



Government of the
Republic of Serbia

January 2012

10th

NEWS ON SOCIAL INCLUSION
LETTER AND POVERTY REDUCTION



Solidarity is one of the fundamental EU principles and represents an overall goal of all European societies. A more inclusive Europe is vital for the realization of EU objectives: sustainable economic growth, new and better jobs and higher social cohesion. EU leaders established the social inclusion process in order to contribute more efficiently to poverty eradication. The Government of Serbia takes active part in the social inclusion process to improve the quality of life its citizens. The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit has been established to assist the Government and line ministries to develop and implement social inclusion and poverty reduction policies in a coordinated and effective manner.

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NOVAK ĐOKOVIĆ, UNICEF NATIONAL AMBASSADOR TO SERBIA

Importance of Early Childhood Education

What I learned as a young child continues to have a tremendous impact on my life today. I was lucky and privileged to have a good start in life and to develop my talents. But the starting line is not the same for all children even though it is an imperative that each and every child has this right realized. It is well known that children's earliest experiences form the basis for all subsequent learning and that if solid foundations are laid in the early years, later learning is more effective and more likely to continue life-long, particularly among poor and other most vulnerable children.

Pre-school programmes help children develop their skills, acquire knowledge, and learn to respect each other and live with each other. Early learning is essential to give every young child the maximum possibilities to succeed in his or her further education. It gives them a winning start position, lessen the risk of school drop-out, help break cycles of inter-generational poverty and reduce the costs for society in terms of lost talent and public spending. Economic research has confirmed that investing in

pre-primary education actually brings a higher rate of return than investments in any other level of education.

What I have learned since I became a National Ambassador for UNICEF is that early education of children aged 3 to 5 in Serbia is one of the weakest parts of the education system, even though some progress has been made. The existing preschool system still leaves behind many children, particularly those from marginalized groups. In 2010, preschool coverage for 3-5 year olds reached only 44% of the general population, dropping to 7% for poor children, 8% for Roma children, and 29% for children from rural areas.

Therefore, we must give our extra support to those children who are born into poverty or on the margins of society so that they can realize their dreams. My engagement, I hope, will contribute to accelerating positive changes in Serbia. I believe I can help UNICEF efforts in ensuring that every young child has a possibility to be involved in a pre-school programme, and learn and develop from the very beginning.

News from the EU

- An Average of 15 Students per Teacher in the European Union
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LiceUlice Celebrates First Birthday

In the previous year there were those who slept in the streets, ate, traded, loved, hated, had happy and sad times, came and went; in a word - they lived, without a break. Many - and their number is increasing - spent yet another "traditional" year in the street, not because this was their life style, but because it was the only way to survive.

In the previous year of rebellious streets, a furious and turbulent year, we also entered the streets, modestly, with only a few vendors. Throughout our fight for each new issue, we managed to establish a media format unique not only in Serbia and in the region, but among street papers globally.

We attempted, and largely succeeded, to blend two major goals: economically and socially empower the most vulnerable citizens based on the principles of social entrepreneurship, to affect directly the improvement of their living conditions, and to come up with, strengthen and regularly publish an attractive and readily read magazine dedicated to activism. We have defended a concept that many have wished would succeed, with many claiming it would be unsustainable. We have offered our readers not what was sought, but what was lacking, what we needed as a community, thus proving that a public media service is feasible.

Each jubilee, though humble as this one, is an opportunity and an obligation to thank those who deserve it the most.

We would like to thank many, our readers above all, those current and future readers, and everyone who have invested effort into coming by their copy in contact with some of our vendors. Nothing would be possible without you, and you give meaning to our efforts.

We are inviting you to stay true, and help increase the number of our readers.

Contact: LiceUlice, Tel: 011 24 40 096, www.liceulice.org

Editorial Office

Serbia in the Lifelong Learning Programme

Serbia has accessed the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme aimed at cooperation in the field of education and training, the mobility of participants and their preparation for the European labor market.

The Memorandum between the Government of Serbia and the European Commission was signed in Brussels on December 21, 2011. It will enable full-fledged participation of Serbia in the Programme, unlike prior indirect participation as a third country. Thus Serbia is given an opportunity to take part in all EU projects on all levels of education, which is a significant reward.

The objectives of the participation of a country in the Programme are to improve the quality of education process, increase the overall level of education among the population, higher accessibility of learning for all and the development of information literacy.

Serbia has thus far taken part in the EU programme in the field of science through the FP7 programme, in the field of higher education through the Tempus programme, and now it can take part in all EU projects on all levels of education.

Programme participants include EU member states, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, candidate countries and all Western Balkans countries.

The programme tackles all levels of education, all forms of education - both formal and informal which may involve a person throughout their life, and it contributes to the advancement of their competencies - knowledge, skills and attitudes in the personal, civic and professional domain.

Policy Impact Analysis in the Field of Social Inclusion

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit is launching a new set of policy impact analyses, with a view to adopting new evidence-based policies and measures and their harmonization with EU policies.

The analyses will be finished by mid-2012 in cooperation with relevant partners and will include the following topics: reduction of inactivity among able bodied population, increase in the employability and creation of activation policies; creation of a favourable setup for the development of social economy and entrepreneurship; support for the education of poor and vulnerable population; the future of long-term care in Serbia; the policies of rural development and the reduction of poverty and exclusion in rural areas; analysis of policies regulating the removal of legal capacity and the rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.

National Debates on Social Inclusion Priorities

The initiative of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit has launched debates relating to social inclusion and poverty reduction issues. These events take form of national debates among national and local institutions, civil society organizations, expert and academic community, business community, labour unions and other stakeholders.

The first of five national debates, entitled "Economic Development and Employment - Post-crisis Opportunities and Challenges" was held in June 2011 in Novi Pazar; the second debate, entitled "The Development of Competitiveness of Rural Municipalities" was held in November in Negotin.

The third debate, entitled "Education for New Age", concluding that education in Serbia must respond to the development trends dictated by Europe and the modern world, was held in Belgrade on November 14, 2011.

National debates are to raise awareness, contribute to the exchange of good practices and indicate the solutions for the implementation of social inclusion and poverty reduction priorities.

National debates are organized by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit in cooperation with the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence and the Civic Initiatives.

Support for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Programs on the Local Level

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, in cooperation with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM), has launched an initiative to exchange experiences and good practices (peer review) in order to help advance the social inclusion and poverty reduction programs on the local level.

Two events have thus far been organized in Zlatibor.

