



Government of the
Republic of Serbia

OCTOBER 2013

17th

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.

LÁSZLÓ ANDOR, EU COMMISSIONER FOR EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION:

We are Concerned about the Large Number of Unemployed Youth in Serbia

The two-day visit to Serbia by László Andor, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, marked the beginning of the process for preparing the Employment and Social Reform Programme. Through this strategic level programme, which will be supported by the European Union, Serbia will initiate the process of solving burning problems in areas such as employment, economic reform, more efficient functioning of the economy, etc.

"Everything indicates that the situation in Serbia is very difficult – more than one million people are unemployed, every second young person does not possess an employment booklet, and nearly 700,000 people receive some form of social assistance. Around 20 percent of the population lives on the edge of poverty, and the employment rate among population between 15 and 65 years of age totals only 45 percent. These numbers represent a great challenge and burden for the social system and also point to the fact that the pension system is unsustainable in its current form. I am aware of the fact that the Serbian people still believe these problems will be solved by Serbia's accession to the European Union. However, these problems have to be solved before. You cannot expect us to solve your problems," Commissioner Andor stated.

Nevertheless, the European Union is willing to assist Serbia in tackling these problems. In this context, he specifically addressed the major problem of unemployment of the young: "Due to economic crisis in Serbia, many young people cannot enter into employment right after graduation and state must help them – unemployment period must be limited. If young people cannot find a job when they complete their education, the National Employment Service must find jobs for them, or make possible the continuation of their education, provide retraining or education in new skills. Young work force is the future of Serbian economy and the future of the country. If their unemployment period is too long, this will not only become a generator of social unrest, but will also have a negative impact on economic development, the demographic future of the nation, and its political destiny. Resolution of this issue must be a priority for Serbia and the European Union will provide its instruments to encourage the country's efforts to solve this problem."

With kindness of daily Politika reproduced from <http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/Drustvo/271389.lt.html>.
Author: Katarina Đorđević, published on 28 September 2013.

News
from the
EU

- Preparation of the Employment and Social Reform Programme – ESRP
- Adoption of the South East Europe 2020 Strategy in November 2013

page
3

Preparation of the Second National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in Serbia

Active participation in the European process of social inclusion and poverty reduction has been defined by the Republic of Serbia as one of its most important tasks in the EU accession process. In order to continue the preparation of the Republic of Serbia for its participation in the Open Method of Coordination in the areas of social protection and social inclusion (OMC), the Minister without Portfolio in Charge of European Integration, with the support from the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, initiated the preparation of the Second National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia.

Preparation of the report aims to contribute to the harmonization of strategic, legislative and programmatic frameworks of social inclusion and poverty reduction in the Republic of Serbia with that in the EU member states. The report will describe the latest situation in Serbia in relation to European indicators of social inclusion and poverty reduction. It is an integral part in the process of regular reporting of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to the public and the European Commission. The report will describe trends, provide an overview of the current situation and give basic guidelines for addressing the issues of social exclusion and poverty in the country.

The report should set out the main policies and measures which will be taken by the Republic of Serbia in order to move towards common objectives in the field of social development in the EU. Furthermore, the report will serve as a preparation for drafting the programme of reforms in the field of employment and social policy (Employment and Social Reform Programme – ESRP), which will be prepared by the Republic of Serbia, at the request of the European Commission. This programme will introduce us into the process of the Open

Method of Coordination and will also enable us to identify priority reforms, the implementation and regular monitoring of which will be of great importance in the process of European integrations.

The prerequisite for the preparation of the report is improvement of the data quality. In this regard, the Republic Statistical Office initiated the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU SILC survey), with the support from the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the European Commission. Carrying out of this survey will result in further harmonization with the European statistics and enable the Republic of Serbia to improve data quality, and synchronize its monitoring of social inclusion indicators with EU member states. It is expected that the data from this survey will be available in December 2013, and this will be its first usage in drawing up reports in the Republic of Serbia.

The process of preparing the report will be open and participatory. In addition to line ministries and Serbian institutions responsible for various aspects of social inclusion and poverty reduction, the participation of local self-government units, civil society organizations, labour unions and international partners will be ensured in this process. Preparation of the report is an opportunity to initiate a national-level dialogue on the future course of social reform, while defining practical steps how to implement reforms and achieve their objectives. At the end of this process, during the second quarter of 2014, the Government of the Republic of Serbia will adopt the Second National Report on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction, and subsequently guarantee and monitor its implementation.

Contact: Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit,
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Introduced Measures
for Economic
Recovery in Serbia

Page 2

Mapping Social
Services

Page 2

The Results of Research
on the Use of ICT
in Schools in Serbia

Page 4

Operational
Conclusions of the
Seminar on Social
Inclusion of Roma

Page 5

Office for Cooperation
with Civil Society
Presents Text of
Guidelines

Page 7

Call for VIRTUS Award
Announced

Page 7

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION UNIT
OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SERBIA**Campaign on the Future
of Villages in Serbia**

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit in cooperation with SEEDEV launches national and local level campaigns on the future of villages in Serbia. The main objective of this initiative is to support and promote individuals and local communities, partnership and cooperation, as well as local and national events which contribute to the raising of awareness regarding issues of importance to rural development and quality of life in the countryside.

Rural development is among the areas which will have the greatest impact in the future EU membership.

There are encouraging examples of rural households and individuals in Serbia who made use of their specific circumstances. Resulting from solving specific problems and dealing with circumstances in a given environment, good examples will be presented as an inspiration. The objective is to promote the recommendations of the study "The Future of Villages." Presentation of good examples will be organized in villages within Serbia's regions.

Study "The Future of Villages" can be downloaded from
http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/files/buducnost_sela_web.pdf.

