

ALBANIA

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA IN RESPONSE TO THE EARTHQUAKE AND HANDING OVER OF EMERGENCY RELIEF GOODS

In response to the request from the Government of Albania related to the earthquake, which occurred in Tirana on 26th November 2019, JICA promptly provided emergency relief goods to assist in alleviating the consequences of the damage.

The handover of relief items, tents and sleeping bags, was held at Tirana International Airport on 4th December. Attendees from the Albanian side were Deputy Defense Minister and General Director of the General Directorate of State's Material Reserve, while H.E. ITO Makoto, Ambassador of Japan to Albania, and TAKEICHI Jiro, Chief Representative of JICA Balkan Office attended the handover from the Japanese side.



H.E. ITO Makoto, Ambassador of Japan to Albania, delivers a speech

NORTH MACEDONIA

SIGNING OF CULTURAL GRANT ASSISTANCE FOR NATIONAL OPERA AND BALLET

Signing ceremony for Cultural Grant Assistance on "The Improvement of Musical Instruments, Sound and Lighting Equipment for the National Opera and Ballet" was

held on December 11 in Skopje. The ceremony was attended by H. E. Bujar Osmani, the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia, Mr.

Vaso Ristov, Director of the National Opera and Ballet, H.E HANEDA Keiko, Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of North Macedonia, and Mr. TAKEICHI Jiro, Chief Representative of JICA Balkan office.

Through this assistance, worth of 79,800,000 JPY (equivalent to 663,000 EUR), Japan tends to improve the quality of the performances of the National Opera and Ballet, and by improving the activities also contribute to the education and the capacity building of the youth in North Macedonia, as well as to improve the mutual understanding of the communities through culture.

This is the second grant of such kind in North Macedonia. The first one, in 2001, contributed to the renewal of the instruments of the National Philharmonic Orchestra.



Signing ceremony



Signing of Cultural Grant Assistance for National Opera and Ballet



Follow-Up Seminar on Protection of Competition



Follow-Up Cooperation on Environmental Education in Waste Littering



From JICA Balkan Office: JICA in the time of Pandemic

SIGNING OF JOINT ACTION DOCUMENT FOR SARAJEVO PUBLIC TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

On February 12, Mr. Adnan Steta, Minister of Traffic in Canton Sarajevo, signed a joint action document with Mr. KAWAHARA Shuntaro, JICA Senior Advisor, on implementation of the Project for Formulation of Public Transport Management and Operation Capacity Development Plan in Sarajevo Canton.

The plan will include a revision of public transport policies and applicable legal acts, regulations and strategies for public transport in Sarajevo Canton. It will also define improvement of operator's management and capacity, as well as a plan for the rehabilitation and replacement of tracks, depots and fleets.

This plan will also incorporate programs to promote the use of public transport and education for employees of the company "Gras" and the Ministry of Traffic of Canton Sarajevo.



Signing the Joint action document

SERBIA

DISPATCH OF NEW JICA VOLUNTEERS

In mid-January, two Japanese volunteers arrived in Belgrade. Ms. OMAE Yuka has been dispatched to work in the field of marketing at Child's Heart, a Belgrade-based NGO specializing in support for the people with disabilities. She is an official from Hokkaido Municipal Government, and is eager to contribute to Serbia using her experience and knowledge. Mr. YUJI Kazuki has been dispatched to Karate Club "Knjaz" in Aranjerovac, 60km south of Belgrade. Practicing and coaching karate is his life-long mission, and he was sent to Rwanda as JOCV from 2016 to 2018 and worked as a karate coach of the national team.



From left to right: Ms. Omae, Mr. Takeichi (Chief Representative of JICA Balkan Office), Mr. Yuji

SERBIA

FOLLOW-UP SEMINAR ON PROTECTION OF COMPETITION



One of the three seminars held at Pedagogical Museum in Belgrade

On the initiative of the Commission for Protection of Competition in Serbia and in collaboration with Japan Fair Trade Commission (JFTC), the Follow-up Seminars on Protection of Competition were held on November 12, 13 and 14 in Belgrade, Nis and Novi Sad, respectively. The Embassy of Japan in Serbia and JICA Balkan Office supported the seminars. Extensive and detailed lectures on Japanese experience and practices in protection of competition, given by Mr. KONO Takujiro and Mr. NAKAHATA Atsushi from JFTC, contributed substantially to the students' understanding of this field. The aim of this three-day program was to motivate the university students to participate actively in the field of protection of competition both through their academic work and later in their professional careers.

