

**MESSAGE OF THE BIH QUALITY CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS:
"TOWARDS EUROPEAN INTEGRATIONS WITH QUALITY"**

Successful companies worldwide have clearly understood the basic idea of the time we live in: **they have to change continuously if they want to survive!** In other words, they have to constantly look for a dynamic balance among quality, price (costs) and time (deadlines) while remaining focused on **quality** as it is increasingly becoming an eliminatory requirement in the struggle for the market.

Majority of the countries, particularly in the past ten years or so, have been preparing for engaging into battles with changes. **The state institutions of those countries** were both the initiators and the holders of those activities, which have been guided primarily by **economic interests**. Unfortunately, most of those changes have remained unknown in BiH, partly because not all the necessary institutions have been established and capacitated at the state level, which would speed up the integration into those processes, and partly because the government authorities have had, to put it mildly, a neutral approach to these issues. The overstated commitment to European Integrations has been more in the function of politics and not an expression of an earnest and a well designed strategic attempt to truly achieve that goal in due time. The result is logical: **Bosnia and Herzegovina significantly lack in the knowledge and application of the international and European quality standards**, which is one of the key prerequisites for the European integrations and the basic requirement for a sustainable development in a society.

Fortunately, even with the huge difficulties our countries is facing organisations emerge as the light at the end of the tunnel, which have found a significant inner strength, sufficient amount of courage and a strong motive to engage in the battle with the world market, which is extremely picky. They have accepted the challenge of having to struggle for and affirm their values, respecting and applying the internationally accepted standards of conduct and business operation. They are a concrete, positive example showing that in the process of creating an environment favourable for changes, one should not start only from the issues our society is facing, but one has to find and promote one's own advantages, such as: tradition, the knowledge of one's own situation, commitment to team work, fair play etc. It is the responsibility of the state to assist such companies in their efforts, while the companies should help others in following their footsteps. It is in that context that one should take this year's slogan of the European Quality Week: *"Quality in Europe: The best experiences for a better life"*. This year's Bosnia and Herzegovina Quality Conference was dedicated to achieving that goal. The Conference took place between 16 and 18 November in Neum, and it was organised jointly by the BiH Quality Association and Foreign Chamber of Commerce of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are aware of the situation our country is in. We are, however, convinced, based on our personal experience that it can improve if we all engage in dealing with the issue and finding the tools for its solving. With regard to that, the highest government authorities have an extremely challenging task, namely **to provide the requirements and create the conditions necessary for the actual integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Europe**. In addition to that, the fact is undisputable that it is the **state administration institutions** that will have the greatest benefit of introducing a quality management system due to increasing the efficiency of their business operation, which is primarily in the interest of economy and all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In that project, we have to start with what we need the most – **education and knowledge innovation**. The success will mainly depend on the degree of the leaders' willingness to acquire the skills to use the highest level of the knowledge applied in the world as well as experience "wrapped" in the quality standards and excellence models. The fact is that it is **our problem**, that is, **our project**, and that we are doing that because of **ourselves**, and not because others are forcing us to it. That would also be a

guideline for other institutions and organisations as to how to proceed. In that way, we would give our own contribution to increasing the European level of quality too.

Neum, 18 November 2006

Conference participants