



Integrated Country Strategy

SERBIA

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

The overriding U.S. strategic interest in Serbia is to support Serbia's goal of accession to the European Union and to ensure that it develops as a democratic, prosperous nation at peace with itself and its neighbors. Serbia still faces significant challenges on this path. Successive European Commission reports on Serbia's accession process have highlighted the need for more progress in implementing democratic reforms, guaranteeing freedom of expression, fighting corruption and organized crime, and reforming the judicial system, among other tasks. U.S. and EU support will be needed to strengthen Serbian resilience to forces that oppose Western-oriented reforms. The slowing accession process has contributed to flagging public support for EU membership, which now stands at barely half the population. Serbians' access to free and independent media is decreasing, and malign influences frequently appear in mainstream Serbian press. Additionally, Serbia has deepened political and economic relations with Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC); it relies upon Russia for oil and gas supplies and for its open support of Serbia's stand against Kosovo independence. Serbia's policy of "balancing" relations among the United States, EU, PRC, and Russia often takes priority over adherence to the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Normalization of the relationship with Kosovo remains critical to realizing the full economic potential of Serbia and its neighbors and determining the pace of Serbia's progress toward EU membership. Close U.S.-EU coordination is essential to this process. Belgrade and Pristina have struggled to implement signed agreements or make progress on negotiations, and the two sides look to the EU and the United States for support and mediation. Serbia will also require continued U.S. urging to work constructively with Kosovo in regional and international bodies.

Serbia has stabilized and expanded its economy, which is now the largest and most dynamic in the Western Balkans. The government managed three successive years of fiscal surpluses and several years of low inflation and falling unemployment before the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has made critical improvements to the investment climate. These factors have fueled a growth strategy based upon attracting foreign direct investment. To sustain this, Serbia must do more to place its remaining large state-owned enterprises on sound economic footing, to promote

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and respect the rule of law, and to speed legal proceedings. It must ensure a transparent and predictable regulatory environment and promote fairer and more transparent procurement practices. Serbia's participation in new regional economic integration initiatives – Open Balkan and the EU-supported Common Regional Market – could further boost economic activity across the region and improve its attractiveness to foreign investors. But Serbia will need U.S. and EU support to realize the early promise of these initiatives. Serbia also needs a strong plan to keep its most educated and ambitious citizens from leaving to build their businesses, do their research, and further their professional goals elsewhere.

Decarbonization of Serbia's energy sector is also critical to its economic future. Long dependent upon high-polluting lignite coal for power generation, Serbia now seeks to integrate large-scale renewable energy sources into its grid. This is an opportunity to move toward a carbon-neutral future, as well as for U.S. investors to participate significantly in Serbia's energy sector for the first time. It will also help Serbia diversify and liberalize its energy market to comply with European Energy Community obligations and reduce Russian influence.

Ensuring effective rule of law is not only an essential element of the EU accession process; it is also an indispensable enabler of progress in nearly every area important to Serbia's future. At Embassy Belgrade, interagency teams coordinate assistance programs administered by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), in cooperation with the Department of Justice (DOJ)¹ and USAID, which support necessary reforms. Both USAID and INL/DOJ assist Serbia's leading anti-corruption entities. INL/DOJ programs also work with police, prosecutors, and judges on Serbia's implementation of its Criminal Procedural Code and strengthening these groups' ability to carry out their roles and collaborate effectively.

Maintaining Serbia's interest and ability to participate in regional security initiatives will require continued U.S. support. We will continue to support Serbia's preparations to contribute troops

¹ There are two components to INL programs in Serbia, which are implemented by the U.S. Department of Justice: (i) the Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance and Training (OPDAT), and (ii) the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP). Both programs work with, and receive program funding from, the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). In the context of Embassy offices and programs, "DOJ" in this document refers to both OPDAT and ICITAP.

to UN and EU peacekeeping missions through training programs on peacekeeping best practices, international humanitarian law, and support for engineer equipment replacement. We will support the further development of South Base, a Serbian military facility that offers modern training for units preparing to deploy in support of peacekeeping and peace-support missions. The State Partnership Program with the Ohio National Guard is among the most successful in Europe. Serbia's relationship with NATO continues through Partnership for Peace, but its support for engagement remains low amid routine statements from the government that Serbia will never join the Alliance. Serbia's pursuit of a "balanced" defense policy often sends the wrong message to the EU and to Serbia's NATO partners through participation in Russian-led exercises that focus on military responses to civil disturbances. Because Serbia does not recognize Kosovo's independence, the Serbian military is reluctant to participate in multilateral training opportunities involving members of the Kosovo Security Force.