Forthcoming Policy Impact Analyses

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit is announcing the publication of two policy impact analyses:

- 1. Long-term Care of the Elderly in Serbia** – among other things, it covers topics such as the following: models for providing long-term care in the European countries, analyses of factors which define the demand for long-term care of the elderly in Serbia, and gives recommendations for improving the system.
- 2. Options for the Introduction of Social Pensions in Serbia** – gives answers to the question which types of minimum incomes in the old age exist, gives an overview of measures to ensure minimum income for the elderly across different countries, analyzes different sources of income and minimum income in the old age in the Republic of Serbia, calculates the cost of different scenarios for protecting the income in the old age and offers policy recommendations.

Mapping Social Services

In collaboration with UNICEF Serbia and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit conducted the mapping of social services at the end of 2012. The primary purpose of this mapping was to collect data on existing non-residential social services which are within the mandate of local self-government units.

Through the process of mapping an effort was made to register all existing social services in Serbia in terms of their availability, efficiency and quality, including those funded from local and national budget and donor projects, in all sectors which provide services.

The data on social services was collected for the years 2011 and 2012, on the whole territory of Serbia, within all 145 local self-government units (in Belgrade and Niš, at the city level).

Complete database of services, number of users, as well as data on human and financial capacity of local self-government units (focused on providing social services within their mandate), will soon be made available on the website of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit.

**Help Scheme for the Disadvantaged
in Radio and TV Digitisation**

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit created a draft plan for assisting the most vulnerable population in the process of digitalisation of terrestrial television. The objective of this plan is to assist vulnerable groups in exercising their right to information in the process of digitization and to prevent their marginalization and social exclusion, through models of financing or co-financing the digital transition.

The transition to digital terrestrial television (digital transition) implies that each household which depends solely on terrestrial broadcast will be required to purchase, install and successfully use adequate digital reception equipment. Various socio-economic factors (poverty, health limitations, geographic location, etc.) prevent certain population groups from purchasing, installing and successfully using the new equipment. They are considered vulnerable in the process of digital transition.

In addition to engaging a number of experts in various fields in the implementation process, it is necessary to establish a special body with a clear mandate and responsibilities and assigned funds which will manage and oversee the implementation of assistance plans.

Draft assistance plan is available at: http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/files/izvestajsema_pomoci_24_09_2013.pdf

Contact: Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, phone: 011 311 46 05,
www.inkluzija.gov.rs

**International Day for the
Eradication of Poverty**

The United Nations declared 17 October as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. It has been observed since 1987. On that day, through a number of initiatives, countries are symbolically invited to make efforts to improve the status and living standard of their population.

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit marks this day through a special edition of the magazine "Lice ulice" dedicated to the topic of social inclusion. It can be purchased from street vendors, thereby supporting their economic independence and social inclusion.

On the same occasion, the Unit will organize Ignite on social inclusion on Monday 21 October, at 20 p.m. in the Mixer House facility. Ignite is part of the global movement to hold fast-paced and concise presentations that inspire and present new ideas to the audience in an informal setting. Translation into sign language will be provided, and Mixer House is easily accessible.

Contact: www.liceulice.rs, www.inkluzija.gov.rs
www.ignite.srbijapokretu.org

**Introduced Measures for
Economic Recovery in Serbia**

On 8 October 2013, the Government of Serbia presented the new set of measures for short and medium-term economic and financial consolidation of the country, which will not affect the poorest.

According to the Minister of Finance Lazar Krstić, Serbia must save 1.5 billion RSD until 2017 in order to reduce its budget deficit to between 2 and 3 percent of gross domestic product. Part of the money will be saved by cutting down public sector wages which exceed the amount of 60,000 dinars. Pensions will not be reduced.

The government has decided to increase the lower rate of VAT from 8 to 10 percent for products which are not existential, to reduce subsidies to more than 170 companies in restructuring, and to introduce order in the public sector financing, which, according to the latest data, employs between 660,000 and 700,000 people.

At present, 28 percent of the budget is earmarked for pensions, 27 percent for wages in the public sector, while the exact value of the subsidies remains unknown, for now. The proposals for introducing solidarity tax on higher incomes of budgetary users, as well as the reform of the pension system, will be considered by the government in the future.

From the strategic point of view, the new measures will be implemented in two segments: the first relates to the consolidation of public finances and structural reforms, and the second is focused on boosting economic activity, encouraging exports and increasing gross domestic product.

The government will combat the gray economy, introduce unique electronic forms and online control of the fiscal accounts, and fundamentally reorganize the tax administration. The introduction of these measures should provide over 200 million EUR annually, while nearly 150 million EUR would be collected through combatting the gray economy, smuggling and illegal trade in tobacco.

Source: www.srbija.gov.rs

Young People – First Targets of the Crisis

Young people in particular have found themselves on the receiving end of economic crisis in Europe, which is indicated by a high youth unemployment rate. In Serbia, according to data from the Republic Statistical Office from April 2013, the youth unemployment rate in the age group between 15 and 24 years is 49.7 percent.

The youth unemployment rate in the EU in June was 23.2 percent and 23.9 percent in the euro area: 5,512 million people under 25 were unemployed, according to data from the European Union Statistical Office – Eurostat.

The lowest youth unemployment rate was registered in Germany (7.5 percent), Austria (9.3 percent), the Netherlands (11 percent) and Malta (11.2 percent).

In Greece, the youth unemployment rate in 2013 reached 58.7 percent and 56.1 percent in Spain. Unemployment rate in Serbia, according to the April Labour Force Survey, totals 24.1 percent, which is 1.7 percentage points higher than in October last year, according to the publication from the Republic Statistical Office (RSO) of 28 June.

