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News text:	<p>WORLD-AUSTRIA-VOJVODINA IRE: Serbia need not fear of regionalism</p> <p>SALZBURG, 31 January 2008 (Beta) – Vojvodina should be given more competencies than it has at the moment, said the Director of the Institute of the Regions of Europe (IRE), Mr. Franz Schausberger, saying that Serbia need not fear of regionalism.</p> <p>Mr. Schausberger said, in his discussion with the journalists from Vojvodina, that the EU regional policy is contrary to separatism.</p> <p>He said that IRE's main task is "to support the idea of regionalism, decentralization and subsidiarity, which is very important for Vojvodina, since it enables it to define its politics".</p> <p>"A lot of countries fear of and see those three principles as separatism. However, they are the most important pillars of EU policy, which are contrary to separatism, and therefore, there is no need for fear", said Mr. Schausberger.</p> <p>In his estimate, the advantage of regionalism is that the governments of countries can transfer a part of their responsibilities to other governmental levels.</p> <p>"I think that Vojvodina needs to be given more competencies than it has. According to the Constitution of 1974, it was entitled to it, yet I do not think that Tito's time should return, but new solutions should be found", said Mr. Schausberger, adding that "it is not easy to explain, taking into consideration Serbia's experiences with Montenegro and Kosovo".</p> <p>He indicated that IRE continually tries to help Vojvodina, which is why they organized meetings with the President of the Executive Council of Vojvodina and the President of the Vojvodina Assembly, Mr. Bojan Pajtić and Mr. Bojan Kostreš in Austria, when not only politics was discussed, but also economy and potential investments.</p> <p>"The membership of Vojvodina with IRE is of special importance for Serbia, because it is on the way to European integration, yet not intensively enough. On the other hand, it is very important for Vojvodina to have contacts with European officials, who wish to support and help it", said Mr. Schausberger.</p> <p>The Director of IRE said that the citizens of Europe do not want a centralized EU, nor all the decisions to be made in Brussels, but they want all the decisions to be made in their environment, which was also the idea behind IRE's establishment in 2004.</p> <p>Today the members of IRE are 60 regions and companies from 11 European countries. Vojvodina became an IRE member in 2006. According to official data, the current barter between Serbia and western Austria, to which the region of Salzburg belongs, is about \$30 billion. Approximately 220 Austrian companies do business in Serbia, however, only around 20 of them are from the western part of Austria.</p>

Journalists from Vojvodina visited Salzburg in the organization of the Office for European Affairs, Executive Council of AP Vojvodina.
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