

NAGOVOR PREDSEDNIKA REPUBLIKE BURUTA PAHORJA

**OB PODPISU MEDNARODNEGA SPORAZUMA O USTANOVITVI CENTRA ZA RAZVOJ FINANC
KOT MEDNARODNE ORGANIZACIJE**

Bled, 3. september 2013

Dear Ministers, Governors, distinguished guests,

It is my honor and privilege to host you today on the occasion of signing the Agreement on Establishing the Center of Excellence in Finance as an International Organization.

Slovenia is proud to be recognized as a regional center for transfer of knowledge in the area of good governance and is honored to host this future new born international organization. We are extremely proud of the achievements of the Center of Excellence in Finance. With extensive knowledge of the region's learning needs, the Center today is a leading learning institution for capacity development in public financial management and central banking in the region of South East Europe.

It was established by the Government of Slovenia in 2001 within the framework of the Stability Pact for South East Europe to promote awareness of international standards and best practice in public financial management and central banking. In its 12 years of operations and more than 10.000 participants from South East Europe, the Center has been accomplishing this mission by organizing specialized learning events, encouraging knowledge sharing and research, and providing technical assistance.

Just two months ago I hosted presidents of Western Balkan countries in the context of Brdo Process through which we are enhancing regional cooperation on political and practical level as a driver for stability, economic development in an effort to join the European Union. We do that by supporting each other through exchange of experience gained during the integration processes. And this is exactly what the Center together with its members and partners has been accomplishing in the last 12 years.

The changing of the status of the Center of Excellence in Finance to an international organization is an important further step of Slovenia's support of regional cooperation in South East Europe. The activities of the Center are also in line with the last year's **EU** support for sustainable change in transition societies. Slovenia and other countries have already invested their prestige and very concrete efforts in confirmation of its conclusions and the change of legal status is another step in their practical implementation.

I am sure that as an international organization, the **ambition to grow** will be complemented by increased funding opportunities for its projects and programs. The Center of Excellence in Finance already has successful track record, knowledge of the region as well as a network and infrastructure in place to support region-wide capacity development initiatives.

Dear Ministers, Governors, distinguished guests,

I would like to thank to **all members** of the Center of Excellence in Finance - the ones joining the agreement as founding members and the ones that may wish to join the agreement at a later stage. It is the **strong political commitment** of your governments that helped steer the way to establishing this international organization.

I would also like to thank to all **donors and partners** supporting the Center of Excellence in Finance and the region – your presence here today reflects your backing and commitment to this institution and its efforts.

I am convinced that you all will continue to back the Center of Excellence in Finance in the future to enable it grow and promote its name-sake - **EXCELLENCE**.

Congratulations to all the countries and ministers signing the agreement here today. Let me also invite other members, donor countries and international organizations to follow suit.

Last but not least, congratulations to the Center of Excellence in Finance, whom I wish all the success in implementing its mission as an international organization.