Contact: Republic Statistical Office, phone: 011 2412 922
www.stat.gov.rs

Next Steps in the EU Accession Process

After the political decision of the European Council of 28 June 2013 that the Republic of Serbia, as a candidate country, may commence negotiations for EU membership, the EU adopted a negotiating framework. It is an EU document which defines principles, substance and procedure for the negotiations. On the basis of this document, the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference will be convened (at the latest in January 2014), which will be a formal commencement of negotiations. At that meeting, the expectations regarding the forthcoming negotiations will be presented by the EU and the candidate country.

After the formal opening of negotiations, the phase of analytical review of legislation (i.e. screening) will begin. In this phase, the evaluation and assessment of the extent to which the law of the candidate country has been harmonized with the EU Acquis will be conducted within each negotiating chapter.

Acceptance of all the rights and obligations on which the EU is founded, including its institutional framework, is a requirement for EU accession.

The Acquis is divided into 35 negotiating chapters, and the negotiations are completed only after consensus has been reached between the candidate country and the EU in all 35 chapters, which should be confirmed by the Council of Europe. This is the act of formal completion of negotiations.

The process of negotiations on Serbia's accession to the European Union will be the topic of regular public hearings, in which a special role will be assigned to the economy and civil society. In this way, the process of European integrations will become the shared property of all citizens.

Contact: EU Integration Office
Phone: 011 3061 100, www.seio.gov.rs

Preparation of the Employment and Social Reform Programme – ESRP

Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Policy Jovan Krkobabić and Minister without Portfolio in Charge of European Integrations Branko Ružić, had talks with the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission László Andor, on 26 September 2013 in Belgrade.

The visit of Commissioner Andor to the Government of the Republic of Serbia marks an onset of the process of creating an employment and social reform programme – ESRP, by means of which Serbia should commence a strategic process of solving accumulated problems in this area, with support from the EU.

During the meeting a conclusion was reached that the programme should focus on the major challenges in Serbia in the areas of employment and social policy. This will prepare the country for a comprehensive social reform and its medium and long-term implementation.

The adoption and implementation of this strategic document is of key importance, since the figures show that nine percent of the population lives below the poverty line, that unemployment rate is 24 percent, while the youth unemployment rate is 50 percent.

Inclusion of Roma and other minority groups, rights of children, and all other segments of socially just environment which Serbia strives for were discussed during the meeting.

Laszlo Andor stressed that the programme aims to prepare candidate countries for future participation in European employment and economic management policy. The development of the programme was initiated by strategic dialogue which had been set in motion.

Andor emphasized that economic crisis has left huge trace in Serbia in terms of increased unemployment rate, poverty and social differences, and the alarming level of unemployment among the young, which is a matter of particular concern.

Andor is convinced that creation of new jobs is especially challenging, while Serbia should be encouraged to create a new economic model.

Serbia needs to do more in order to specialise its workforce for sustainable development and train future workers for certain occupations.

Source: www.srbija.gov.rs

Action Plan Implemented 84% in the Third Quarter of 2013

The Government of Serbia, at the session held on 23 August, adopted the third Report on Implementation of the Action Plan for Fulfilment of the European Commission Recommendations under the Serbia 2012 Progress Report in the European integration process.

According to this report, 84 percent of recommendations planned by the end of this year have been implemented, taking into account both those which were fully and partially fulfilled. Out of 185 recommendations which should have been achieved in the third quarter of this year, 24 were fully completed, 132 partially, and 29 were not fulfilled.

The action plan includes measures which are the sole responsibility of the Government of Serbia, defines key activities related to 231 specific recommendations of the European Commission, lists the institutions responsible for implementation, and the time period in which they should be implemented. Many measures are long-term and they will require continuous work.

Contact: European Integration Office, phone: 011 3061 100
www.seio.gov.rs

Half of Serbian Citizens in Favour of Accession to the European Union

Poll which was conducted in accordance with Eurobarometer standards, with participation of 1,050 respondents over 18 years of age, indicates that the level of support of citizens to the European integration, after 28 June 2013, had increased by nine percentage points compared with the previous poll. According to the results of this year's public opinion poll "European Orientation of the Citizens of Serbia – Trends" which was carried out by the Serbia's European Integration Office in early July 2013, 50 percent of Serbian citizens would vote for Serbia's accession to the EU, 24 percent would vote against, 19 percent would refrain from voting, and 8 percent did not know what to answer.

Still a large number of people, 68 percent, believe that the reforms which are necessary for our country's accession to the EU should be implemented, but that they are not a requirement for membership. Majority of population, 41 percent, ranks anti-corruption measures among the most important reforms, which bear the greatest impact on their daily lives.

Source: www.euractiv.rs

Implementation of the SAA is Underway

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between Serbia and the EU entered into force on 1 September 2013. Its implementation will be one of the criteria in monitoring the progress of Serbia in negotiations for EU membership.

By entry into force of the SAA, Serbia gained the status of the state associated with the EU, which is the closest link with the EU that a non-member country may achieve.

Entry into force of the SAA will bring about some changes, such as the phase liberalization of access to public procurement procedures of the two parties and access to real estate markets, while there will be no new commitments in the area of trade. Another change is the protection against discrimination in business operations of companies and legally employed citizens.

Source: www.seio.gov.rs

Adoption of the South East Europe 2020 Strategy in November 2013

The South East Europe 2020 Strategy (SEE 2020) is a response to socio-economic development strategy of the European Union: Europe 2020 Strategy. This regional strategy takes into account specific needs of the region, and it was drafted under the patronage of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). SEE 2020 does not substitute participation in initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, but should be considered as a complementary, regional mechanism for better coordination between them.