The first event, entitled "Evidence-Based Policy Making on the Local Level", was held on November 16-18, 2011. It was attended by the representatives of 10 selected towns and municipalities, out of 26 applicants: Bor, Valjevo, Ivanjica, Kanjiža, Kruševac, Ljubovija, Majdanpek, Novi Sad, Ruma and Sjenica. They presented the policies and measures created based on evidence in the field of education and social protection.

The second event, entitled "Long-Term Care", was held on December 14-16, 2011. The event was attended by 10 selected towns and municipalities, out of 36 applicants who wanted to take part in the exchange of practices in the field of home care for the elderly.

The following event is planned for the beginning of 2012, dealing with the establishment of local services for the Roma.

Contact: Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit
Tel: 011 311 4605, www.inkluzija.gov.rs

Decentralization Glossary Published

The Office of the National Council for Decentralization published the Decentralization Glossary, which provides explanation of some 400 legal, political and economic relevant terms. The Glossary is available electronically on the Office's website.

Contact: Office of the National Council for Decentralization
Tel: 011 21 37 720, www.decentralizacija.gov.rs

Action Plan for the Advancement of the Status of the Roma 2012–2014

The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Government coordinated the development of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Advancement of the Status of the Roma 2012–2014 throughout November and December 2011. The development involved 13 working groups which gathered the representatives of ministries in charge of the implementation of specific fields, international organizations, citizen associations and the National Council of the Roma National Minority. The final consultations were held on December 21, 2011 and the formal adoption procedure is due at the beginning of 2012 at the session of the Government.

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The Council for the Advancement of the Status of the Roma in the Republic of Serbia held the Eighth session on December 5, 2011, to analyse the implementation of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Advancement of the Status of the Roma in Serbia in 2009-2011, and to analyse the assessment of the status of the Roma given in the Analytical Report of the European Commission within the Opinion on the Request for EU Membership of the Republic of Serbia.

Contact: Group for the Advancement of the Status of the Roma, Human and Minority Rights Administration, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self-Government
Tel: 011/311 76 44, www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICY: Allowance for Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities

As of April 2011 when the new Law on Social Protection was adopted, 54 unemployed parents of children with developmental disabilities, who meet the age-related conditions for exercising the right to retirement, have exercised their right to monthly allowance totalling the lowest pension in the insurance of the employed and/or RSD 12,500.

Pursuant to the new Law, the right to the specific allowance, received as a monthly benefit throughout life, is given to an unemployed parent who has taken care for 15 years of a child who is entitled to increased care allowance, who is not employed and is not retired, and meets the age-related conditions for retirement (60 years of age for women and 65 years of age for men). The right to increased care allowance is currently received by 32,148 beneficiaries, who receive a monthly benefit of some RSD 20,000.

All beneficiaries who receive a monthly allowance totalling the lowest pension will keep the right to increased care allowance, because the beneficiaries of the monthly allowance are the parents, whereas their children are the beneficiaries of the increased care allowance. The life-long monthly allowance received by the parents is not a typical pension and may not be inherited.

Contact: www.minrzs.gov.rs

Extended List of Social Protection Services

The members of the Assembly of the City of Belgrade adopted the decision at the session held on December 23, 2011 on the rights and services of social protection. The list relates to the existing and new social protection services and is implemented by supporting social protection institutions, as well as the services provided by immediate providers licensed in the citizen associations, companies etc.

The new services include the daily care of adults with developmental disabilities, safe house, personal assistance, supported housing for adults and the elderly with developmental disabilities, supported housing of children, youth and adults with physical disabilities, social entrepreneurship and temporary housing for pregnant women and women with children under 3 years of age. Material benefits are provided as one-off and permanent assistance, free meals, scholarships and subsidies for utility products, services and lease.

The measure relates to all Belgrade citizens meeting the relevant conditions.
Contact: Assembly of the City of Belgrade, 011 3229 678, www.beograd.rs

Database on Strategic Documents of Towns and Municipalities

A database providing information on which municipalities and towns have strategic documents is available, including the period and fields covered by strategies, the bodies dealing with the development and implementation of strategic plans on the local level, as well as the capacities and trainings needed by the municipalities and towns to implement their strategic plans more effectively.

The initiative of mapping the local strategic documents was launched by the former Deputy Prime Minister's Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities.

Contact: Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities
Tel: 011 3223 446, <http://strategije.skgo.org>

Decision on Candidacy Postponed

The debate whether to award Serbia the status of EU candidate country will take place in February before the Council of Ministers, while in March the decision on Serbia's EU membership candidacy will be confirmed at the EU Summit, according to Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council.

The leaders of the EU member states debated Serbia's membership on the basis of the European Commission recommendations dated 12 October 2011, which were supportive of Serbia being granted the status of a candidate country.

After the session of the European Council, it was acknowledged that Serbia had made considerable progress, extradited the war-crime indictees and initiated the

dialogue between Priština and Belgrade. As stated in the adopted conclusions, Serbia is expected to achieve further progress in the implementation of the agreements reached in the dialogue with Priština, including the agreement on Integrated Border Management, negotiations on the participation of all parties in the regional cooperation and active collaboration enabling EULEX and KFOR to execute their mandates.

For the accession negotiations to begin, clear conditions have been set for Serbia with regard to finding solutions to certain practical issues in its relations with Kosovo. As a result, Serbia will have to wait for this turning point to occur until all the conditions have been met. Source: [EurActiv.rs](http://euractiv.rs)

Denmark's Presidency of the EU in 2012

Denmark will take over the Presidency of the EU Council in the first half of 2012.

The most important issues to address will be the creation of economic growth in the EU, climate, energy, environment and agriculture, justice and home affairs, a strong global role for the EU, as well as negotiations on the EU's long-term budget.

Contact: <http://europa.eu>

Uncertain Fate of European Food Aid

Six EU member states have blocked the renewal of the European food aid for food banks and soup kitchens.

At the meeting of agriculture ministers, Luxembourg, Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom, Denmark, Czech Republic and the Netherlands remained opposed to the idea of spending the funds from the agricultural budget, envisaged for the European Poverty Reduction Programme, on social policy.

The food aid scheme is worth EUR 480 million. In the EU, 16.3% of the population is exposed to the risk of poverty, while 18 million people benefit from food aid. Source: www.euractiv.rs

Income Inequalities in Europe Increase

According to the first annual review of Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE), the economic crisis has precipitated the deterioration of structural weaknesses, such as income inequalities in Europe. The inequalities have also increased in the traditionally egalitarian member states, such as the Nordic countries, with the trend of further increase.

