

Almost 400 companies opened in Serbia by German investors employ 70,000 people. One of those companies is Siemens, and as they work in Serbia, do they find qualified staff, director Udo Eichinger spoke for N1.

What does business in Serbia look like, what are the advantages?

- The German-Serbian Chamber of Commerce has been working here for almost 14 years, we have conducted research. When we ask German investors how they see the economic situation, in order to assess it, whether they would invest again, I have to tell you that almost 95% say they are satisfied with the general conditions and would invest again," says director Eichinger.

Why do they choose Serbia?

- There are many reasons, they differ, for some resources are important, dual education, for example, is the model we introduced with the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, skilled workers are available, it is an important thing, not only in big cities, but also in smaller communities. On the other hand, you have infrastructure as a very important factor, and the government is now investing heavily in railways, as roads have been built or are being built. With the railway, completely new opportunities are opening up for investors. We expanded our operations in Kragujevac three years ago, and now the industrial complex will be connected by rail, and that brings other direct foreign investments. Everyone says, this is interesting what the government is doing, for companies and investors it makes Serbia attractive for investment. In addition, the geographical position of Serbia is attractive. We have similarities in mentality, we are in the same time zone, you are in Germany in 2 hours, air connections are good, there are also incentives for investors, which some companies use. The government is realistic, there are no exaggerations in promises, the conditions are clearly presented to everyone, that is why large companies from Germany came here, ZDF, MTU, which are listed on the stock exchange. Everything that was promised has been fulfilled.

How does Siemens do business in Serbia?

- We have been present here for three decades, we are investing in high technologies, we want to expand. We employ 1,200 people, we started a new factory in Subotica. Our forecasts are going in that direction.

What is the labor market like in Serbia?

- In the last year and a half, two, employees come to us and ask for higher salaries, because they get better offers in other companies, which shows that salaries are growing, which is a good trend. As a director, I have to do more for the employees so that they don't leave. We want them to stay here, but if someone offers twice the salary, it's hard to follow.

What is the possibility of investing in high technologies in Serbia?

- The trend of investing in simple production - in labor-intensive activities is changing. I see it in Kragujevac and Subotica, where we started with such jobs, now we have work at a

much higher technical level. We have a big engineering center working on a high-speed train prototype, it's a global project, we have great engineers here, they don't have to leave the country to make good money. Many are interested in investing in IT and high technologies. Suppliers are also working on much more complex projects than before, concluded the director of Siemens, N1 reports.