



PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, 13 June 2019

The EU funded project 'EU Support to the Kosovo Competition Authority and State Aid Commission' has held today the conference "COMPETITION IS GOOD, WITH REGULATION IS BETTER" initiating unprecedented discussions on competition and state aid policies in Kosovo as means to promote economic growth.

The European Union Office in Kosovo is supporting the Kosovo Competition Authority, Kosovo Competition Commission, State Aid Department and State Aid Commission to further develop their institutional capacity and harmonize Kosovo competition legislative framework and enforcement practices with EU acquis. This EU funded project represents the first major initiative aimed to support competition and state aid policies and key responsible institutions in Kosovo. The duration of the project is from January 2019 to May 2022. The overall budget of the project is almost 3 million Euros.

The event has encouraged discussions about challenges and opportunities faced by investors in Kosovo markets, bringing together the highest representatives of government institutions (KCA, SAD, SAC, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economic Development), key market players (IPKO), media and civil society (Kallxo, GLPS, "Consumer"). The event included a panel discussion with influential speakers from competition and State aid sectors.

Riccardo Serri – Deputy Head of the EU Office in Kosovo / EU Special Representative said that: "Now it is time to increase the focus on enforcement of competition policy and state aid rules. Regulated and increased competition between providers of goods and services will have positive impact on Kosovo customers. It will encourage companies selling in Kosovo market to innovate and provide the consumers with wider choice of products, better quality and more innovative products. All of these will be available at better prices."

Minister of Finance Bedri Hamza stated: "Special thanks to the European Union in Kosovo for the active support of our country in many sectors but also for this particular project which will contribute to Kosovo Market to make it more competitive and regulated. Establishment of a fully functional State Aid Department in two years is a great achievement and we are proud of that. There is always room for improvement but we are on the right track and we are committed for further progress to be achieved. "

If properly monitored and enforced, competition policy promotes free trade and ensures that companies compete fairly with each other to procure customers' business. For the coming 3 years KCA, KCC, SAD and SAC will receive EU-funded support through the assistance of competition and State aid top specialists in order to lead the government agenda when faced with issues related to unjustified market monopolies, government grants and business schemes, privileges, regulatory or other trading barriers discriminating State Owned Enterprises and market players. The ultimate objective of competition policy is to create wider choice for consumers by fostering innovation, better quality and lower prices.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement is the contractual framework for the EU and the Kosovo administration to discuss technical and policy issues including competition and state aid in relation to the European agenda.

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