In 2010, the number of poor persons remained high - 115 million Europeans were at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

The review also reflects on the active ageing policies and draws attention to poverty in employment. Namely, while the Eastern Europeans are more often facing serious material deprivation, the northern and western EU countries are dominated by labour market exclusion.

The risk of poverty and social exclusion is particularly high for the elderly, single parents and households with low work intensity. More than 8% of the employed are at risk of poverty - the "working poor".

Raising the level of employability of elderly workers and encouraging active ageing have been defined as the key elements for the achievement of the EU employment rate target of 75% by 2020. Active ageing policies will help to discourage the habit of early retirement, stimulate life-

long learning, adjust working conditions to the needs of the elderly and ensure elderly care.

According to the results of the Eurobarometer surveys, more than one third of the currently employed Europeans are concerned about the likelihood of losing their job. Most of the respondents think that the EU overall has taken a step backwards over the last period, given that 71% of them have been pessimistic about the prospects of the economic crisis ending any time soon, whereas 87% have said that poverty has increased.

The general feeling of depression for the situation in the society has not translated into the crisis of faith of most respondents in the outlook for their own future - more people believed they would keep their job in 2011 than in 2009.

Contact: <http://ec.europa.eu>

EU Unemployment Rate at a Record High

In September 2011, the unemployment rate in Europe reached 9.7%, which is equal to the record high from the first half of 2010.

Unemployment in the Eurozone increased to 10.2%. Youth unemployment is still a major concern in the European Union. In September 2011, youth unemployment totalled 5.3 million, with the youth unemployment rate of 21.4%.

An Average of 15 Students per Teacher in the European Union

The student-to-teacher ratio in primary education in the EU member states continues to fluctuate. In 2009, it was 15 students per teacher on average.

A Eurostat research of the EU education trends during the last decade showed that the teaching staff in primary education institutions mostly consisted of women, as well as that in certain countries almost one half of the teachers were older than 50.

In 2009, the average number of students per teacher in the EU ranged from 10 (in Malta, Lithuania, Denmark and Poland) to almost 20 in France and the United Kingdom. The average number of students per teacher in the U.S. was 14.9, whereas in Japan it was 9.4. The student-to-teacher ratio in Serbia in the academic year 2008/2009 was 13.7.

In 2009, pre-school education in 11 EU member states was attended by 92% of the children. These 11 countries have thus already fulfilled their education and training targets set for 2020. In Japan, 98% of the children of pre-school age are included in pre-school education, whereas the rate in the U.S. is 66%.

Compulsory preparatory pre-school education in Serbia is attended by 87.8% of the children. Contact: Eurostat, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>

More Funds and Fewer Procedures for Social Enterprises

From now on, social enterprises in the EU will no longer depend predominantly on the funds earmarked in the national budgets, since the European Commission has decided to simplify the procedures for business start-ups and facilitate the access of social enterprises to capital markets.

The Commission has launched the Social Business Initiative, which is, in effect, a short-term action plan stimulating the creation and growth of social enterprises, and has proposed 11 priority measures. The idea behind the initiative is to promote competitive, social-market economy - the core of the Europe 2020 growth strategy.

Social enterprises have been given priority for funding within the EU regional policies. With about EUR 90 million, the EU will support debt payoff and new investments of social enterprises between 2014 and 2020. The Commission intends to propose a regulatory framework for social investment funds, so as to facilitate the access of social enterprises to private capital, thus contributing to job growth in social economy.

The sector of social economy employs more than 11 million people, which is 6% of the total employment in the EU.

Contact: European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu>

25% of the Europeans Have Not Used the Internet

Eurostat research shows that almost a quarter of the Europeans between 16 and 74 years of age have never used the internet, which is by 18% less than in 2006. The share of the population who have never used the internet ranges between 5% in Sweden to 53% in Serbia and 54% in Romania.

Almost 75% of the households in the EU had internet access at the end of the first quarter of 2011 (ranging from 45% in Bulgaria to 94% in the Netherlands), whereas in 2006 the share was 50%. Online shopping is mostly used by the British, Danes, Germans and Swedes.

Internet access is available in 95% of the European enterprises, while 69% of them have websites. In Serbia, the internet is used by 97% of the enterprises, whereas 67.7% have websites.

Contact: Eurostat, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Action Plan for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Special commercial embassies in the fast-growing economies, less strict terms for banking loans and new investment funds designed to assist the innovative businesses will be integrated in the European Commission action plan for small and medium-sized enterprises. The primary goal of the action plan is to introduce the long-awaited measure aimed at facilitating joint investments in the small and medium-sized enterprises throughout Europe.

The action plan will also suggest ways for banks to lend money to SMEs without applying the usual stringent criteria of balance sheet valuation, which is one of the main reasons why banks frequently refuse SMEs' loan applications.

Contact: European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu>

Call for Applications for Promotion of Social Services

The Family Care and Social Welfare Department within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has selected 20 associations and organisations that applied with project proposals for funding from the national budget.

The selected projects are aimed at supporting the introduction of new and promotion of existing services with a view to improving the position of the particularly vulnerable groups, promoting innovative inter-sector social services, as well as monitoring and evaluating the local social services.

By 19 November 2011, when the deadline for applications expired, 234 project proposals were submitted.

Contact: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
Tel.: 011 31 12 916, www.minrzs.gov.rs

Call for Public Works for PWD Announced

The National Employment Service has announced the call for public works hiring unemployed persons with disabilities, or unemployed persons assisting the disabled persons.

Since the passage of the Law on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (May 2009), more than 7,000 PWDs have been employed.

The deadline for applications was 5 December 2011.

Contact: NES, tel.: 011 30 36 228, www.nsz.gov.rs

New Parking Cards for Disabled Persons

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Parking Services Public Enterprise, Serbian Parking Association and Youth with Disabilities Forum have launched an initiative for issuing new standardised and protected parking cards to persons with disabilities, which will be valid throughout Serbia. The cards would be issued as of 1 January 2012.

Contact: Youth with Disabilities Forum, tel.: 011 32 48 347,
www.fmi.rs

Assistive Technologies

In mid-November, the Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation from Novi Sad organised a conference to present an initiative by 26 civil society organisations to introduce assistive technologies ensuring that persons with disabilities can exercise their right to work.

Assistive technologies are computer technologies that ensure optimum communication capabilities and independence of PWD.

