

Radovan Jelašić: Promoting achievements, inventiveness and commitment in Serbia

Speech by Mr Radovan Jelašić, Governor of the National Bank of Serbia, at the promotion of the TV Serial “Big Small Business”, directed by Olivera Miloš Todorović, Belgrade, 30 January 2008.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I warmly welcome the idea of a TV serial promoting achievements of small businesses in Serbia, and still more so, promoting what seems to be the key to success – determination to take life into one’s own hands, inventiveness, commitment and unrelenting effort to improve yourself and achieve more day after day. I am sure that the stories of those who mustered the courage to quit their jobs in state enterprises and venture out into the world of private business will encourage many people in Serbia to do away with the deep rooted belief that the state is bound to provide each and every person with a well-paid job, and that all you have to do is wait long enough for the employment bureau to call you. I hope these stories will encourage them to have confidence in themselves, to trust their intelligence, ability and creativity, just as the protagonists of this TV serial did and, finally, made it.

It is a particular pleasure for me that the author, ShockArt Production and television Studio B, supported by the European Agency for Reconstruction, decided to show that there are positive processes in our society that lead to change and better life. In this respect, the media have a special role, both in terms of education and social responsibility. Unfortunately, nowadays we are flooded with examples of the worst things in our society, as if there were nothing else in Serbia apart from political intrigues, financial affairs or deaths and accidents. It is clear that most of the media focusing on these topics are only looking for higher rating or circulation figures. It practically boils down to the following: the more you slander, often even by publishing the most disgraceful lies, the easier it is to beat your competition.

I am convinced that much of our people’s discontent – regarding both the speed of change in the society and one’s perception of chances of success in the process of transition – is media shaped. In such an environment, TV serial “Big Small Business” seems more valuable as it shows that right here, although not shown in the media, there is quite a different Serbia, represented by individuals who are daring and know how to work, create, better their lives and hence, contribute to the progress of society at large.

For the purpose of encouraging development of small and medium-sized enterprises, the government has so far provided private entrepreneurs with access under favourable terms to two APEX global loans of the European Investment Bank in the amount of EUR 65 million, two credit lines worth EUR 63.25 million from the Government of the Republic of Italy, and the EAR Revolving Credit Fund in the amount EUR 15 million. Everything else, from coming up with a good idea, developing a good project to successful business realization, the entrepreneurs have had to do by themselves. It is encouraging that an increasing number of people is willing to take the leap into the waters of big small business and that the media is willing to provide coverage.