

Serbian-German cooperation

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During the recent visit of German Chancellor Angela Merkel to Belgrade, economic topics remained in the shadow of two main political issues – the process of Serbia’s EU integrations and the Kosovo status. Nevertheless, the fact is that Germany is Serbia’s major foreign trade partner and that capital-related interests have always been above any political affinities or antipathies, which has been confirmed so many times in history, especially when it comes to German-French relations. More by Ranka Pavlovic.

Germany has so far invested some 1.5 billion EUR in Serbia and 22,000 people have found jobs in those companies. 85% of the companies running business in Serbia are very satisfied with the conditions. The list of German investors interested in investing in the Serbian economy this year is twice as long as last year’s. German business people are interested in investing in infrastructure, car parts production, energy, mining, agriculture and environment protection. Company „Reum“ is to employ some 350 workers in a car part factory by 2012, while company „Medsorg“ will be building a recycling plant in Kraljevo.

German investors like Subotica most, because only 100 days elapses there from the beginning of negotiations on the establishment of a factory or a company to the beginning of production. It is in Subotica that most German companies in Serbia are running business, such as „Siemens“, which produces and exports high-tech windmill generators.

The top individual investment of German investors in Serbia has been the privatization of „Hemofarm“, which „Stada“ bought for some 480 million EUR. Next comes the investment in the METRO CASH AND CARRY trade chain, worth more than 160 million EUR,, then „Messer Tehnogas“ with 100 million EUR, „Henkel“ with 80 million and „Nord Zucker“ with some 50 million EUR. In the first six months of this year, the exchange in goods with Germany totalled some 1.7 billion dollars, 659 million of which were exports, which was by 39.5% more than in the same period last year.

Angela Merkel’s visit has been the second visit of a German chancellor to Belgrade in the past two decades. A good indication is the fact that in the total gross amount of German bilateral aid, Serbia is at the 16th place among 151 states. For instance, BIH is at the 39th position, Croatia is at the 49th place, Macedonia at the 67th and Montenegro at the 78th. Ever since at the beginning of democratic changes, Germany has granted one billion EUR of bilateral aid to Serbia and some 400 million through EU funds. The funds have mostly been invested in infrastructure, energy, water supplies, raising capacities of local self-rules and humanitarian purposes.

Germany, as the most powerful EU country, regardless of political disagreements with Serbia, is one of the most important points of support to Serbia on its EU course. The stand of

Germany must be taken into account and analyzed and must be installed into decisions on Serbia's future, because Germany is the most influential and largest country in the EU and one of the top economic partners of Serbia. Angela Merkel and I will continue with our dialogue, said Serbian President Boris Tadic these days.

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