Strategy SEE 2020 will be closely linked to the programming of pre-accession assistance of the European Union, the so-called IPA II. For successful implementation of the Strategy, participation and active cooperation of the ministries in charge of economy, education, agriculture, energy, employment, social affairs, justice and the interior is expected at the national level.

Adoption of the SEE 2020 Strategy has been planned for the meeting of ministers of economy of the Western Balkan countries in November 2013.

Source: <http://www.neurope.eu/article/see-2020-strategy>

CONCLUSIONS OF THE SOCIAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE Regarding the Development of Social Protection Policies in the EU

Council for Employment and Social Affairs approved the conclusions of the Social Protection Committee regarding the development of social protection policies in the EU between January 2012 and June 2013. This report reviews the efforts of the EU countries in terms of structural reforms and reforms in social protection.

The main message of the report is that while the economic crisis continues to put pressure on social protection systems, EU priorities in this area must shift from tackling the consequences of the crisis towards building stable and effective social protection systems, based on adequate support and sustainable financing.

Source: ec.europa.eu

Draft Law on Modifications to the Law on Higher Education Adopted

At the session held on 30 September 2013, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Draft Law on Modifications to the Law on Higher Education. In order to increase efficiency and effectiveness of studies, the draft law envisages the introduction of six examination terms in the academic year 2013/2014.

It also stipulates that students who obtain at least 48 ECTS credits in the academic year 2012/2013 may be financed from the budget in the school year 2013/2014.

Draft Law on Modifications and Amendments to the Law on Higher Education has been submitted to the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia for further consideration.

Source: www.srbija.gov.rs

The Final Conference of the Second Chance Project

The final conference of the Second Chance Project took place in the Palace Serbia on 12 September 2013.

The objective of the Second Chance Project was to systematically develop and test functional elementary education of adults (FEEA) in Serbia, in the period between September 2010 and September 2013. On the basis of positive results, the Ministry of Education has introduced the programme of functional elementary education of adults into the regular education system in the school year 2013/2014.

The objective of the project is to raise the general level of literacy through elementary education adapted to the needs of adults and requirements of the labour market. In this way, poverty will be reduced; higher level of employment and faster socio-economic development of the country will be achieved.

National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Law on Education of Adults which will be applicable from the year 2014. The key document – Strategy for the Development of Education in Serbia – promotes the concept of lifelong learning which allows everyone, under the same conditions, to acquire key competencies necessary for inclusion in the society.

The project has been implemented with the financial support from the European Union.

Contact: www.drugasansa.rs

Professional Orientation in Serbia

The objective of the Professional Orientation in Serbia Project is to establish sustainable and functional system of professional orientation for the final year elementary school pupils, secondary school students and young adults up to 30 years of age, in all elementary schools and youth offices in Serbia, in the period between 2011 and 2015. The project is carried out by the German Agency for International Cooperation GIZ, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia and the National Employment Service.

According to plans, the project will cover all elementary schools (1104), as well as 124 youth offices, by mid-2015.

The POIS database – Professional Orientation Information System has been launched under the project on 30 September 2013. POIS is a public database of all career information services and actors who provide them or participate in their realization. POIS can be used by the young, schools, youth offices (YO), companies and other stakeholders in order to obtain information about available services or to monitor the results of professional orientation services (PO) in local communities.

Contact: www.profesionalnaorijentacija.org

The Results of Research on the Use of ICT in Schools in Serbia

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit released a publication “Research on the Use of ICT in Schools in Serbia.” The research was conducted in order to supplement the Guidelines for Promoting the Role of ICT in Education, prepared by the National Education Council, due to the complexity of the issue of successful ICT integration into the education system, and due to the fact that documents that would support the formulation of education policy in this area had not been prepared.

This research focused on selected, relevant topics, such as: understanding the concept of ICT application in the teaching process, systemic environment for using ICT in education, institutional framework and strategic approach, the availability of equipment and computer software, levels and opportunities to develop teachers’ competences, access to development of competencies in teacher training colleges, levels and forms of ICT application in education, forms of ICT use by students for learning purposes, the practice of distance education and the prerequisites for improved application of ICT in teaching.

The research demonstrated a lack of understanding among the teachers and students about the possibilities of ICT in the teaching and learning processes. There is no clear strategic approach which would promote the role of ICT at the school level and the level of local communities or relevant institutions. Development of the role of ICT is primarily based on enthusiasm of individuals. The lack of organized ICT support prevents the planned acquisition and maintenance of equipment, and the organization of trainings for competence development of teachers.

Schools are equipped to different degrees, which vary depending on the profile and size of school, and level of economic development of the municipality. Although computers are available and accessible in all schools, one cannot say that the basic level of equipment has been achieved.

The existing digital learning materials are underused and creation of new materials depends on the enthusiasm of individuals and proficiency in English, which is a prerequisite for accessing international websites.

Contact: Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit

Phone: 011 311 46 05, www.inkluzija.gov.rs

COMPETITION FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PUPILS: Educational Campaign on Environmental Protection

Competition for elementary schools in the South and South West Serbia, on the topic of environmental protection, has started. Throughout the campaign “Where is Your Threshold of Responsibility?” primary school pupils will try to find answers to questions related to the protection of environment through the proposals for the realization of small environmental education projects in their local communities.

The competition will be opened until 27 October 2013, and primary schools in the following 25 municipalities may participate: Blace, Žitorađa, Kuršumlija, Prokuplje, Bojnik, Vlasotince, Lebane, Leskovac, Medveđa, Crna Trava, Bosilegrad, Bujanovac, Vladičin Han, Vranje, Preševo, Surdulica, Trgoviste, Ivanjica, Nova Varoš, Novi Pazar, Priboj, Prijepolje, Raška, Sjenica and Tutin.

