

Nobel Peace Prize Nominee Leads Delegation from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Explore Nova Scotian Experiences in Local Government

Toronto, November 7, 2003 – A delegation from Bosnia and Herzegovina, led by Nobel Peace Prize Nominee Selim Beslagic, is in Nova Scotia from November 8th to 16th to meet with representatives of provincial and local governments, as well as private and non-governmental organizations, to look at Canadian and Nova Scotian experiences in environmental management, local government and urban planning. It's all part of a study tour being organized by the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI), a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in urban areas in Canada and internationally.

"We are pleased to be able to bring this delegation to Nova Scotia," said the Honourable David Crombie, President and CEO of the Canadian Urban Institute. "This is a unique opportunity for elected leaders and practitioners from Bosnia and Herzegovina to meet their peers in Canada and to learn first-hand how provincial and local governments in another country, together with their community partners, are tackling similar issues and challenges."

The study tour is part of six-year cooperation program between Bosnia and Canada, which began in 1998. Funded by the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the program is helping to rebuild Bosnia's local government institutions in the post-conflict period since the war ended in 1995. This has included introducing principles of transparency and accountability in local government, citizen participation in planning and improved solid waste management.

While in Nova Scotia, the delegation will meet with Nova Scotia Environment and Labour, Halifax Regional Municipality, Miller Composting Corporation, Lunenburg Regional Recycling and Composting Facility and many other organizations. Study tour participants will have an opportunity to meet Nova Scotians involved in urban management. They will see concrete examples of projects that have been implemented to address quality of life issues.

Participants from Bosnia include the Honourable Selim Beslagic, Member of Parliament and former mayor of the City of Tuzla, the Honourable Ramiz Mehmedagic, Minister of Physical Planning and Environmental Protection, and various elected and non-elected officials from the Tuzla Canton, where activities of the CIDA project are centered. Tuzla is the fourth largest city in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the administrative and cultural center of the northeast part of the country. It is also the region's economic engine. The Tuzla Canton (pop. 600,000) contains 13 municipalities including the City of Tuzla (pop. 180,000).

Media Release



In 1997, Mr. Beslagic received a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in promoting peace and unity. During his term as Mayor of the city, Beslagic was able to deflect the tide of ethnic nationalism that swept through the former Yugoslavia during the conflict that followed its break-up in 1991.

“Beslagic and his policies have served as a benchmark of good governance, democracy and ethnic coexistence at the local level in Bosnia,” notes Dr. Tibor Frank, Executive Director of the CUI’s International Programs Office. “His efforts to maintain peace and civility during the 1992-1995 aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina led to the survival of his city as a bastion of tolerant and democratic relations among citizens and has earned him international recognition.”

“By supporting good governance and rule of law principles, this project in Bosnia is helping to build and sustain peace by nurturing a culture of unity, diversity, tolerance and fairness and through pursuing equitable access to local government decision-making processes, services and resources,” explains Dr. Frank. “Local authorities have a large role to play in establishing an environment of unity within and between different communities, ethnic groups and various socio-economic strata. As a multicultural country, Canada’s experiences in this area are seen as very relevant to our Bosnian partners.”