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SERBIAN SHOEMAKERS MAKE INTERNATIONAL DEBUT WITH USAID SUPPORT

Belgrade/Vranje – Five south Serbian shoe manufacturers are in Dusseldorf, Germany, attending one of the world's largest footwear trade fairs to establish contacts with importers, wholesalers and buyers and prepare for their participation at next the next trade fair.

The managers from Minex, Steffi Com, Mladenovic and Lotos, all based in Vranje, are attending Global Shoes Dusseldorf with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which is helping them meet potential business partners from all around the world. The five companies are scouting for orders which will help the launch their own industry cluster.

Similar trade missions have created export opportunities for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in south Serbia. USAID's support to Sandzak's textile manufacturers resulted in their establishing their own distribution center in Poland – Europe's sixth-largest market – after their participation in Poznan International, Poland's largest trade fair venue.

USAID's Economic Security Program has helped 147 Serbian companies from Sandzak and south Serbia enter new markets across Europe, Turkey, Russia and Belorussia, and has generated more than \$11 million in sales.

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For additional information about USAID's programs in Serbia, visit <http://serbia.usaid.gov>.

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