Three schools which propose the best ideas, that is to say whose sections reach the finals of the competition, will carry out their projects with the support from the European Partnership with Municipalities Programme – EU PROGRES.

Upon completion of the implementation of mini environmental projects, the jury will award the winners with 100,000 RSD.

Source: generator.org.rs

SOCIAL INCLUSION BLOG

In the not-so-distant past in the development of (inclusive) school/society, children from sensitive groups had been integrated within regular schools, but a large number of them were unable to complete their education. Why? Because children with special educational needs were expected to adapt to the school system. Thus, unassisted children from sensitive groups, unable to respond to requirements unified by the system, dropped out from the educational system...

Inclusive school/society adapts to child/pupil by providing him or her with an adequate, necessary, (in) visible (educational) support. In that way, assisted children have a chance to grow, develop and make progress within peer environment in accordance with their own capabilities.

In order to enable the optimal integration of chil-

dren/pupils from sensitive groups into the regular educational system and their progress within it, they may be provided with so-called additional educational assistance, the ultimate goal of which is independence of children/pupils who are provided with assistance in a group of children/classroom, to the extent that assistance becomes less necessary or unnecessary.

To my mind, and from a professional point of view, Individual Education Plans (IEP) confirm that IEPs are flexible and powerful assistance tools for pupils, but also for teachers in setting up an educational process exclusively tailored to suit the needs of children/pupils. This is an opportunity to establish a network of professional competencies, knowledge and skills of persons who comprise the IOP team for child/pupil and devise a unique curriculum.



Ivana Vasiljević is a class teacher from Belgrade.

She graduated from the Teachers College, University of Belgrade. She has been living the life of the school for the last ten years. Since 2005 actively participates in a variety of (pro) inclusive projects of (non) governmental sectors related to the development of inclusive school and society

Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for Improvement of the Position of Roma and Sinti

A new Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for Improvement of the Position of Roma and Sinti communities in the territory of OSCE member states has been made public. It has been published by the ODIHR/OSCE (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) and covers the period from 2008 to 2013. The report is divided into five categories: positive changes, visible progress, breakthroughs, no changes, negative trends.

Some of the conclusions in the report are as follows: the Roma policy has been standardized, it has been implemented at a local level and has been generally financed with more funds. However since appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and analysing the results have not been developed, there can be no conclusions drawn concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of the funding; in terms of actual results and changes in society.

Hate crimes against Roma, extremist anti-Roma rhetoric and mistreatment by the police have all shown a negative trend of growth.

Source: <http://www.osce.org/serbia> i <http://www.osce.org/odihr/roma> and <http://www.mfa.gov.rs/sr/index.php/spoljna-politika/multilateral/oebs?lang=lat>

Operational Conclusions of the Seminar on Social Inclusion of Roma

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, the Office for Human and Minority Rights and the European Commission organised on the 18th June 2013 a seminar entitled "Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in the Republic of Serbia". The seminar was organised as a) a continuation of the active implementation of operational conclusions of the joint seminar of Serbia and the European Commission held in 2011, and b) in order to summarise past results and present new priorities concerning plans for the further improvement, through social inclusion of the position of Roma men and women in the Republic of Serbia.

The areas in which operational conclusions and plans for future actions to improve the social inclusion process include: interdisciplinary issues, civil registration, access to personal documents, education, employment, social security and healthcare; housing and freedom of movement (including awareness raising activities for Roma about the risks of abusing the visa-free regime).

The issues of social inclusion and the fight against poverty of Roma have become a priority for all EU countries since the adoption of the Framework for National Roma Strategies in 2010, as well as for the countries in the process of EU accession.

The June seminar was attended by representatives of the National Assembly, the Government, the National Council of the Roma National Minority, local self-governments, civil society organisations, a variety of international organisations as well as representatives of the European Commission.

Contact: Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, www.inkluzija.gov.rs, European Commission, ec.europa.eu

COMPETITION:

Advocacy for Social Care Reforms

The TRAG Foundation has announced a competition for Advocacy for Social Care Reform within the "Social Care Reform Initiative" programme, conducted with financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), with the aim of improving the system of social care in Serbia, and thus also improving the quality of life of the elderly, persons with disabilities, children and other vulnerable social groups.

The deadline for applications is the 24th of October 2013.

The aim of this programme is to encourage greater participation of civil society organisations (CSO's) working in the field of social care in the process of reform of the social care system in Serbia.

This programme should instigate organisations to develop initiatives that will encourage decision-makers at the local level to cooperate and further contribute to the affirmation of civil society organisations as social services providers and to the decentralisation of the national social care system.

Contact: TRAG Foundation, tel: 011 32 88 723 www.tragfondacija.org

DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION: A Call for Submitting Project Proposals

The fund of the Secretariat of the Decade of Roma Inclusion has issued a call for project proposals from coalitions of civil society organisations in order to carry out monitoring of the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion and supporting action plans in the framework of the initiative of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

The call covers the following countries: Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia and the United Kingdom.

The deadline for submitting project proposals was the 7th of October 2013.

More information can be found at:

<http://goo.gl/bEo2oI>

Contact: www.romadecade.org

COMPETITION:

Improving the Position of Roma Women

The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy – along with the Gender Equality Administration – has made a public call for project proposals aimed at improving the position of Roma women in Serbia. Registered organisations/associations of citizens of the Republic of Serbia have the right to participate in the competition for funding.

The contest rules, forms, instructions, as well as additional information can be downloaded from the websites of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy and the Gender Equality Administration: www.minrzs.gov.rs (competitions) and www.gendernet.rs (competitions).

