



## PRESS RELEASE

Sofia, 21 October 2005

### **Employment Ministers Intensify Co-operation on Job Creation in South Eastern Europe**

**Sofia, 21 October** — In order to pursue much needed economic growth, social cohesion and regional stability in South Eastern Europe, the Ministers at the Second Ministerial Conference on Employment in SEE agreed today (21 October) to deepen the exchange of good practices in the design and implementation of employment policies.

The so-called Bucharest Process has brought together the SEE countries and international organizations to develop recommendations on how to improve employment policies. In Sofia today, the Ministers responsible for employment committed themselves to implement the recommendations and to find ways to further improve their employment policies. This includes, among others, measures for the long-term unemployed and for raising the percentage of women and young people in the work place.

As high and productive employment is of paramount concern to the region, the Ministers have also identified an additional set of priority areas:

- labour inspection and health and safety at work being important elements of the quality of the employment;
- coherence between economic and financial policies on one hand and employment, labour market and social policies on the other;
- social dialogue, in other words, institutionalised communication among governments, workers and employers.

Addressing the ministerial meeting in Sofia, **Deputy Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact Michael C. Mozur** said: "Facilitating increased levels of employment will have a manifold effect: it will provide for the well-being of SEE citizens, it will contribute to enhancing social cohesion and it will ensure steady socio-economic progress. In this context, it is important to consider ways, which would make the results of the Bucharest Process sustainable in the long run."

The Bucharest Process was launched in 2003 by the governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and UNMIK/Kosovo. They have mandated the Council of Europe and the International Labour Organisation under the auspices of the Stability Pact's Initiative for Social Cohesion to guide the activities.

Launched in 1999, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe is the first comprehensive conflict-prevention strategy of the international community, aimed at strengthening the efforts of the countries of South East Europe in fostering peace, democracy, respect for human rights and economic prosperity. The **Stability Pact** provides a framework to stimulate regional co-operation and expedite integration into European and trans-Atlantic structures. The Pact's secretariat, located in Brussels, is organised into three units - Working Table I deals with issues of **democratisation and human rights**, Working Table II with **economic reconstruction, co-operation and development** matters and Working Table III with **security issues**.

For the full list of the Sofia Conclusions, please click here:

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