

# THE CITY OF NIŠ AT THE UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE IN BONNE

This year the annual UN Climate Change Conference was held in the former West German political capital – Bonn. This is one of the largest conventions under the auspices of the UN, which gathers the representatives of all UN member states at the highest level, the representatives of the NGO sector and the activists. The main topics of this year UN Conference in Bonn (COP23) were the levels of the implementation of the previous major agreements on climate change in Rio, in Kyoto and in Paris, as well as the latest challenges that include extreme weather conditions such as wildfires, floods, storms and tropical heat waves.

What is significant for the city of Niš is that for the first time, since the UN Conference on Climate Change has been held, equal participation has been taken by the representatives of the regions and the leaders of the local self-governments worldwide, within the special Climate Summit of the local and regional leaders, as the official part of COP23. The Chairman of the Niš City Assembly, M.S. Rade Rajkovic, at the invitation of the Mayor of Bonn, and since being a representative of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, took part in the Conference and the Summit held from November 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017, whereas he was the sole representative from Serbia and the region.

Activities at the Summit were made up of the official and informal parts, whereas the key topic of the discussion was the way to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which is largely released by the combustion of coal and oil. Research suggests that the increase in the average air temperature of over 2 degrees Celsius over the

coming years would lead to catastrophic consequences and negative climate change.

At the Summit, attended by over 1000 delegates and over 330 political leaders from over 80 countries worldwide, the Chairman of the Niš City Assembly, during his address, as well as in the conversations with the mayors from several dozen cities worldwide, stated that the City of Niš was ready to deal with climate change and that all necessary steps would be undertaken in order to increase energy efficiency and ensure the sustainability of the energy system in the city. This is only possible through energy efficiency projects, which would contribute to the significant reduction in exhaust emissions, with the aim to make the city of Niš a pioneer in the field of climate and the environmental protection in the region.

At the Summit, the Chairman Rajkovic stated that the city of Niš had the opportunity to improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy sources, which included energy savings, the introduction of cleaner and renewable energy sources, recycling and treatment of water pollution, electrification of public transport, economical public lighting and other preventive and practical models for eco-friendly environment. In addition, everything mentioned, could be achieved through the international forums, exchange of experience and project financing, stated the chairman in his address.

Moreover, the Chairman Rajkovic discussed those and similar problems related to one of the biggest threats to humanity – climate change during the bilateral meetings with his colleagues on the sidelines of the Summit. The Chairman of the Niš City Assembly also talked about the willingness of the City of Niš to deal with climate change and concrete co-operation with other cities and countries with the California Governor, Mr. Jerry Brown, with the Mayor of Hiroshima, Mr. Macui Kazumi, with the Mayor of Bonn, Mr. Ashok Sirdharan, with the Special Envoy of the Kingdom of Morocco in UN, Mr.

Hakim El-Haite, as well as with many other political leaders and experts in this field from Africa, the USA, Asia and Europe.

Special guest speakers at the Summit were Bertrand Picard, the world leader in the Solar Impulse Project, as well as the former California Governor, and present chairman of the R20-Regions of Climate Change Action, Mr. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

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## **IMI STARTS BUILDING FACTORY IN NIS**

July 29<sup>th</sup>

Philippines based company IMI announced in Nis on July 30, that it would start building a facility for the production of electronic car components in the Lozni Kalem location in Niska Banja in August. Eric de Candido, Managing Director of IMI Bulgaria, pointed out that the 12,000-m<sup>2</sup> facility would be completed in July 2018.

“The production facilities in the location will be built in three stages. The second one will entail the construction of a 8,000-m<sup>2</sup> facility, and a facility with 4,000 square meters will be built in the third stage”, De Candido said at the Nis City House, at the official handing over of the building permit for the Lozni Kalem location. De Candido stated that more than 1,500 people would work in the facilities in Niska Banja in the next ten years. According to him, the production of electronic car parts in the new facility would meet all the requirements of the European Union.

Minister of Economy Goran Knezevic pointed out that 1,250 people would work in IMI Serbia as soon as July 2018. Mayor of Nis Darko Bulatovic pointed out that the local self-government had made maximum efforts in order for IMI to get a building permit as soon as possible.

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# **RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FACADES OF THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN NIS**

July 7<sup>th</sup>

Nis City Mayor Darko Bulatovic with his associates visited the works on the reconstruction of the facades of the buildings of Nis National Museum and Nis National Library. This project is financed by the Government of the Republic of Serbia through the process of public procurement in three parts.

First part includes the construction works on the facades at the level of investment maintenance and the installment of the decorative lighting on buildings: Nis National Theatre, Nis National Museum, Nis National Library, Nis Symphony Orchestra, Endowment Building of Milorad Vasic.

Open public procurement procedure for works on the facades of buildings in Nis (I part) was launched on 23/02/2017. The contract with selected bidder Neimar Projekt doo Belgrade was signed on 26/04/2017. The value of the Contract is 42.073.390,00 RSD. The deadline for the completion of works is 120 days since the beginning of the works which is 22/5/2017. The scope of works includes: the repair of facade surfaces, removal of degraded, sub-assembled parts and

reconstruction of façade surfaces with re-dyeing; repairs of carpentry, replacement of sheet metal (gutters and gaskets); repairs of roof structure and roof cover with replacement of worn-out elements.