The call is open until the 22nd of October 2013.

Contact: The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy, www.minrzs.gov.rs

The Improved Position of Women in Serbia

A state delegation of the Republic of Serbia presented in Geneva, at the 55th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the second and third periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women for the period from 2007 to 2009.

The delegation presented to the Committee the measures that the state had undertaken in order to reduce social exclusion and discrimination against women and implement the strategic documents and laws in this area. The majority of issues related to the protection of women against violence, the development of mechanisms to protect victims of trafficking, employment, education, health care, access to justice,

rights and services of social protection and participation in political and public life.

Particular concern was expressed for the position of vulnerable groups of women such as Roma women, women with disabilities, and women in rural areas, especially older women.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the UN General Assembly on the 18th of December 1979 and entered into force on the 3rd of September 1981.

The Republic of Serbia, as successor of the previous state, has been a member of the Convention since March the 12th 2001.

Contact: Office of Human and Minority Rights, tel: 011 311 25 10 www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs

Combat Prejudice Against the Minority Groups

"LGBT people are going through 'hell continuously' in schools and at universities and that is why serious reform of the curricula and textbooks is necessary in order to combat prejudice against the gay community and minority groups", it was said on the 24th of September 2013 at the panel discussion entitled "Homophobia in Schools", held within Pride Week.

Research of Yucom and the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights has shown that as many as 80% of high school students support discrimination against LGBT people, whereas only 16% of students think that LGBT people should have the same rights as everybody else.

Deputy Ombudsman for the Rights of the Child, Tamara Lukšić Orlandić, said at the meeting that textbooks are out-dated and do not address the topic of different sexual orientations, while teachers are "conservative and cemented in their positions".

Professor at the Faculty of Law in Belgrade and University Ombudsman Branko Rakić said of LGBT people and their environment that the wider community has no understanding of their situation, but that "80% of high school students should not be considered maniacs, but rather children burdened with prejudice and a lack of understanding", which is why schools should develop understanding about the right to be different. Source: Beta, taken over from www.euractiv.rs

ASSOCIATION HANDSHAKE ("EVO RUKA"):

Inclusive centre "Meeting Point"

At the initiative of the Association Handshake ("Evo ruka"), a campaign was launched to raise funds for the works on the building of the local inclusive centre "Meeting Point" in Zemun Polje. The inclusive centre for children with developmental impediments was officially opened on 5 October 2013 on the first National Giving Day.

The aim of this initiative is that children with disabilities and their peers from the community are enabled to spend a quality free time together, to socialise, learn and develop. Contact: TRAG Foundation, telephone: 011 32 88 723, www.tragfondacija.org

Position of Serbia in 2013, according to World Economic Forum's Report

The Foundation for the Advancement of Economics (FREN), as a local partner of the World Economic Forum (WEF), shows in a concise study "Competitive Position of Serbia in 2013" the position of Serbia in the WEF 2013 list.

According to the report of the World Economic Forum for the year 2013, Serbia is ranked at 101st, out of 148 countries included on the list worldwide. Serbia's position is shown relative to other countries from the region, and the study points to the factors that decisively led to the current positioning of Serbia on the list. At the end of the document, there is an explanation of how to form a Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), based on which the ranking is done. This Index includes: what the country's competitiveness is, as well as what the most common concerns and ambiguities are when the term "competitiveness" is in question.

The study is available at the link <http://goo.gl/WAVdth>
Contact: Foundation for the Advancement of Economics, FREN, tel: 011 3021 069
www.fren.org.rs

Philanthropy Guide "Good Deeds Will Come Back to You"

The TRAG Foundation and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Team held a meeting on the 23rd September 2013 entitled "Existing Tax Relief for Common Good Donations in the Republic of Serbia", as part of which the philanthropy guide "Good Deeds Will Come Back to You" was presented.

The aim of this guide is to facilitate donations from legal entities for the common good in Serbia, as well as to point out to legal solutions and ways of solving outstanding issues.

Those present discovered more about existing tax relief solutions EU member countries, as

well as models that are applicable in the Republic of Serbia.

The development of this guide was made possible thanks to financial assistance from European Union funds, the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development and the Balkan Trust for Democracy (BTD).

An electronic version of the guide is available at the website of the TRAG Foundation: http://www.tragfondacija.org/media/PDF/Dobro_se_dobrim_vraca.PDF
Contact: TRAG Foundation
tel: 011 32 88 723, www.tragfondacija.org

Awards for Corporate Volunteering 2013

The Grand Prize for the best volunteering programme in 2013 went to Erste Bank, for its "Right Day for a Big Cause", which has been running for five years.

The awards for corporate volunteering for 2013 were awarded on the 25th of September 2013 in Belgrade, and the winners included the companies GlaxoSmithKline Serbia and Montenegro in the category of Employee Development - for their programme "Golden Challenge" and Coca-Cola for their New Year's campaign "Let Get the Magic Started Together" in the category of: the Most Successful Partnership in the Local Community between Companies and Non-profit Organisations in the Implementation of Volunteer Programmes.

In the category of Measurement of Results, the award went to the "Inclusive Academy" programme of the Société Générale Bank for the methodology of monitoring and measuring the effects that the programme had on the increased employability of people with disabilities.

The ceremony of granting the awards for corporate volunteering was for the third time organised by the Business Leaders Forum Serbia and the Smart Kolektiv.

Source: www.bizlife.rs

USAID Invests USD 7 Million in Entrepreneurship

The National Agency for Regional Development and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) signed in June 2013 a contract for a project for the development of the private sector, based on which small and medium-sized businesses and entrepreneurs get a total of USD 7 million for the development of business operations.

