

USAID celebrates Earth Day by organizing a “Global Recycling Village” in the heart of Skopje

Skopje, April 20, 2008.

On Sunday, April 20, 2008, the USAID Plastic Recycling Project, together with the City of Skopje and the Government of Macedonia, celebrated Earth Day by organizing an open-air festival in the Skopje City Square. The four-hour show drew almost 10,000 people and featured performances by children’s theater, dance and music groups, popular singers, clowns and entertainers. DCM Thomas Navratil joined Skopje Mayor Trifun Kostovski and the Minister of the Environment Dzelil Bajrami to address the diverse audience of students, parents, project partners and government officials about the importance of plastic waste recycling for present and future generations. The USAID \$1.2 million Plastic Recycling project works with local governments, public and private companies and schools to raise awareness about protecting the environment and to build partnerships for a sustainable nationwide recycling program. The first results are impressive – the amount of collected bottles doubled from 1500 tons in 2006 to approximately 3000 in 2007, and employment in the recycling industry has increased 60 percent from 2006 to 2007. The project is currently expanding from four to eight municipalities, with the ultimate goal of reaching 12 municipalities across Macedonia. The event received coverage in all major print and broadcast media.