Contact: Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation
tel: 021 466 588, www.ehons.org

Clubs against Discrimination against Children from Marginalised Groups

The Belgrade-based Centre for Quality Education has commenced the implementation of the project titled Clubs for Children and Youth, with the goal of organising and developing three public spaces in Belgrade, Kragujevac and Ivanjica so as to support the building of social co-

hesion and elimination of discrimination against children and youth from marginalised groups.

Project partners are the Society for Support of Mentally Challenged Persons from Kragujevac, the Creative Educational Centre for People with Developmental Disabilities

from Belgrade and the Association for Supporting People with Developmental Disabilities from Ivanjica, with the financial support from the EU.

Contact: Centre for Quality Education, tel.: 011 25 13 989,
www.cko.org.rs

Short Videos Promoting Services for the Disabled

As part of the project titled Social Services for Persons with Disabilities as Support for Equal Socio-Economic Development, implemented by the Centre for Society Orientation in ten municipalities, five short videos have been produced to promote support services for disabled persons, especially regarding education, employment, free time, transportation and support of the community.

Project partners include Autism Serbia, European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities, Centre for Development of Inclusive Society, International Aid Network and the Municipality of New Belgrade.

Contact: Centre for Society Orientation - COD
tel.: 011 21 20 177, www.cod.rs

Social Inclusion through Sport

Belgrade city authorities will continue supporting sports clubs and associations in organising sports activities and the support will target the associations gathering persons with disabilities, marginalised population groups, as well as associations of less popular sports. The idea is to encourage people to take up sports, as well as to mainstream the less popular sports.

Among others, the funds will be awarded to the Sports and Recreation Federation of Persons with Disabilities from Belgrade, the Centre for Improving the Position and Promoting the Rights of Socially Marginalised Groups and the Sports and Recreation Association of Persons with Disabilities Everything is Possible.

Contact: City of Belgrade, Secretariat for Sports and Youth, tel.: 011 71 57 440, www.beograd.rs

Inclusive Academy

The Youth with Disabilities Forum and Société Générale Bank have signed a partnership agreement for the Inclusive Academy project, which entails training programmes and workshops delivered, among others, by volunteering bank employees. The project objective is to advance the knowledge and skills of people with disabilities and improve their prospects in the labour market.

Contact: Serbian Youth with Disabilities Forum, tel.: 011 32 20 632
www.forum-osi.org

Inclusive-Creative Centre in Novi Sad

The Inclusive-Creative Centre has been opened in Novi Sad to provide better education, vocational rehabilitation and occupational training for persons with developmental disabilities.

With boarding capacity for 40 students, tailored to suit persons with various types of disability, the new facility, established within the Milan Petrović Primary and Secondary School, is the first institution of the kind.

The City of Novi Sad financed the construction of the centre with more than RSD 450 million and provided additional RSD 23 million for furnishing the specialised laboratories.

Contact: Milan Petrović Primary and Secondary School, tel.: 021 66 16 366
www.smp.edu.rs

ACTivate Yourself Project Completed

As part of the ACTivate Yourself humanitarian project, which focused on social inclusion of parentless children and children with developmental disabilities, a final event was organised with a programme intended for children. The participants in the event were the Dragutin Fili-

pović Jusa, Jovan Jovanović Zmaj and Drinka Pavlović children's homes, Vuk Karadžić and Josip Pančić primary schools, as well as AIESEC volunteers. For six months, the volunteers visited the homes for parentless children, associations for supporting the persons with develop-

mental disabilities and primary schools, where they spent time with the children through workshops, organised frequent outings and made their daily routines more colourful.

Contact: AIESEC
tel.: 011 26 21 455
www.aiesec.org.rs

PHOTO NEWS

SOCIAL INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Integration Workshop



Corridors
Yellow,
Purple, Blue

Directed and choreographed by Ms Sonja Vukićević

Theatre pieces Corridors Yellow, Purple, Blue and Waiting for Godot, staged by persons with disabilities, who also participate in them, have been produced and are performed on the stage of the Integration Workshop.

The goal of the Integration Workshop is to have persons with disabilities create the programme and directly participate in it. The two pieces are the first workshop products created and performed by blind and visually impaired persons. The original idea came from Mr Predrag Miki Manojlović, actor.

Contact: Integration Workshop
tel.: 065 86 24 633



Waiting
for Godot

Directed and adapted by Mr Nebojša Dugalić

Advertisement for Mentors on the Make the Most of EU Funds for Roma Project

An advertisement has been launched, inviting applications for five mentors and 15 mentor assistants to provide support to municipalities in preparing Roma inclusion projects, to be funded by the EU as part of the Make the Most of EU Funds for Roma project. The project aims to strengthen the capacities of Roma organisations to design projects to be funded by the EU.

The project is being implemented by Group 484, European Movement in Serbia and Roma Centre for Democracy Development, with the support of the Open Society Institute.

The advertisement was open until 22 December 2011.

Contact: Group 484, tel.: 011 2660 972
www.grupa484.org.rs

Literacy Certificates for the Roma

Adult Roma from the former Gazela slum who have successfully completed a literacy programme have been awarded certificates.

As part of the project being implemented by Civic Initiatives and funded by the City of Belgrade, 14 students worked with 40 adult Roma men and women from Barajevo, Rakovica, Makiš, Mladenovac and Boljevac for two months.

The students taught them to write in block letters, sign their names, read simple sentences and fill in simple forms on their own.

The students will continue working with them twice a month until the project closure.

Contact: Civic Initiatives
tel.: 011 2623 980, www.gradjanske.org

CSOs Appeal for a Solution for Relocation of Informal Roma Settlements

A group of civil society organizations has invited public authorities to resume dialogue in order to find an adequate housing solution for 33 families from the informal Roma settlement on Dr Ivana Ribara Street in New Belgrade, inhabited mainly by internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija. On the International Day for Tolerance, they were served with decisions of the New Belgrade Municipal Inspection Affairs Department ordering demolition of the structures in which they had lived for years, within one day.

The endorsed international standards in the field of human rights prohibit forced evictions in bad weather, as well as evictions rendering occupants homeless.

The appeal has been endorsed by Praxis, Regional Centre for Minorities, Minority Rights Centre, Women in Black, Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights (YUCOM), Humanitarian Law Fund, Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Association of the Roma Exiled from Kosovo and Metohija, Centre for New Communications Dokukino and Coalition against Discrimination.
Contact: Praxis, tel.: 011 3444 486, www.praxis.org.rs

Belgrade's Human Rights House

The City of Belgrade has provided office space for the Agency for European Integration and Cooperation with Associations and the Federation of Associations House of Human Rights and Democracy.

