



Serbian Ambassador to Italy Ana Hrustanovic thanked Italy for its support extended to Serbia on its EU path and expressed hope that, on 28 June, Serbia would be granted a date for opening negotiations with the European Union.

"I wish to thank Italy, on behalf of all of us, for its daily support to Serbia along our EU path", said Hrustanovic at the Serbian/Italian business meeting in the Foreign Trade Institute in Rome.

"We hope that, also owing to Italy's strong support, we will be granted the date, on 28 June, for starting the EU negotiations", underlined Hrustanovic. This will certainly give an additional impetus to further investments by Italian companies in Serbia", she assessed.

Addressing the business people of Rome and Serbia, Hrustanovic stressed that "Serbia and Italy can boast of 134 years of bilateral relations and, since 2009 they have become strategic partners."

"These special ties between us and bilateral relations exist not just on paper; 500 - 600 companies from Italy do business in Serbia, employing more than 20,000 workers from Serbia", said Hrustanovic.

It is no accident that so many Italian companies are active in Serbia. Hrustanovic pointed out that the whole system of Italy was present in Serbia, from banks, insurance companies, Chamber of Commerce, and that it was important for the Italian businessmen that they could count on the absolute safety of investments in Serbia. She remarked that none of the companies operating in Serbia had withdrawn.

Beside a large number of businessmen from Serbia and Rome, the meeting was attended by Presidents of the Belgrade and Jagodina City Assemblies Aleksandar Antic and Dragan Markovic Palma, President of the Belgrade Chamber of Commerce Milan Jankovic, Adviser to Prime Minister Ivica Dacic for National Security Ivica Tonchev, Director of Foreign Trade Institute in Rome, Filippo Lanciotti with associates Aniello Musella and Giovanni Saatchi. Markovic said that, in most towns, Serbia offered free land with infrastructure, security of investment, subsidies of up to 10,000 euros per employee, free-trade relations with Russia, Belarus, Turkey and Kazakhstan.