quantum leap in economic development. Taking into consideration requirements of economic growth in general, and particularly of SA processes in SEE countries, it is clear that the development of ICT sector is essential part of the regional progress towards the EU.

Mr. Toyberg Frandzen said that despite the continuous brain drain, SEE still has the critical mass of well educated labor force in this sector who have the knowledge valued on the world market, and in proper environment they could boost economic development

of their countries. International community will continue to add value to creation of this environment through bilateral support, but also through support of initiatives of regional cooperation.

In the view of UNDP, eSEE Initiative creates opportunities for exchange of experience between the countries which deal with similar problems, starting with development of physical infrastructure, through creation of stable political and economic environment to establishment of competitive market economies. Thanks to exchange of experiences shared at this table, successful solutions used in some countries could be applied elsewhere, consequently boosting the development of the region as a whole.

Furthermore, by supporting eSEE Initiative, UNDP supports strategic development plans of eSEE Agenda. For this, it is essential to assess ICT development status in all countries, so that the decision makers could have a relevant information about the situation and needs of ICT sector. This Report will also increase awareness about possible solutions. UNDP considers ICT Sector Status Report to be a valuable exercise, which will lay ground for future cooperation in SEE concerning ICT.

Mr. Toyberg Frandzen expressed his expectation that the processes of eSEE Initiative will continue to strongly impact the creation of feasible ICT development strategies in public sector of SEE. This will improve quality of governance, create healthy competition in the field of telecommunications, as well as support development of physical infrastructure. Good physical infrastructure and competitive prices in fixed telephony and Internet services, with coherent legal framework in accordance with Acquis Communautaire, are prerequisites which every government in SEE should provide to their citizens. When this environment is created, it is certain that knowledge of ICT experts in commercial sector of SEE will prevail and instead of leaving their countries, these people will take part in the development of regional economy.

Such positive developments would lay a foundation to creation of SMEs in ICT sector, lessening of unemployment and reduction of poverty. Thus, ICT development is one of the critical milestones that lead to sustainable economic development. Furthermore, ICT development will be one of the pillars, which will hold the SEE region on the way to successful achievement of millennium development goals.

In accordance with these facts, UNDP BiH is using this opportunity to reaffirm its support to eSEE Initiative. Through Sarajevo based eSEE Secretariat UNDP will continue to actively support the coordination processes, provide logistical and administrative support, continue to foster the process of country strategies for ICT development, as well as to facilitate regional cooperation within eSEE Initiative

In line with this, **Mr. Toyberg Frandzen** offered the hospitality to the Working Group to hold their next meeting in Sarajevo meeting in October, in combination with the launch of ICT Sector Status Report.

Next eSEE Working Group Meeting: The group agreed with the proposal. Next eSEE Working group meeting will be held in October in Sarajevo. The exact date is yet to be confirmed.

7.3 INA Perspective and support to eSEE Initiative

Mr. Ioannis Konstas, *INA Academy coordinator*, said that a conference on e-security will take place in Sofia on the 23rd of September 2004 in collaboration with the ICT Agency of Bulgaria. Prior to the conference, INA Academy is organising a 3-day training on e-security in collaboration with ITU.

Mr. Konstas committed to circulate an in depth report from the eSEE benchmarking workshop. Although this workshop was a success by all standards, it would be highly advantageous to have EU on board. The workshop was well attended and it saw participation of eSEE group, UNDP, representatives from national statistical offices, research institutes and academia. **Mr. Konstas** agrees with the idea that this workshop should find its continuance on regular basis. The next workshop could also involve the ministers and regulators.

Mr. Konstas also introduced **Mr. Adnan Sulejmanpasic** who is currently doing his post-graduate thesis on ICT research. He asked the working group to assist him with their contacts.

Suggestion: Mr. Bogoevski informed the group that for CLDP, their fiscal year will start in September and October. This is an opportunity for the group to re-apply for continuance of CLDP support to eSEE Initiative.

Moreover, **Mr. Bogoevski** announced that he has completed his assignment and that this is his last meeting with the eSEE working group. He will return to his Ministry in Macedonia to continue his mission.

The Chair, Secretariat and the working group thanked **Mr. Bogoevski** for his exceptional performance and for his dedicated work and professionalism. The group expressed hope that a new expert from the Stability Pact for SEE will be assigned as his replacement to support the Initiative in like manner.