Serbia has made tremendous strides, but it still has much work ahead to achieve robust democracy and prosperity. The country has a talented, multilingual, well-educated population, but the government's policies too often have been a drag on the Serbian public's aspirations. That is starting to change. U.S. Mission Serbia should adapt as well, bringing new, more diverse views and expertise into its strong local staff team as current employees reach retirement. This renewal in our Mission community will help bolster U.S. support and engagement, which will be critical to further progress in moving Serbia towards a brighter European future.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Strengthen Democracy and Rule of Law to Advance Serbia's European Integration.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Serbia Makes Progress on Tackling Corruption and Organized Crime Through Strengthened Enforcement Institutions and Holding Corrupt Actors Accountable.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Serbia Makes Progress on EU Accession by Implementing the EU Action Plans and Strengthening Democratic Institutions.

Mission Goal 2: Strengthen Serbia's Economic Resilience and Role in Promoting Regional Economic Growth.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Broad-Based, Inclusive, and Sustainable Economic Growth Accelerated, Including Through Improved Access to Finance and an Improved Ecosystem for the Knowledge-Based Economy.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Serbia Takes Measurable Steps Toward Economic Integration with its Neighbors.
- **Mission Objective 2.3:** Serbia Creates a More Transparent Environment for U.S. Firms to Compete on a Level Playing Field in the Serbian Market.

Mission Goal 3: Advance U.S.-Serbia Cooperation to Address Global and Regional Threats.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Serbia Strengthens Public Health and Environmental Protection Institutions and Takes Concrete Steps to Address Climate Change.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Serbia Strengthens Security Partnership with Euro-Atlantic Partners and Promotes Security and Stability in the Region and Beyond.

- **(U) Mission Objective 3.3:** Serve U.S. Citizens in Serbia, and Facilitate Legitimate Travel and Exchanges between the United States and Serbia.

Management Objective: The Mission Applies Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Principles in Personnel Management and Contracting to Include More Diverse Skills and Approaches to Policy and Assistance Goals.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1 | Strengthen Democracy and Rule of Law to Advance Serbia's European Integration.

Description | Our top Mission goal is supporting Serbia's efforts to join the EU, thereby firmly anchoring Serbia in European institutions and values and ensuring the country is a reliable partner that helps advance U.S. priorities and interests in the region. EU accession will also lessen the influence of Russia and the PRC in Serbia. President Vucic has affirmed that Serbia's EU accession is a strategic priority of his government, and the European Commission maintains that enlargement remains an EU priority.

The European Commission has recognized Serbia's recent progress in meeting EU requirements and standards and opened additional chapters in Serbia's accession process. At the same time, Serbia still must implement difficult reforms, particularly on the rule of law. Corruption remains a significant problem, and Serbia needs to demonstrate a commitment to tackle official corruption, particularly at high levels, as well as transnational organized crime, illicit finance, and terrorism-related threats. Serbia also continues to struggle with maintaining a free and independent media sector.

Greater accountability for public officials and increased transparency of political processes through heightened governmental and non-governmental oversight will improve governance and the climate for resolving regional disputes on refugees, missing persons, borders, and other legacy conflict issues. These efforts will deepen Serbia's security relationship with Euro-Atlantic partners as another means of meeting EU membership criteria and promoting the alignment of values with the EU and United States.

U.S. assistance programs and diplomatic engagement will further assist Serbia's government institutions and agencies to strengthen their operations, improve the Parliament's ability to act as an independent branch of government responsive to citizens' needs, foster more transparent political processes, strengthen civil society, improve the media environment,

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increase the respect of human rights and protection of vulnerable groups among its citizens, support anti-corruption efforts, and bolster law enforcement capacity to combat organized crime and emerging threats.

Objective 1.1 | Serbia Makes Progress on Tackling Corruption and Organized Crime Through Strengthened Enforcement Institutions and Holding Corrupt Actors Accountable.