The space will be used for joint project implementation and cooperation in the field of human rights, local democracy and rule of law.

Contact: Belgrade City Administration - Agency for European Integration and Cooperation with Associations, tel.: 011 715 7361, www.evograd.rs

Women's CSOs Seek a Fund for Promoting the Status of Women

The campaign For the Fund - against Inequality, with the idea and aim of establishing funds for promoting the status of women within city and municipal budgets and at the national level, has been conducted by 24 women's civil society organisations from 20 towns and cities.

The campaign was launched by symbolic street actions in 20 towns and cities on 17 October, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, and was closed by submitting the proposed text of decision establishing a fund for promoting the status of women to nine mayors and a proposal for amendments to the Gender Equality Law.

The campaign is a part of the Poverty Reduction Program - Civil Society and Responsible Government, implemented by a coalition of civil society organisations supported by the Government of the Kingdom of Norway through the Institute for Sustainable Communities.

Contact: Autonomous Women's Centre
tel.: 011 2687 190, www.womenngo.org.rs
www.zafondzazene.rs

16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women

As part of the international campaign 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women, representatives of four non-governmental organizations appeal for amendments to the Republic of Serbia Criminal Code, introducing the criminal offence of stalking. The number of stalking cases is on the increase in Serbia, with some resulting in deaths. Victims of stalking are not afforded any protection.

The campaign is being conducted by Reconstruction Women's Fund, Women against Violence Network, Autonomous Women's Centre and Act Women.

Contact: Reconstruction Women's Fund
tel.: 011 3222 751, www.rwfund.org

Monitoring the Effects of Measures on Combating Violence against Women

The recently established Observatory on Violence against Women was presented in mid-November at the conference Monitoring the Effects of Policies and Measures on Combating Violence against Women.

The Observatory is an independent expert body tasked with monitoring and assessing the effects of policies and measures on combating violence against women.

The results of implementing the Strategy for the Protection against Domestic Violence and Other Forms of Gender-based Violence, as well as actions aimed at establishing cooperation among the community services implemented in 15 cities/municipalities in Serbia were also presented.

Contact: Autonomous Women's Centre
tel.: 011 2687 190, www.womenngo.org.rs

Psychosocial Treatment of Domestic Violence Perpetrators

Perpetrators of domestic violence will have an opportunity to undergo psychosocial treatment on a voluntary basis in three social work centres - in Belgrade, Niš and Kragujevac, with the aim of eradicating and preventing the recurrence of domestic violence.

Research has shown that perpetrators' motivation to undergo treatment is the highest within two to three days after a violent incident.

Training for professionals from the centres has commenced, and the programme is a part of the Combating Sexual and Gender-based Violence project.

Contact: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Gender Equality Directorate, tel.: 011 3345 665
www.minzrs.gov.rs

Pregnant Women's Service and Funding of the Third IVF Attempt

The City of Belgrade's latest project is the launch of an SMS service named Baby on the Way, aimed at helping women carry their pregnancies more confidently and with fewer cares. The service will provide pregnant women with the necessary information on important aspects of their and their babies' health on a weekly basis.

In the past two years, the City of Belgrade has funded 250 IVF attempts, and 75 babies have been born as a result. In the coming budget year, the City will also fund the third IVF attempt for all women up to the age of 40 diagnosed with fertility problems; in addition, once granted access, the beneficiaries will not subsequently be eliminated on the grounds of age.

Contact: City of Belgrade, Secretariat for Health Affairs
tel.: 011 7157 480, www.beograd.rs

Declaration on Resolving the Problem of Refugees

Foreign ministers of Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have signed a joint declaration which foresees providing EUR 584 million to resolve the status of 74,000 most vulnerable refugees and internally displaced persons in the region.

The funds will be provided at a donors' conference planned for 2012 and, of the total funds, EUR 335 million will be earmarked for resolving the status of 45,000 refugees and internally displaced persons in Serbia.

In the next five years, these funds will enable the closure of all refugee collective centres in Serbia.

EU member states will provide one half of the total required funding.

Contact: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
tel.: 011 3616 333, www.mfa.gov.rs

Access to Free Legal Aid for Displaced Persons in the Western Balkan Countries

As part of the project Fostering NGO Human Rights Network, a group of regional non-governmental organisations has analysed the possibility of access to justice through the provision of free legal aid for vulnerable groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia and Serbia in the aftermath of the conflicts in the territory of former Yugoslavia.

The document gives an overview of the most important areas of interest to refugees and displaced population, and has been prepared by the NGOs Your Rights (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights, Centre for Peace, Legal Advice and Psychosocial Assistance (Croatia), Humanitarian Centre for Integration and Tolerance, Group 484, Initiative for Development and Cooperation, Serbian Democratic Forum, Praxis, Balkan Centre for Migration (Serbia) and Legal Centre (Montenegro). The project is supported by the OSCE.

Contact: Group 484, tel.: 011 2631 445
www.grupa484.org.rs

Youth Business Serbia Programme for Young Entrepreneurs

Youth Business Serbia, a comprehensive programme providing support to young entrepreneurs in starting and growing their businesses, was launched on 13 December 2011 as a result of cooperation between Smart Kolektiv, Erste Bank, Business Leaders Forum, National Employment Service and USAID Sustainable Local Development Project.

The programme will include business mentoring for young entrepreneurs, access to Erste Bank's credit line for young entrepreneurs (SuperSTEP) granted on especially favourable terms, as well as training organised by the National Employment Service. Through partnership of all involved domestic and foreign organisations and institutions, comprehensive support to youth entrepre-

neurship will be provided over the next two years with a view to decreasing youth unemployment and promoting local economic development.

The programme is implemented by Smart Kolektiv in line with the Youth Business International methodology, with the support of USAID and the Republic of Serbia Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Through the Business Leaders Forum, the companies Coca Cola Hellenic, Holcim, Serbian State Lottery, Société Générale Bank, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Atlantic Grupa, Erste Bank, Ernst & Young, Omega M and Oivivo are involved in the project.

Contact: Business Leaders Forum Serbia
tel.: 011 2440 096, www.preduzminesto.org

Green Initiative Advocates Formal Recognition of Collectors' Work

A typical scrap collector lives, on average, for 46 years, works for 11 hours a day, is unemployed, has no health insurance and manages to earn between RSD 11,000 and 15,000 per month by selling recyclable materials. These are results of a research into the socio-economic status of scrap collectors, presented in early November at the meeting titled Scrap Collectors - Problem or Potential, held as part of a campaign led by the Green Initiative.

