

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today we are closing the technical exchange programme between PA PUC and AERS, launched in 2007 within NARUC's Regulatory Partnership Program, and financed by USAID. Until now, we have had seven meetings, both in Serbia and the U.S, evolving from introduction with each other's regulatory practices, over specialized capacity building towards more sophisticated forms of cooperation – work in joint project teams on resolving “hot” issues of day-to-day operation of AERS.

We have heard the evaluation of the Partnership Program, both from the experts of PA PUC and AERS. I would like to complement on this discussion by highlighting few additional details. As you may be aware, AERS is the youngest regulatory authority in Europe (it became fully operational in January 2006), faced in that time with the expectation to develop the regulatory framework needed to support electricity and natural gas sector liberalization in Serbia within ambitious deadlines set by the law, practically in parallel with training of its staff, with very solid industrial background, but poor experience in new regulatory issues coming with market liberalization. Today, after five years of operation, I believe that we are on a good path to contribute to establishing a robust and trustworthy regulatory framework in line with best regulatory practices for benefit of consumers and energy industry in Serbia. To support this statement, I would quote the European Commission's Serbia 2010 Progress report, where the Agency is assessed with one sentence: *“The Energy Regulatory Agency (AERS) has been working well”*. This “good work” is a result of a hard work of dedicated and competent people, and in this occasion I would like to emphasize the contribution of this Regulatory Partnership Program and our friends from PA PUC to building this most precious asset we have-competence and expertise of our employees.

At the end, I would like to thank the PA PUC experts for the efforts and dedication they have put in this partnership, to NARUC for superb organization and USAID, who made this all possible by providing funds for the program.