

## PRESS RELEASE

*Banca Intesa supports SME Day organized by Confindustria Serbia*

### **Strengthening SMEs**

**Sremska Mitrovica – November 10, 2016** – Event entitled SME Day – PMI Day 2016, organized by Confindustria Serbia, the association of Italian industrialists, with institutional support from the City of Sremska Mitrovica and mayor Vladimir Sanader and in cooperation with Banca Intesa was held today in Sremska Mitrovica.

“Our initiative addresses young people who are the most valuable asset this country has. We want PMI Day to serve young generations as an opportunity for having a broader perspective of how our companies organize their operation, to get an insight into all the efforts we, entrepreneurs, invest in order to promote entrepreneurial spirit and improve business environment,” Erik Kosuta, president of Confindustria Serbia, said at the press conference held anent the event.

The event was also attended by assistant minister for SMEs Katarina Obradović Jovanović who said: “More than ever, the state focuses on development of entrepreneurship and SMEs. In the Year of Entrepreneurship, not only does the state provide financial and non-financial support to this sector through 33 different programmes, but it also takes concrete steps in introduction of dual education. Companies play an important part in this venture, not only to identify human resources they need, but also to take a more active part in their education.”

SME Day – PMI Day 2016 was an opportunity for corporate, education and local community sector to start dialogue, when three companies, Luvata, Steeltec and Labor legno opened the door to their production facilities. They welcomed students, professors and local community representatives with the goal to allow the young have an insight into production world, company-employees relations and the importance of creating proper education that prepares future employees.

This is an initiative promoted and organized in Italy for the seventh time by Confindustria, the biggest and most important Italian association of production and service industry companies. This year, the event was organized in Serbia for the very first time.

A whole range of event characteristics, starting from the visual ones to the very concept of organization, was led by the motive “Let’s industrialize!”, with a clear message about the increasing development and expansion of entrepreneurial spirit among young people.

The message of support for future initiatives, whose aim is to strengthen the bond between the Italian corporate sector in Serbia and the educational system, was sent by the Counsellor of the Italian Embassy Mr Sergio Monti, as well as by Gabrijela Grujić Garić, dual education advisor to Minister of Education, Science and Technological Development: “The model of active student work in companies is based on attitudes and needs of

companies, and they are the basis for the creation of this model. Students have a chance to conduct internship in companies in a “real working environment”, and to get certain types of compensation in accordance with the possibilities of the company.”

The importance of the event was also recognized by Banca Intesa, member of international banking group Intesa Sanpaolo with head office in Italy and the leading bank on the Serbian market

“As the largest creditor of domestic economy as a whole and SMEs sector, Banca Intesa supported this project with the desire to contribute in another way to strengthening of this strategically important segment of Serbian corporate sector. Due to developed product portfolio, strong client base, and special service model, Banca Intesa has supported SMEs in the first nine months of 2016 with EUR 240 million worth new loans, recording growth by 15% compared to the previous year,” said Marija Radivojević, corporate operations regional manager at Banca Intesa.