The funds are intended for applicants from 12 municipalities in the south and south-west of Serbia, and the project will be implemented over the next four years. Contact: National Centre Zaječar, tel: 019 445 301, www.narr.gov.rs

Bulletin on Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship

The Coalition for Social Entrepreneurship Development published the second issue of their Bulletin on the social economy and social entrepreneurship in Serbia in September 2013.

It presented examples of funding social enterprises in Serbia and Europe, with the intention that all stakeholders and agents of change in society would be encouraged to actively participate in starting a social enterprise in their local community. An electronic version is available at <http://goo.gl/TNsply>.

INOVATIVA: Competition for Best Socio-Entrepreneurial Idea

As part of a new project entitled "Inovativa", the Coalition for Social Entrepreneurship Development with the support of the SuisseSolidara Office in Belgrade announced a competition for young people aged 15 to 19 for the best socio-entrepreneurial idea. This project will encourage young people to think about the possibilities that social entrepreneurship offers to solve problems in society.

Five ideas that will receive financial support will be selected with the deadline for submission of applications being the 30th October 2013.

The competition results will be published on the website of the European Movement in Serbia. The project aims to promote social entrepreneurship among young people, (especially those who are marginalized on a multiple basis), as well as decision-makers (who work with young people), so that they become familiar with the opportunities that the social economy offers to solve the problems of youth unemployment.

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

INCUBATOR:

Results of the Competition for Young Entrepreneurs

The Incubator for the development of entrepreneurship "KZM Gnezdo" – (a project of the Youth Office Belgrade) held a public competition for the use of resources of the Incubator, intended for young entrepreneurs under the age of 35 who are in need of work space, administrative and consulting services.

The top 13 business plans out of 100 that applied, entered the business Incubator and will work there for one year free of charge. After this period, users can stay and pay part of the costs of their accommodation.

The space is on the sixth floor of the Palace of Belgrade, which has been open since the 7th of October 2013, and houses a business incubator spanning 700 square meters. The project was funded by the City of Belgrade, and the project partners are the Faculty of Organisational Sciences, the Faculty of Economics, Finance and Administration, and individual entrepreneurs.

The Youth Office project: "KZM Gnezdo" seeks to promote self-employment, help resource entrepreneurial venture projects with high market potential, as well as support the development of new products, services and processes in the field of high technologies with potential for growth and employment.

Contact: Youth Office Belgrade
tel: 011 715 7351, www.kancelarijazamlade.rs

Agribusiness Development Programme for Unemployed Youth

The City of Zrenjanin and the municipalities of Kikinda and Novi Bečej, with the support of the Project and the Ministry of Youth and Sport, launched a programme that aims to help young people start their own businesses through the cultivation of highly profitable vegetable crops. Agricultural and entrepreneurial incubators will enable participants to learn how to grow vegetables in greenhouses and in open fields.

The goal of the programme "Agricultural and Entrepreneurial Incubators for Young People" is to reduce the time and cost of establishing new agricultural businesses. The programme is designed for young people who have the land and equipment to start an agribusiness, but are lacking in their knowledge and experience in vegetable production and entrepreneurship, it is also aimed at young people in need of education, land and equipment for the production of vegetables. The programme invites young people aged up to 35 who are unemployed, with a minimum of a high school education, who want to be engaged in the production of vegetables in the territory of the inter-municipal partnerships composed of Zrenjanin, Kikinda and Novi Bečej.

More information available at www.lokalnirazvoj.rs

Discussion on Importance of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurs are not born, they are created – that was the joint message conveyed on the 25th of September 2013 by representatives of state institutions, the corporate sector, international organisations, the European Commission, teachers and associations of entrepreneurs in a panel discussion entitled "The Importance of Entrepreneurship Education in Creating Change in Society", held at the Serbian Chamber of Commerce (SCC).

The panel discussion was organised by Junior Achievement Serbia, with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development USAID Serbia, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation, Belgrade, the Ministry of Economy and the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, and represented a national central event as part of the European Week of Small and Medium Enterprises, which is coordinated by the European Commission.

Contact: Junior Achievement Serbia, tel: 011 2183 581, www.ja-serbia.org

Guidelines of Higher Public Participation in Policy Making

The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society presented the working version of its text "Guidelines for the Participation of Stakeholders in the Making of Regulations and Acts," to representatives of the public administration, independent institutions and civil society organisations. This document is the product of a comparative analysis of mechanisms and methods of cooperation between governmental institutions and civil society. The adoption of the Guidelines is part of the government's Work Plan for 2013.

The Guidelines is one of the key documents in a strategic and systematic legal framework to encourage public involvement in the legislative process. The document has the ambition of raising standards as it opens up opportunities to introduce new practices contained in the documents of the European Union and the Council of Europe.

Raising awareness of the importance of civil society participation in the decision-making process is necessary through education at all levels. With a consensus about the content of the Guidelines, the Guidelines are a starting document for formulating legal norms governing the cooperation of public administration and civil society.

The proposed document is based on the document "Analysis of Mechanisms and Methods of Cooperation between State and Public Institutions of Civil Society Organisations," which has an emphasis on European and regional aspects, as well as on the existing levels of participation of civil society organisations in decision-making processes.

Contact: Office for Cooperation with Civil Society
Tel: 011 311 3859 www.civilnodrustvo.gov.rs

CIVICUS: Serbia Ranked 54th by Quality of Enabling Environment

In late September, the CIVICUS alliance published an annual report on the quality of an enabling environment for civil society, in which the Republic of Serbia is placed 54th on an index made up of 109 countries that were analysed.