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## **AMBASSADOR OF NORWAY VISITED NIS**

April 3<sup>rd</sup>

Nis City Mayor Darko Bulatovic met with H.E. Ambassador of Norway Mr. Arne Sanes Bjornstad, who led the Nordic Business Alliance delegation in their visit to Nis. The cooperation with companies in Norway, Sweden and Finland, and attracting investors from these countries, as well as facilitating the procedures for their business operation in Nis were the topics of the meeting between the city management and the representatives of Nordic Business Alliance. Companies from Norway, Sweden and Finland, whose representatives visited Niš, can count on the help of the city government and national institutions if they decide to invest in this part of Serbia, as the Nis City Mayor Darko Bulatović said.

“Today we talked about the possibility of opening the production capacity and the availability of educated and highly skilled workforce, as well as educational institutions in the city. This was an opportunity to see why Nis is excellent destination that we would recommend to any company to start their business operations here” as Ambassador Bjornstad said.

The goal of Nordic Business Alliance in Serbia is to promote

and strengthen the network and cooperation between Nordic companies and Serbia and to contribute to the development of business relations and activities (between the Nordic countries and Serbia).

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## **ZUMTOBEL GROUP IS COMING TO NIS**

“Dear fellow citizens, today is a great day for the citizens of Nis.

Although the Government of the Republic of Serbia, from July 2016 until today, managed to attract two large investors to Nis, which would hire more than 3,500 workers with a high proportion of highly educated personnel, and allow me to remind you that these were: Integrated Micro-Electronics (IMI), from the Philippines, which would invest over 20 million euros and employ at least 1250 workers and German Leoni, which, in new factory in Nis would invest 20 million euros and employ at least 2,200 workers, the news announced today by Serbian PM Aleksandar Vucic in an open letter to citizens of Nis, that the Austrian Zumtobel would invest in Nis over 30 million euros in the construction of a manufacturing plant with the production starting in 2018 is a historic moment for our city.

Thus the promise given by Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic to the citizens of Nis during the seven-day stay of the Government in Nis is fulfilled, by bringing several world-renowned companies to Nis and by returning Nis to the place it belonged to, which is the center and generator of the future development of the southeast of Serbia. The City of Nis and

the citizens of Nis are thanking him for this.

The Austrian company Zumtobel Group is one of the leading in the field of innovative solutions for the lighting and production of accompanying components. With three internationally recognized brands *Thorn*, *Tridonic* and *Zumtobel*, and two lesser known *acdc* and *Reiss* brands, the group offers a wide range of products and services to its customers around the world. The group has 14 production facilities on four continents and sales facilities in about 90 countries, employing over 7,000 workers. Zumtobel Group is constantly expanding by taking other brands, and in 2006 the group went out on the stock market. It is known worldwide as "Mercedes in the world of the latest lighting technology". At the beginning of 2016, the company Zumtobel donated to the City of Belgrade and the City of Nis modern public lighting with smart management.

Zumtobel Group plans to build a factory of approximately 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> and to employ a significant number of Nis citizens with a large share of highly educated personnel. For the realization of the planned project, about 10 ha of land is needed, which the Republic of Serbia and the City of Nis will provide in one of the Industrial zones in Nis. The decision-making process lasted over a year. During the six visits of Zumtobel Group to the City of Nis, we introduced to them the comparative advantages of the Republic of Serbia and especially of our city. A special accent in the negotiations was on the industrial tradition, potentials and plans for the development of the Science and Technology Park and the advanced technology industry in Nis, i.e., the advantages that the University of Nis is generating above all.

As the prime minister pointed out, "our engineers, our workers and our young innovators are becoming members of this big family" and with the arrival of these factories they have more reasons to plan their families and their careers in our city.

In the end, once again I would like to thank Aleksandar Vucic for his enormous personal effort to bring this significant investor to our city and to enable the opening of new jobs and new employment, which are a key prerequisite for higher standards and better lives of citizens.”, as Mayor Bulatovic said at the press conference held at Nis City Hall in this occasion.

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# VENEZUELAN CULTURE WEEK IN NIS

October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016

On the occasion of the “Venezuelan Culture Week” in the City of Nis, the Chairman of the Assembly of the City of Niš, Mr. Rade Rajkovic organized office reception for the Ambassador of the Bolivarian

Republic of **Venezuela** in **Serbia**, Her Excellency, **Dr Dia Nader de El Andari**.

The Chairman of the Assembly of the City of Niš, Mr. Rajkovic, on behalf of the citizens of Nis, thanked Her Excellency, **Dr Dia Nader de El Andari**, for her efforts to organize this event in Nis and to enable our citizens to better learn about the culture of Venezuela. This will certainly contribute to the rapprochement of our countries and to the creation of better prospects for cooperation.

As far as cooperation is concerned, said Mr. Rajkovic, it can be developed primarily in the fields of culture, education, tourism and sports, whereas a mutual interest is to find a way for cooperation in the field of economy.