Formal recognition of collectors' work would contribute to improving their socio-economic sta-

tus and increasing the quantity of collected recyclable materials by 20%.

There are about 55,000 scavengers, who collect most of the currently recycled waste in Serbia - about 75%. Although trade in recyclable materials is highly profitable, scavengers belong to the poorest population group.

The Green Initiative is a network of 22 civil society organizations.

Contact: Green Initiative
<http://zelenainicijativa.rs>

A Business That Gives a Chance to All

Our House, an association for support to persons with developmental impairments, has established a social enterprise - Paper Supplies Workshop, employing about a dozen young men with developmental impairments who are beneficiaries of a day care centre located in a modest rented house and 15 square meters' workshop.

The Municipality of Zvezdara has supported the project financially and through networking with professional soft packaging manufacturers, who have set up the equipment, trained the workers and provided useful advice. Several food and pastry producers now order paper bags from the Workshop.

In cooperation with the Zvezdara Volunteers' Centre, Our House has designed a new project - Kitchen on Wheels. Within the project, young men from Our House will deliver food to the homes of the elderly and sick in Zvezdara.

Donors have provided a touch screen cash register, since they are not able to compute; a packaging machine and a food storage unit have also been provided, and a delivery van will be purchased soon.

Contact: Our House, tel.: 011 2888 084

BCIF: Social Transition Programme

The Balkan Community Initiatives Fund announced a January call for applications for the Social Transition programme, implemented in cooperation with the Co-operating Netherlands Foundations for Central and Eastern Europe (CNF CEE).

The programme objective is to support the process of social welfare system transition by awarding grants of up to EUR 15,000 to local, non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations engaging in social issues and services.

Contact: Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF)
tel.: 011 2622 511, www.bcif.org

The Association Bridges Buys a Farm and Develops a Business

As part of the Health against Poverty project, the Kruševac-based Bridges Sustainable Development Initiative, gathering citizens and parents of children with special needs, has bought a farm where it grows chokeberries, known for their health benefits. The initiative has started building an eco-village and is preparing to start a social enterprise.

At the beginning of the project, the initiative trained 41 unemployed persons in organic growing of chokeberries. These berries are nowadays in very high demand for their health properties, whereas they were not even registered in Serbia until recently.

An association of 27 members has been established, but the number of beneficiaries is far higher. The Erste Foundation has awarded EUR 16,000 to the project and the association has used the

funds to buy the farm and chokeberry seedlings. The farm is located outside Kruševac, in the community of Lomnica, and will not be connected to water and power networks - instead, a well will be drilled and windmills and solar panels will be installed to ensure self-sustainability of the farm.

Day care services will be provided for children and youth with disabilities, as well as hippotherapy, recreational horseback riding and the like.

The initiative started by building the Green Classroom for Lifelong Learning. It will enable the young and elderly to learn from each other - the young will learn old trades, such as masonry or carpentry, while the elderly will learn the basics of IT and how to create a Facebook profile.

Contact: Bridges Sustainable Development Initiative, tel.: 063 41 94 52
<http://odrzivirazvoj.org.rs>

Call for Applications: Mentoring for Women Entrepreneurs

The National Agency for Regional Development and the Association of Business Women in Serbia invited interested women entrepreneurs to apply for mentoring assistance by 16 December 2011 with a view to advancing their business. Twenty women entrepreneurs will be selected to receive assistance for 16 months.

Mentors of Women Entrepreneurs in Serbia is a project implemented by the National Agency for Regional Development and the Association of Business Women in Serbia. Its aim is to build a national network of mentors for women entrepreneurs, like those established in 17 European countries and gathered in the European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs.

Contact: Association of Business Women
tel.: 011 2776 801, www.poslovnezene.org.rs

Share Your Knowledge Become a Mentor

Following the call for applications within the Share Your Knowledge - Become a Mentor programme, the selection of participants has been completed.

The aim of the programme is to bring together leading women experts from different professions to share their knowledge and experiences with young women who have similar interests and are at the beginning of their careers.

This year's call for applications has also been launched by the Embassy of the United States to Serbia, Erste Bank and the European Movement in Serbia, and the one-year project started in November 2011.

Contact: European Movement in Serbia
tel.: 011 3640 174, www.emins.org

Social Enterprise Portal

Isede Net, an internet portal where social enterprises from Serbia may create their pages, present their activities and receive the necessary technical assistance in business management, marketing, finance, legal aid and human resources development, has been launched.

Isede Net aims to promote the alternative economy in South-Eastern Europe and is designed as a social enterprise service centre, also providing assistance to project partners. Information is available in Serbian, English, Slovenian, Greek, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Italian, German and Ukrainian languages.

The project partner is the European Movement in Serbia.

Contact: www.isede-net.com;
European Movement in Serbia
tel.: 011 3640 174, www.emins.org

Eco-Bags of Modern Design

Eco Bag, a social enterprise established one year ago, manufactures fashionable bags from recycled materials with the principal aim of employing long-term unemployed women over 50 years of age.

Bags, folders and wallets in various colours are made of waste billboards, i.e. of PVC sheets used in many advertising campaigns.

Eco Bag works with a local bank, which orders bags for its conferences, as well as with city authorities, the NGO sector and several companies.

The City of Belgrade has donated a cutting machine used to make welt strips for bags.
Contact: Eco Bag, www.ekotorbe.com

CSR Measurement Project Launched

As part of its investment promotion and business support activities, the NALED has launched the CRS Certification programme, which will result in a mechanism to assess whether a company is socially responsible or not.

The CSR Certification programme will address five areas of social responsibility and set the indicators to identify what companies should do in order to treat their staff, local community and the environment responsibly, and also what approach to the market and corporate management they should foster.

NALED's project partners are SMart Kolektiv and BCIF, and the CSR Certification programme is implemented with the support of the Institute for Sustainable Communities as part of the USAID-funded Civil Society Advocacy Initiative.

Contact: NALED, tel.: 011 3347 634, www.naled-serbia.org

Virtus Corporate Philanthropy Awards Presented

For the fifth time, the Balkan Community Initiatives Fund presented Virtus 2011 Corporate Philanthropy Excellence Awards to companies in six categories of corporate social responsibility.