- **Justification** | Rule-of-law reforms are among the greatest hurdles in Serbia's EU path. EU member states' concerns with rule-of-law issues put this issue at the fore of Serbia's accession negotiations with Brussels. The European Commission has expressed concern with political influence in Serbia's judicial system – although recent constitutional amendments provide a foundation for further reform. Serbia has recorded little progress in the fight against corruption and organized crime, with few prosecutions or convictions for high level officials. Political interference in the judiciary and prosecutor's office remains a problem, and Serbia has not fully implemented anti-corruption measures related to the recruitment and rules of conduct governing members of parliament, judges, and prosecutors. Public opinion polls show a widespread perception that the law is not implemented consistently or systematically and that some high-level officials engage in corrupt practices with impunity. Entanglement of organized crime networks with corrupt politicians and elected and government officials creates disincentives for the government to fully root out corruption and organized crime. Public procurement is of particular concern, especially in the areas of health and education. EU-mandated reforms include institutional independence of judicial and law-enforcement institutions; tackling corruption, organized crime, illicit finance, and trafficking of illicit materials and persons; and strengthening transparency and efficiency of the judicial and prosecutorial mechanisms.
- **Linkages** | National Security Study Memorandum/NSSM-1 of June 3, 2021; U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption, issued December 2021; JRS Objectives 2.1, 2.4, 3.3; USAID's CDCS Intermediate Result (IR) 1 (Select Government Institutions Increasingly Acting in the Public Interest) and IR 2 (Informed Citizen Participation Increased). Addressing rule-

of-law deficiencies will benefit Serbia's economic growth, help spread economic benefits more equitably, and create a more transparent environment for U.S. investors to thrive in the Serbian market (ICS Objectives 2.1, 2.3). Efforts to meet EU standards and requirements will also facilitate Serbia's economic cooperation with its regional neighbors (ICS Objective 2.2).

- **Risks** | Failure to curb official corruption will further hamper Serbia's ability to meet EU accession acquis and will further delay or even prevent its EU accession. Persistent weakness in the rule of law will also have broader negative effects on Serbia's ability to sustain economic growth over the long run, stem brain-drain, attract foreign investors, and implement effective environmental regulation. It will also create a more welcoming climate for non-transparent influence of malign actors including Russia and the PRC.

Objective 1.2 | Serbia Makes Progress on EU Accession by Implementing EU Action Plans and Strengthening Democratic Institutions.

- **Justification** | Serbia lacks adequate checks and balances on central authority and sufficient opportunities for citizens to engage in decision-making processes or to hold elected officials accountable, not least because the Parliament is currently dominated by one political party. Diplomatic and programmatic efforts will encourage Serbia to enhance accountable and representative governance, thereby helping to strengthen and sustain Serbia's democratic transformation. Sustained diplomatic engagement will encourage the evolution of Serbia's foreign policy from one that is often at odds with U.S. and EU foreign policy goals, particularly as Serbia fails to join its Western partners in holding Russia, the PRC, and other anti-democratic actors to account in international fora.
- **Linkages** | CDCS DO1: Resilience of Democratic Actors Increased; JRS Objectives 1.3, 2.1, 2.2. Greater accountability by public officials and increased transparency of political processes and public administration through heightened governmental and non-governmental oversight will raise governance standards (ICS Objective 1.1).

- **Risks** | If Serbia does not succeed in strengthening its institutions, it risks slowing or stopping progress in its EU accession process, as well as losing public faith in the government. Polls generally indicate that 40-50 percent of Serbia's population supports EU membership, although the long-term trend shows increased apathy as the accession process has stagnated and EU membership becomes an increasingly remote possibility. The difficult reforms, coupled with a weak Serbian government strategy promoting the benefits of EU membership, amplified by declining political appetite in EU members states for new entrants, tempt many in Serbia to seek other, less demanding partners.

Mission Goal 2 | Strengthen Serbia's Economic Resilience and Role in Promoting Regional Economic Growth.

Description | Serbia has the largest, most diverse and dynamic economy of the six Western Balkan EU candidate countries, and it exercises outsized influence over the entire region. Its government has stabilized and grown the economy through years of infrastructure investment and fiscal discipline, primarily by attracting a steady flow of foreign direct investment. Serbia aims to expand its economy further through regional economic integration initiatives such as Open Balkan. Serbian leadership has staked its legitimacy on maintaining growth and job creation and exercising regional economic leadership. This political imperative provides leverage for the United States to press for further structural and other reforms that would help Serbia's economic growth. Remaining obstacles include the excessive influence in the economy of state-owned enterprises and government officials, persistent endemic corruption, Serbia's open embrace of PRC and Russian actors, and a related lack of transparency in government procurement. State-owned enterprises still exercise excessive influence, and Serbia's pursuit of closer partnerships with the PRC and Russia lead some in the region to question its motives. These problems have resulted in market distortions and regional distrust and contribute to persistent brain-drain.

