



U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN OFFICIALS DISCUSS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSE SOLUTIONS AT USTDA CONFERENCE

*USTDA Announces Plans to Award Grants to Further Priority Projects
in Romania and Serbia*



His Excellency Gordon Bajnai, Hungarian Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, addresses participants at USTDA's Europe Regional Emergency Management and Response Conference in Budapest.

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY – (October 30, 2007) Strengthening and promoting coordination among integrated emergency management and response systems in Central and Eastern Europe are the goals of a USTDA-sponsored conference at the Corinthia Grand Hotel Royal in Budapest. The event, which continues through October 31st, attracted participation by approximately 220 participants, including Ministers and other senior government officials from 14 countries and representatives of U.S. government agencies, technology providers and international organizations.

“Increasingly, countries are looking to maximize their system harmonization and equipment interoperability not only on a national level, but on a regional basis,” said Acting Director Leocadia I. Zak in remarks at yesterday’s opening plenary. “By establishing systems that work together and share information across borders, countries can better anticipate emergencies and more effectively coordinate appropriate responses.”

The conference agenda incorporates discussions on the emergency management and response needs in the region and presentations on more than 15 projects ranging in value from \$20 million to \$400 million. Focus areas include hydrological, meteorological and seismic monitoring systems; integration of civil and military information systems and the impact of International Traffic in Arms Regulations; state-of-the-art technical interoperability; and terrestrial and satellite telecommunications applications. In addition, plenary sessions, panel discussions and workshops have been scheduled on key issues such as common regional requirements for emergency management and response; risk management and mitigation; and emergency response capabilities for police, fire and medical operations.

(More)

At the opening plenary, Acting Director Zak announced USTDA's intention to award two grants that will further the region's emergency management and response capabilities. First, USTDA will fund technical assistance, valued at \$700,000, to the Romanian Special Telecommunications Service in establishing a blueprint for interconnecting telecommunications infrastructure among government agencies.

Under the second grant, the agency intends to provide a \$200,000 grant to fund investment analysis for the Serbian Ministry of Finance on the design and creation of an integrated telecommunications infrastructure that combines customs and border integrity with emergency management systems. More information on the USTDA grants is contained in a separate information sheet.

In addition to Acting Director Zak, other participants in today's opening plenary included U.S. Ambassador to Hungary April H. Foley and His Excellency Gordon Bajnai, Minister of Local Government and Regional Development for Hungary. Countries participating in the event include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, and Turkey.

The conference has also attracted significant interest from U.S. firms who are present to offer technology solutions to meet the region's needs. Lockheed Martin, Harris Corporation, Ericsson USA, Motorola, Siemens USA, Hewlett Packard, ESRI, Raytheon, Federal Signal Corporation, and Winbourne & Costas are corporate sponsors of the event.

Additional participants in the conference include representatives from the U.S. Departments of Commerce and State, the U.S. Geological Survey, the U.S. Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the National Weather Service, and the American Red Cross. Officials from international lending institutions and regional and international organizations are also present, including the Export-Import Bank of the United States, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, the South East Europe Drought Management Center, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, and the United Nations Emergency Communications office.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency funds various forms of technical assistance, early investment analysis, training, orientation visits and business workshops that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment. USTDA's strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support sound investment policy and decision-making in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, investment and sustainable economic development. In carrying out its mission, USTDA gives emphasis to economic sectors that may benefit from U.S. exports of goods and services.



**Information on USTDA Grants Announced
at Europe Regional Emergency Management and Response Conference
October 30, 2007**

USTDA has announced plans to award two grants to support the development of emergency management and response infrastructure in Eastern Europe. The projects will enable sweeping improvements in infrastructure and capabilities in Romania and Serbia. USTDA has approved funding for both grants and anticipates signing grant agreements with the project sponsors in the near future. The grants are as follows:

Romania: Next Generation Network Infrastructure for Emergency Management – The Government of Romania is planning to establish a Next Generation Network Infrastructure for Emergency Management that will address functionality, bandwidth capacity, geographical reach and transmission/storage security limitations of existing infrastructure. USTDA plans to support this effort by awarding a \$700,000 grant to the Romanian Special Telecommunications Service to fund technical assistance on improving the government’s ability to respond to crises. In particular, the grant will provide a functional blueprint for an entirely interconnected telecommunications infrastructure among governmental agencies.

Serbia: Customs/Border Integrity and Integrated Emergency Management Systems – Under a newly adopted law regarding Serbia’s Integrated Border Management Strategy, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Interior are working together to increase the integrity of Serbia’s borders by facilitating the free movement of trade and people across its borders in an efficient manner. At the same time, the Ministries are simultaneously striving to improve the government’s capacity to respond to emergencies. To further this effort, USTDA has approved a \$200,000 grant to the Ministry of Finance to partially fund a study that will determine the best mechanism for improving current customs operations while sustaining and/or building new enabling information technology infrastructure to create an integrated emergency management and response system. In addition to the USTDA grant, Raytheon Company of Waltham, Massachusetts, will contribute additional resources toward the completion of the study.