FOLLOW-UP COOPERATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN WASTE LITTERING

NGO “Environment & Community Development”, in cooperation with Municipal Directorate for Education and Science in Kosovo, and JICA, implemented an environmental educational project on waste littering from February 9, 2020 to March 7, 2020. The project targeted 100 children aged 8 to 11 in four elementary schools. The children had an opportunity to learn theoretically and practically about the whole process, from collection to the final disposal. They also learned about 3R (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle), which was a new concept to them, through a workshop where they turned used glass bottles into reusable items.

Environment & Community Development has developed a concept for waste littering, based on the Japanese experiences gained in projects implemented in Kosovo and a training program held in Japan.



The consultant, Mr. Nehat Bojaxhiu, lecturing children on waste management process

ALBANIA

ALUMNI HOLDS A SEMINAR ON JICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



H. E. ITO Makoto, Ambassador of Japan to Albania, gives a speech at the seminar

On December 18, JICA Alumni Association of Albania (JAAA) held a seminar on how JICA Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP) helped Albania to develop its human resource in public administration.

During this seminar, six ex-participants of JICA KCCP, who attended the program in JFY2019, made presentations on their experiences in Japan, including lessons learned, professional benefits as well as possible applications of their Japan-learning experience in Albania. The programs they attended varied from regional development, tourism, local industry promotion to urban development.

The seminar was attended by the members of JAAA, representatives of Albanian governmental organizations, as well as the representatives of the Embassy of Japan in Albania and JICA Balkan Office.

MONTENEGRO
**ALUMNI
HOLDS
SEMINAR
“SCIENCE-
ECONOMY-
CLIMATE”**

On February 19, a seminar titled “Science-Economy-Climate” was held at the Hotel Podgorica in Podgorica, Montenegro. The event was organized by JICA Alumni Association of Montenegro in cooperation with Prona (Montenegrin Science Promotion Foundation), Green Home (NGO) and the Ministry of Science of Montenegro. Professor of Tsukuba University in Japan, Mr. KADOWAKI Kazuo, held a presentation explaining how science, economy and climate were affecting each other. He introduced an innovative approach of another professor from the same university, Mr. WATANABE Makoto, who managed to extract crude oil from algae with an aim to use it as a biofuel in the future. So far, the results of this research have been applied in pharmaceutical and medical industry.

The seminar was attended by JICA KCCP training participants and the students of the University of Podgorica.



Presentation by Professor Kadowaki

JICA IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

Since March this year, the Western Balkans has been struggling with the pandemic. The severe situation has affected both everyday life and the economy.

Especially to those who experienced a loss of their loved ones due to COVID19, I express my sincere condolences.

This situation has put serious limitation on JICA's activities; the volunteers had to return to Japan, planned visits of the experts on projects have been postponed and that is still continuing. However, it does not mean that the projects will have to be restricted indefinitely.

At JICA Balkan Office we have been implementing three types of activities amidst pandemic.

1. We have introduced online meetings and seminars within the ongoing projects, and even though the travels are limited, we have been making best efforts to continue with the project activities.
2. We have been formulating Follow-up projects with the ex-participants who

have attended JICA Knowledge Co-creation Programs (KCCP) in Japan in order to deliver the necessary assistance especially to vulnerable residents in local area and SMEs as soon as possible.

3. Now, it is exactly the period of the year when JICA Balkan Office conducts need surveys in collaboration with the Ministries from all six Western Balkan countries. Keeping the focus on public health and environment protection and with an aim at “Creating societies resilient to pandemics”, we have been formulating projects together with the Ministries of each country.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have introduced remote working style at JICA Balkan Office, while maintaining smooth cooperation with our counterparts by phone, e-mails and different applications. So, if you would like to share your opinions and ideas, please feel free to get in touch with the office.



Mr. TAKEICHI Jiro, Chief Representative of JICA Balkan Office