U.S. efforts to promote rule-of-law reforms, improve the business environment, and reduce corruption can help reduce risks to U.S. businesses and level the playing field so that U.S.

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comparative advantages can thrive. U.S. support for inclusive regional economic integration and linking Serbian businesses with those in neighboring states can help overcome regional tensions and hasten EU accession for Serbia and its neighbors. U.S. support for energy transformation and digitalization of the economy can help nurture new industries and job-creation. U.S. investment in Serbian human capital through technical assistance and citizen exchange programs can help develop a cadre of young, educated, and motivated Serbians who have a Western perspective and want to invest and improve their country.

Objective 2.1 | Broad-Based, Inclusive, and Sustainable Economic Growth Accelerated, Including Through Improved Access to Finance and an Improved Ecosystem for the Knowledge-Based Economy.

- **Justification** | Small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) account for 98% of all enterprises in Serbia, but they generate only 28% of GDP, according to the Serbian Ministry of Economy. Serbia's economic growth will accelerate if entrepreneurs and SMEs have greater opportunity to enter the market and gain access to capital and skilled labor, if they can operate within a fair and predictable business environment, and if the state reduces its outsized role in the economy. Growth will also become more sustainable as disadvantaged populations – including women, youth, LGBTQI+ people, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable groups from rural communities – find new and better economic opportunities. U.S. financial-sector assistance can help expand SMEs' access to financing. U.S. diplomatic and commercial advocacy can help ensure fair access by U.S. firms to strategically important projects. SMEs are disproportionately affected by the over-regulation of Serbia's foreign-exchange market by the National Bank of Serbia. Reforms to Serbia's Law on Foreign Exchange Operations, long advocated by the American Chamber of Commerce in Serbia and other business associations, would substantially improve the business climate and promote growth in business activity.
- **Linkages** | JRS Objectives 3.1, 3.3; USAID's CDCS DO2 (Equitable Prosperity Increased), IR 2.1 (SME Economic Growth Accelerated), and IR 2.2 (Equity of Disadvantaged

Communities Improved). Promoting transparency in Serbia's procurement system will help curb corrupt behavior by Serbian officials (ICS Objective 1.1). Creating the conditions for broad-based, sustainable, and inclusive economic growth will help accelerate Serbia's EU accession process (ICS Objective 1.2).

- **Risks** | Continued failure of Serbian SMEs to tap into external financial markets would perpetuate large-scale brain-drain, hobble development of Serbia's knowledge-based economy, and further integration into the broader European market. Serbia competes with its EU neighbors for foreign direct investment, and continued corruption and resulting labor shortages could deter additional investments in Serbia, which would stymie broader economic growth. Failure to improve the investment climate could also deter investment by U.S. and other trusted telecom vendors in Serbia's nascent 5G market, thus ceding that market to untrusted vendors. Similarly, failure to increase domestic economic opportunities for youth, women, and other disadvantaged communities will exacerbate brain-drain.

Objective 2.2 | Serbia Takes Measurable Steps Toward Economic Integration with its Neighbors.

- **Justification** | Serbia, together with Albania and North Macedonia, announced the launch of the Open Balkan economic integration initiative in August 2021, through which they plan to undertake trade-facilitation agreements and other arrangements to implement the EU's Four Freedoms (free movement of goods, services, capital, and labor) throughout the Western Balkan region. Open Balkan largely mirrors the EU-led Common Regional Market initiative, launched in November 2020 under the auspices of the Berlin Process. The United States supports both initiatives as a means of accelerating the countries' progress toward EU membership, improving the region's business climate, and increasing its attractiveness to foreign investment. U.S. diplomatic engagement and technical assistance for these integration initiatives, in coordination with EU partners, can help facilitate practical cooperation and trade, thus advancing shared U.S. and EU goals for greater interconnectivity and stability in the region.

- **Linkages** | JRS Objective 3.1. Regional economic integration will increase Serbia's attractiveness to foreign investors and thereby boost overall economic growth (ICS Objective 2.1). Regional economic integration, consistent with EU standards, will reinforce Serbia's efforts to implement the EU action plan for accession (ICS Objective 1.2). Improved economic relations with neighboring states will aid in interdicting illicit trade in WMD-related materials and other arms and thereby contribute to regional security (ICS Objective 3.2).
- **Risks** | Failure to achieve regional integration goals would result in slowing economic growth in Serbia and the wider region. Failure of Serbia to fully implement the goals of the Open Balkan initiative – and failure to welcome participation by Kosovo, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina – would limit the initiative's benefit to Serbia and the region.