Showing gratitude for the welcome, Her Excellency, the Ambassador **Dr Dia Nader de El Andari** also pointed out to a number of areas in which the cooperation could and should be developed. She also emphasized that her mission is to help Serbia establish its Embassy in Caracas as soon as possible and pleasurably accepted to organize the exchange of cultural and artistic programs in the future.

Apart from the Chairman of the Assembly of the City of Niš, Mr. Rajkovic, The Chairman of the City Municipality Mediana, Mr. Milan Krstic and the Director of the Tourist Organization of Nis, Mr. Uros Parlić, also welcomed Her Excellency, **Dr Dia Nader de El Andari**; they also had the chance to present, in general outline, the values of Nis, which the guests from Venezuela could find interesting.

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## **NIS LIBERATION DAY IN FIRST WORLD WAR**

October 12<sup>th</sup>

On the occasion of the celebration of the Nis City Liberation Day in the First World War, the flower wreaths were laid on the monument dedicated to the Duke Petar Bojović in the park across the City Hall. The respects on this day were paid by Nis City Mayor Darko Bulatovic, Deputy Mayor Prof. Dr. Milos Bandjur and President of the Assembly of the City of Nis, Rade Rajkovic. The wreaths were also laid by the delegations of the Nisava District, the Police, the Army and associations that nurture recollection of the liberation wars and their victims.

On December 12, 1918, units of the First Serbian Army, led by the Duke Petar Bojovic, were wiped out in Nis. After three days, the troops of the allied armies arrived in the city. From July 1914 to October 1915, Nis was the seat of the Government and the National Assembly, the war capital of Serbia in the First World War. The government was placed in the building of the district authority (the current University of Niš), and the National Assembly occupied the Officers' Mess Building.

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## **EU FORMER PARLIAMENT MEMBERS IN NIS**

September 30<sup>th</sup>

Nis City Mayor Darko Bulatovic met today with the former EU Parliamentarians at Nis City Hall. "Your visit is very important, for our country and our town, especially since it comes at the moment important for European integration process of Serbia. Membership in the European Union is a priority in the foreign policy of our country, and it is also important for the functioning of large cities like Nis, because a number of investments and market opportunities opened up. This is especially important in the light of the recent challenges that await us in the negotiation process by chapters. An important message for the citizens of Serbia is that the European Union has approved the opening of chapters 23 and 24 in the accession negotiations. Bearing in mind that these are the two most important chapters on which the European Union rests, namely the respect for the rights and freedoms of all citizens and the rule of law, the opening of these chapters represents a great recognition to our government and our

country of its progress in the implementation of reforms”, said Mayor Bulatovic. According to him, through the adoption of strategically important documents and action plans that are in line with the documents of the European Union, City of Nis, as a local government, wants to contribute to the acceleration of the reform process and show that we are a good partner to the Serbian government at the local level in its efforts to bring us closer to membership in EU.

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## **COOPERATION PROGRAMME BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY PRESENTED**

The new grant program to support innovative research projects in Serbia has been presented today to the businessmen and representatives of the scientific community at the meeting organized at Nis City Hall in cooperation with the Regional Development Agency South and Regional Chamber of Commerce. The participants were welcomed on the behalf of Nis City Mayor by Mr. Dragoslav Pavlovic, Assistant Mayor for Economy and Investments.

The cooperation programme is being implemented by the Innovation Fund and it is funded by the European Union, in the amount of 2.4 million euros, and the Republic of Serbia, in the amount of 1 million euros. It is designed with the technical assistance of the World Bank. The Fund provides grants amounting to 300 000 euros per project, and in the next months, it will be presented in Belgrade, Kragujevac, Cacak, Novi Sad and Novi Pazar.

The application for the funds can be submitted by the consortium of maximum five members consisting of at least one private small, micro and medium-sized enterprise established in Serbia, with annual revenues of at least 200 000 euros, and a public scientific research organization, also registered in Serbia.

Cooperation programme between science and business is one of the pillars on which the Innovation Fund together with its partners base their comprehensive and consistent commitment to strengthen innovation sector as one of the cornerstones of the local economy based on knowledge.

In addition to this program, since March 2016, the Fund has been implemented a pilot program for technology transfer TTF Programme, funded by the EU, with the objective to enable the redirection of public knowledge from academic research organizations to the private sector by linking researchers with businesses. In June 2016 the Innovation Fund signed a cooperation agreement with the University of Nis.

Since 2011, Republic of Serbia Innovation Fund has been actively promoting links between science, technology and economy and contributes to the development of innovative entrepreneurship. The Delegation of the European Union in Serbia has been supporting the work of the Fund since its establishment. The Fund has awarded financial support to more than 50 inventions developed in young and technologically mature domestic private enterprises under the Support to Innovation in Serbia Project financed by EU funds in the amount of 8.4 million euros. EU support will continue through additional funds in the amount of 4.9 million euros for the implementation of the Program of cooperation between science and business, to the work of the Office of Technology Transfer under the Program TTF and to the development of the Strategy of Scientific and Technological Development of Republic of Serbia for period 2016-2020.