The principal award for national contribution was won by Erste bank a.d. Novi Sad for its contribution in addressing social issues, support to young talents and marginalised groups. Erste Bank also received an award for the volunteering programme, while Holcim won the award for contribution to the local community.

The most innovative project award went to the company B92 for its Food for Enclaves programme, aimed at collecting cash and food donations for continued operation of soup kitchens in the area of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Raška and Prizren.

For its cooperation with UNICEF on the Roma health mediators project, Telenor received an award for long-term partnership between business and not-for-profit sectors.

In the category of small and medium-sized enterprise philanthropy, the award went to the family business Sunce Marinković, which gives a part of its profits back to the community in which it operates through staff training, employment of persons with disabilities and energy efficiency activities.

Contact: Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF)
tel.: 011 2622 511, www.bcif.org

Be a Vip Student Competition

The company Vip Mobile has announced the fifth scholarship award competition as part of its project titled Be a Vip Student, enabling talented young people to gain experience in the telecommunications industry. So far, more than 700 students have applied, the top 77 have been awarded scholarships and 12 are currently employed with Vip.

This project is formally by the Digital Agenda Administration, eligible universities and faculties of Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš and Kragujevac and student organisations.

Contact: Be a Vip Student programme
tel.: 011 225 3010, www.jasamvip.rs

Conference: "Make a Change Be a Volunteer!"

The national conference "Make a Change - Be a Volunteer!" was held on December 5, 2011 in the Palace of Serbia.

The conference aimed at raising the visibility of volunteer activities implemented in the Republic of Serbia which promote active citizenship, strengthened social cohesion and the development of democracy. According to the latest data, Serbia takes 45th place in the global list in terms of the number of volunteers.

The discussion on the Law on Volunteering included the presentation of the Guidelines on the Implementation of the Law on Volunteering, published within the programme "Civil Society Public Advocacy Initiative".

The Conference was organized by the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of The Republic of Serbia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Civic Initiatives, Young Researchers of Serbia and UNICEF on the International Day of Volunteers and closing of the European Year of Volunteering.

Contact: Office for Cooperation with Civil Society
www.civilnodrustvo.gov.rs

Government of Serbia to Adopt a Regulation on NGO Funding

The Government of Serbia is about to adopt a regulation which will introduce uniform rules on funding the non-governmental sector from the state budget for the first time. The aim of the regulation is to remove any uncertainty in awarding funds and to restrict the possibility of public bodies' management awarding public funds to NGOs according to their own criteria.

Each NGO receiving a single dinar from the state budget will be obliged to make its financial statements available to the public at the end of the year.

The Law on Associations, passed in 2009, defines programmes that are of particular interest to the state.

Contact: Government of the Republic of Serbia, www.srbija.gov.rs

New Web Site of the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society

The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society has launched its new official internet presentation at www.civilnodrustvo.gov.rs, aiming to inform the public with its work and activities faster and more conveniently. The latest news on the Office's work is also available on Facebook.

About 15,600 NGOs Registered in Serbia

Serbia has about 15,600 associations, according to the survey Status of the Civil Sector in Serbia, encompassing 67 municipalities and a total of 13,375 associations.

Vojvodina is leading with 37% of all registered NGOs, followed by Belgrade with 30%, while in other areas the NGOs are relatively evenly distributed.

More than 60% of all NGOs pursue aims in the fields of social services, culture/media/recreation and environment. About 10% engage in education and research, while only 0.2% engage in philanthropic intermediation and promotion of volunteering.

In 2010, most NGOs had budgets below EUR 20,000, while one in ten had a budget exceeding EUR 100,000. About 41% of NGOs are financed from their own resources, 20% receive assistance from local governments and 12% receive funding from foreign donors.

The survey was carried out by Strategic Marketing, commissioned by Civic Initiatives, and funded by the Civil Society Advocacy Initiative programme.

Contact: Civic Initiatives, tel.: 011 2623 980, www.gradjanske.org

Stars of Belgrade Awards Presented

The Stars of Belgrade awards were presented to 15 civil society organizations for projects voted best in 2011 and funded by the City of Belgrade.

Awards were presented by the Agency for European Integration and Cooperation with Associations to the Belgrade Open School for the project Evrokrem and to the organization New Idea for the project Filmstreet - Summer Cinema, and a special award was presented to Mr Miljenko Dereta, Executive Director of Civic Initiatives, for the project Teaching Literacy to Adult Roma.

The Secretariats for Child Protection and Culture presented awards to the Association for Education and Support for the project Support to the Families of Children with Developmental Impairments, International Jeunesses Musicales Competition, Outside, the poetry festival Pesničenje and the Belgrade Dance Festival.

In the field of social welfare, the association Together received an award for the project School for All, as did the Youth with Disabilities Forum for the project Social Inclusion and Career Guidance of Young Roma and the New Belgrade Association of War and Peace Time Disabled Military Veterans for the project Rehabilitation through Sports and Recreational Activities.

In addition, awards were presented for the projects Training Secondary School Students in Successful Waste Management and Exhibition of Heirloom Breeds of Livestock, and also to the organisations Art Group Hop.la! for the project Generation 3 and Ekocentrik for the project Reciklašar - Recycling Fair.

Contact: Belgrade City Assembly, tel.: 011 3229 678, www.beograd.rs

Project: Commissioner for Equality Protection

The Commissioner for Equality Protection is approved funds totalling EUR 145,717 for the Going beyond Legislation: Promoting the Implementation and Mainstreaming of Antidiscrimination and Equality in Serbia", within the component "Support to National Activities to Fight Discrimination and Promote Equality" of the European Union Progress programme.

The project was assessed by the European Commission as one of the best designed projects, emphasizing the need to raise the capacities of the judiciary in the implementation of antidiscrimination legislation, the education of the media and strengthen the capacities of the Commissioner for Equality Protection.

The European Commission has recognized the need of the Commissioner for Equality Protection to set strong foundations of the institution which fights all forms of discrimination through, inter alia, intensive education of the media and the judiciary in the field of antidiscrimination legislation and for the strengthening this independent body - the Commissioner for Equality Protection. The project will be realized in cooperation with target groups encompassing the Judicial Academy, journalist organizations, aiming to reach all relevant groups in Serbia and raise awareness on the means of fighting discrimination.

Contact: Commissioner for Equality Protection, www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs

INVITATION TO CSOs: Drafting a Report on Discrimination in Education

The Ministry of Education has invited civil society organisations engaging in education and prevention of discrimination in education to take part in drafting a report on Serbia's efforts in combating discrimination in education.

The Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Serbia to UNESCO has invited state parties to submit reports on the implementation of the UN Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education from 2006 to 2011.

Contact: Ministry of Education and Science
tel.: 011 3616 489, www.mp.gov.rs

Legal Aid in Cases of Discrimination in Schools

The project Combating Discrimination on All Grounds in the Serbian Education System focuses on cases of discrimination against students and school staff, as well as cases of peer discrimination. In addition to legal protection, the project foresees training for school inspectors and advisers, students, parents and school administration with a view to upgrading capacities and raising awareness of this issue.

The project is being implemented by the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights (YUCOM) and Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) with the support of the Delegation of the EU to Serbia.

Contact: Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights (YUCOM), tel.: 011 3344 425, www.yucom.org.rs

Campaign against Violence in Secondary Schools

The campaign Belgrade - Violence-Free City, conducted in Belgrade secondary schools, is aimed at reducing the incidence of violence and discrimination among secondary-school students and stimulating them to take an active part in social life. It is conducted through workshops on human rights and the programmes Music against Violence and Sport against Violence.

The campaign is being conducted by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, supported by the City of Belgrade Agency for European Integration and Cooperation with Associations, City of Belgrade Youth Office and other city institutions.

Contact: Youth Initiative for Human Rights - Serbia (YIHR), tel.: 011 3370 757, www.yihr.org

Students and Student Associations Assistance Programmes

The City of Belgrade Secretariat for Sports and Youth continues its assistance programme targeting full-time university and secondary school students attending additional training seminars, lectures and internships in the country and abroad.

The assistance is available to students of state-owned faculties and secondary schools who have applied for the annual competition, through which the City provides funding for a portion of the training costs.

Contact: City of Belgrade, Secretariat for Sports and Youth, tel.: 011 7157 440
www.beograd.rs

Student Conference on the United Nations

The United Nations Association of Serbia has announced a call for applications to participate in the ninth student conference Belgrade International Model United Nations - BIMUN 2012, to be held in March 2012.

BIMUN offers students of social sciences and humanities from around the world an opportunity of gaining practical experience in international topical issues and ways they are resolved within the UN, of applying diplomatic rules and of developing their own skills in the areas of public appearance, negotiation, debating and reaching compromises.

During the year, the best-performing participants will be working on the BIMUN Plus project.

The deadline for applications is 25 January 2012.
Contact: United Nations Association of Serbia
tel.: 011 322 4648, www.bimun-unaserbia.org

Strengthening the Social Dimension of Higher Education

The first meeting of the Steering Committee of the project Equal Access for All: Strengthening the Social Dimension as Support for a Stronger European Higher Education Area - EQUI-ED was held in Niš, totaling a million EUR and financed from the EU Tempus program.

The project shall enable a legal and institutional framework for a higher inclusion of students from vulnerable groups into higher education through three specific objectives: advancement of policies and legal framework for a diversification of students, improved collection of data and analytical information and improved institutional framework.

The project is coordinated by the University in Niš, with participation of all state universities in Serbia, the Republic Statistical Office, the Commissioner for Equality Protection and non-government organizations. Foreign expertise is provided from universities in Spain, Great Britain and Slovenia.

The project was initiated by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit and a team of experts in the field of higher education reform.

Conference on the Return of Highly-Skilled Professionals

As part of the project Advocating for "Brain Gain" Policies aimed at Reintegration of High-skilled Returnees in the Western Balkans and with financial support from the Balkan Trust for Democracy, the regional conference Repatriation of Highly-Skilled Experts in the Western Balkans - Brain Gain or Brain Re-drain? was organized by Group 484 and the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence at Sava Centre on 15 December 2011.

Contact: Group 484, tel.: 011 2660 972
www.grupa484.org.rs

Digital Class 2 Competition Launched

The Ministry of Culture, Media and Information Society has announced the Digital Class 2 competition for primary school teachers.

The competition aims to promote effective and varied application of information technologies in the teaching process and it targets teachers who use information and communication technologies in teaching in creative ways.

Eligible entries are papers containing an overview of a school lesson involving the use of information technologies as teaching aids, and should be submitted by 16 January 2012.
Contact: Digital Agenda Administration
tel.: 011 2020 057, www.mtid.gov.rs

Creative School Competition

The Education Advancement Institute and Microsoft opened a competition for elementary and secondary schools entitled "Creative School 2011/2012". The competition aims at the employed in primary and secondary schools whose works, developed in the project "Exchange of Experiences by Using ICT", represent good practices in teaching and the achievement of education goals by using ICT.

Teams of three members employed in a primary or secondary school are eligible to take part in the competition.

The condition is that at least two team members teach in the relevant category of the competition. A member may be engaged in more than one team, and each team may compete with a single entry.
More information on <http://www.zuov.gov.rs>

Computer Literacy Programme in the Požarevac Women's Prison

The International Aid Network (IAN) has started the delivery of computer literacy courses for a group of eight female inmates in the Požarevac prison with the aim of skills upgrade and occupational empowerment, in order that they could be integrated in normal social and working life as successfully as possible upon being released.

Contact: International Aid Network (IAN)
tel.: 011 7617 197, www.ian.org.rs

Schools Rated by Students

www.ocenishkolu.com is an internet portal set up as part of a project supported by the Agency for European Integration and Cooperation with Associations through a public competition and implemented by the association Resource Centre Belgrade.

The objective of this virtual community is to enable present and former students and teachers, as well as parents to exchange experiences and knowledge regarding curricula and extracurricular activities. The key result is student involvement in decision-making processes and valuing their opinions.

It will contain profiles and histories of all primary schools.
Contact: Resource Centre Belgrade, www.rcbg.org

St. Sava Award 2011 Competition

The Minister of Education and Science invited all interested educational institutions, associations of education professionals, educational and research institutions, universities and other legal and natural persons to propose school and university students, education professionals, educational institutions or other individuals, institutions or organisations to be presented with the St. Sava Award for outstanding achievements and contribution to the development of education in the Republic of Serbia in 2011.

The deadline for submitting proposals was 26 December 2011.
Contact: Ministry of Education and Science, www.mpn.gov.rs

School Lessons with YouTubeEDU

YouTube has created YouTubeEDU, a dedicated channel for schools, enabling teachers to use plenty of video contents in their work. The base of educational video contents features over 300 playlists classified according to the students' knowledge levels and interests on www.youtube.com.

In order for teachers to have access to YouTubeEDU contents, the school IT administrator should create a designated school account, to disable student access to other YouTube contents at school.

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