Objective 2.3 | Serbia Creates a More Transparent Environment for U.S. Firms to Compete on a Level Playing Field in the Serbian Market.

- **Justification** | This Objective will capitalize on Serbia's strong economic growth and development of its digital economy to create new jobs and business opportunities. Increased U.S. investments and sales into Serbia will also introduce new technologies and management techniques, as well as set positive examples for corporate social responsibility and partnership with U.S. firms. Increased bilateral trade boosts U.S. exports and, on the Serbian side, educates Serbian firms on trade opportunities while strengthening their trade competitiveness in advance of EU accession. The Embassy will advocate for U.S. company bids on Serbian government tenders and will promote increased investment through business outreach and strategic programming. Integrating Serbia into the World Trade Organization (WTO) will anchor Serbia in the global trade and financial system and provide leverage for U.S. exports to compete on a fairer basis in the Serbian market. Serbia's WTO accession depends upon repealing its ban on genetically engineered products.

- **Linkages** | JRS Objectives 2.4, 3.1, 3.2. Pressing for greater transparency in the business and investment climate contributes to reducing corruption in the economy (ICS Objective 1.1). Strengthening the presence of U.S. companies in the Serbian market contributes to economic stability and growth (ICS Objective 2.1). WTO accession is a prerequisite for completing Serbia's EU accession (ICS Objective 1.2).
- **Risks** | If the Mission does not provide strong advocacy for U.S. companies, those companies risk losing market opportunities to competitors including Russia and the PRC. Failure by Serbia to remove its ban on genetically engineered products could continue to exclude Serbia from WTO membership and stall its EU accession indefinitely.

Mission Goal 3 | Advance U.S.-Serbia Cooperation to Address Global and Regional Threats.

Description | Serbia occupies a strategic juncture at the social, political, and geographic crossroads of Eastern and Western Europe. As the biggest economic force in the Western Balkan region, Serbia is key to ensuring regional stability and is an important partner in addressing global threats such as terrorism and transnational crime. However, with strong Russian and PRC presence in Serbia's energy and infrastructure sectors, U.S. engagement is essential to support Serbia on its EU path. As such, Mission Serbia will deepen cooperation between our two countries to continue jointly addressing global and regional threats. Our support will help Serbia play a regional role in advancing action on climate change, the COVID pandemic, and global and regional security issues. Essential support for American citizens and facilitating continued exchanges between Serbians and Americans is also key to improving our bilateral relationship and advancing further cooperation in the key areas related to Goals 3 and 4 of the EUR Joint Regional Strategy (JRS).

Objective 3.1 | Serbia Strengthens Public Health and Environmental Protection Institutions and Takes Concrete Steps to Address Climate Change.

- **Justification** | Air pollution in Serbia is among the worst in Europe, primarily due to emissions from power plants fueled by poor-quality lignite coal. This pollution

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endangers public health and contributes to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. U.S. support for renewable energy, energy efficiency, and energy-sector policy reforms will help Serbia meet its commitments under the Paris climate agreement and climate-related obligations under the EU accession acquis. U.S. support for diversification of Serbia's energy supplies will help reduce Serbia's reliance on exclusively Russian-supplied oil and gas and the accompanying malign influence. Increased U.S. support for Serbia's self-reliance in the public health sector will help reduce its reliance on the PRC for medical supplies and equipment in the event of a resurgence in global pandemics.

- **Linkages** | JRS Objectives 3.4, 4.1, 4.2. This section also links to USAID's CDCS Objective 1.3 (Responsiveness to External Stressors Improved). Assisting Serbia's progress toward compliance with EU regulations and standards will facilitate its overall progress toward EU accession (Mission Objective 1.2).
- **Risks** | Failure by Serbia to set and fulfill concrete commitments under the Paris Agreement to mitigate climate change will also reflect poorly on its progress toward European environmental-protection standards, which are essential to its EU accession. Failure to control carbon emissions will also result in continued public-health danger and could lead to social unrest. Continued dependence on Russian oil and natural gas will perpetuate Russian malign political and economic influence. Failure to strengthen public health institutions could result in a weakened response in the event of future pandemics and leave Serbia as a point of vulnerability in Europe's broader efforts to control the spread of infectious disease.

Objective 3.2 | Serbia Strengthens Security Partnership with Euro-Atlantic Partners and Promotes Security and Stability in the Region and Beyond.

- **Justification** | Serbia's inclusion in Euro-Atlantic partnerships facilitates resiliency against malign influence and security partnerships that seek to destabilize the region in a manner that is against U.S. interests. Mission Serbia will engage Serbia to become an enduring contributor to stability in the Euro-Atlantic security structure. A peaceful Serbia that works constructively with its neighbors to maintain stability in the Balkans

and that contributes effectively to global peace support operations (PSO) is essential to our long-term interests. We will work with Serbia to improve its security relations with its neighbors, the United States, and other Euro-Atlantic partners. We will continue a defense transformation geared toward creating a cost-efficient, NATO-interoperable force, capable of assuming a greater role in international PSOs throughout the world. Enabling Serbia to increase its contributions to global security enhances U.S. security while providing a mechanism to enhance our bilateral relationship. Supported by the Global Peace Operation Initiative (GPOI), Serbia has expressed ambitions to further increase its contributions to peacekeeping operations. As Serbia works to bring its export control regime to an international standard and maintain more effective control over its excess and aging munitions stockpiles, we will continue to use Department of State programs to help build institutional capacity and reduce the threat of accidents and proliferation.

- **Linkages** | JRS Objectives 1.1, 4.3. Improving security relationships with Balkan neighbors supports our goal of fostering improved relations between Serbia and its neighbors more broadly (ICS Objective 2.2).
- **Risks** | If Serbia does not increase, or at least maintain, its contributions to global security, it risks political isolation as well as more immediate transnational threats including smuggling and weapons proliferation, as well as strengthened military relationships with malign actors including Russia and the PRC.

Objective 3.3 | Serve U.S. Citizens in Serbia, and Facilitate Legitimate Travel and Exchanges between the United States and Serbia.

- **Justification** | Protecting U.S. citizens in Serbia is one of the Mission's highest priorities. The Consular Section will keep U.S. citizens informed about threats to their safety and security, increase the Mission's readiness to assist U.S. citizens, and work to maintain high customer-service standards for non-emergency services to U.S. citizens. The Consular Section will work to increase customer service standards for Nonimmigrant Visa applicants to facilitate U.S. Government-sponsored exchange as well as regular

business and leisure travel to the United States. The Public Affairs Section will work to increase official and unofficial exchange opportunities at all levels to develop partners and allies focused on meeting our joint goals.

- **Linkages** | This objective links to the Official Interim National Security Strategy's goals "to protect the security of the American people" and "to reinvigorate and modernize our alliances and partnerships around the world." Citizen exchanges support all EUR JRS Objectives. U.S. Government-sponsored exchanges on cross-cutting policy issues primarily advance Goals 1 (Revitalize European Alliances & Partnerships), Goal 2 (Strengthen Democracy & the Rule of Law Throughout Europe and Eurasia), and Goal 4 (Leverage Alliances and Partnerships to Address Global and Regional Threats and Challenges). Private exchange and travel primarily supports Goal 3 to "promote deeper trade, investment, and energy cooperation."
- **Risks** | If the Embassy does not adequately serve U.S. citizens, it risks leaving our fellow citizens unsupported in a foreign country. Failure to adequately facilitate citizen exchanges would risk reducing the effectiveness of one of our most valuable tools for international understanding and influence.

4. Management Objective

Management Objective | The Mission Applies Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Principles in Personnel Management and Contracting to Include More Diverse Skills and Approaches to Policy and Assistance Goals.

- **Justification** | Mission Serbia benefits from a talented and dedicated workforce of locally engaged staff, many of whom have been working with the Mission for at least two decades. As these staff approach retirement, and with all personnel searches, the Mission will seek to recruit a diverse pool of new talent from a variety of ethnicities and backgrounds, including those that are historically marginalized in Serbia. A more diverse local staff will help encourage new and different approaches to political, economic, public diplomacy, and other aspects of our engagement in Serbia. Prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of Embassy operations advances U.S. Government policy goals with respect to our own employees as well as our interlocutors in Serbia. We will invest in our own workforce while at the same time modeling the fostering of equity and inclusion for marginalized communities around us. The Embassy will seek out and target underserved communities for recruitment and procurement opportunities.
- **Linkages** | E.O. 13985, E.O. 14020, E.O. 14035, National Security Memorandum/NSM-4, EUR JSP Objective 3.2, JSP Objective 4.1, and GTM FBS Goal 3.
- **Risks** | Failure to diversify hiring in the Mission would restrict the creativity and range of ideas and approaches that Mission employees bring to the substantive mission goals and management challenges that we face.