This index was developed on the basis of monitoring three dimensions (socio-economic, socio-cultural and political environments). Each of the dimensions has sub-dimensions and indicators on the basis of which the development of an enabling environment is being monitored.

On the basis of this analysis, the Republic of Serbia is somewhere in the middle of the list. By the methodology used by CIVICUS, Serbia achieved its lowest score in the field of socio-cultural environment. Enabling Environment Index (EEI) Report can be downloaded at the following address: <http://civicus.org/what-we-do-126/2013-05-06-10-38-39>

Resource Centre in Pirot Opens

On the 10th October 2013 The Resource Centre organised a ceremony to mark the start of its work. The Resource Centre in Pirot will be a kind of incubator for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from Pirot and from across Serbia. It is an umbrella organisation that was created by joining together more than 50 non-governmental organisations and eight youth offices.

The main goal of the Resource Centre is to increase the capacity of non-governmental organisations and their approach to EU tenders.

The first major project of the organisation will be to establish a Centre for Non-Formal Education in the village of Vlasi, where an attempt will be made to revive the village. This village shares the fate of many other dying villages in Serbia.

Contact: Resource Centre Pirot, tel: 011 032 08 26

COMPETITION: Leadership in Application of Women's Empowerment Principles

The award ceremony for leadership in the field of Women's Empowerment Principles will be held in March 2014, with the competition being open to all companies that have signed the Women's Empowerment Principles and consistently enforce them. The application deadline is the 1st of November 2013.

The WEPS Leadership Awards were presented for the first time on the 6th of March 2013 in New York. The awards went to companies that recognised the importance of gender equality and undertook concrete actions to implement the seven adopted principles of women's empowerment.

The application form can be found at:

<http://www.wepprinciples.org/Site/WepsLeadershipAwards>

Call for VIRTUS Award Announced

The TRAG Foundation announced a competition for the VIRTUS Award for corporate philanthropy. The competition is open for all domestic and foreign companies, corporations, public and state-owned enterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises and media companies, as well as corporate trusts and foundations, with the exception of non-profit organisations, public institutions and administration bodies.

The deadline for receiving the applications is the 25th of October 2013.

The competition was announced with the financial support of the European Commission and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy Team.

For more information and detailed competition requirements are available on the website of VIRTUS Award, at www.tragfondacija.org/virtus.

Contact: TRAG Foundation

tel: 011 32 88 723, www.tragfondacija.org

MLADGRAD 2013 Award Presented

Civic initiatives have presented the annual award MLADGRAD 2013 to local self-governments of Pirot and Priboj and to Duško Krstić, an activist from Obrenovac and the founder of the website www.youth.rs.

Special awards for contribution to a better position of young people were awarded to Ivanjica and Raška, the Bečej Youth Association and the Astronomical Society "Eureka" from Kruševac. A special award for the advancement of young people from vulnerable groups went to the Municipality of Zvezdara and the association "Pirot E Publika".

The purpose of the award MLADGRAD (that Civic Initiatives are awarding for the fourth year), is to encourage people, local self-governments and organisations to improve the position of young people in their communities. The award was established in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Self-Government and is supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and numerous civil society organisations.

Source: www.mladgrad.rs

NCD: Project Policies That Work

The National Coalition for Decentralisation (NCD) within the new programme of the USAID and ISC "Civil Society for the Future" is carrying out the project "Policies that Work". The project aims to encourage capacity-building for changes in local communities and create long-term local potential for decentralisation of power and authority.

As part of the project, regional centres for civic policies will be formed, whose role will be to consult, mentor and resource programme participants.

Urban In, Novi Pazar (Sandžak), Educational Centre Kruševac (Central Serbia) and the Užice Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (Western Serbia) were selected as organisations whose representatives will first undergo training for trainers (and mentors). A total of 30 civil society organisations are working on developing plans of building public support, of which the National Coalition for Decentralisation will fund three best plans in 2014.

Source: <http://www.iscserbia.org/srb/Novosti/Novosti16.html>

Project "Triple A"

Civil society organisations in Serbia are invited to submit their project proposals concerning the development of information, advice, active assistance or advocacy services, which are free of charge and open to all citizens.

A consortium of organisations in charge of the project's activities have provided a grant of EUR 100,000 for the implementation of two projects from each country. The amount of each individual grant is EUR 10,000.

Contact: Centre for the Development of Non-profit Sector, tel: 011 2626113
www.crnp.org.rs

15 Youth Local Projects "Really Important Changes" Implemented

Really important! The Foundation of Ana and Vlade Divac (as part of the competition for youth projects "Really Important Changes"), implemented, with the support of the Balkan Trust for Democracy, 15 youth projects aimed at solving problems in the local community. A total of 15 new youth projects were selected within the competition, "Hello Internet", which was supported by the Open Society Foundation.

Selected project activities include, containers for the disposal of cans being installed in primary schools in Sremska Mitrovica as well as bins for recycling batteries in Čačak; two Android applications created for learning sign language and accessing information about rights; volunteering of high school students and peer education promoted with young people from the Zvečanska children care centre; medical students helping children break free from the fear of doctors and acquire healthy life habits in the "Hospital for Teddy Bears"; the first TweetUp in Kruševac was held and a brochure was created about safe and useful use of the internet; a platform for crowd funding www.pomozimozajedno.rs was created.

For more information on the competition "Really Important Change" and on the supported youth projects, please visit www.stvarnovazno.org.

60% Households Have Computers

The latest publication of the Serbian Statistical Office "The Use of ICT in the Republic of Serbia, 2013" has been published. The methodology used in the publication is comparable to Eurostat, and the EU's data for 2013 are expected in December 2013. According to the published results, the trends are as follows: 59.9% of households own a computer and 55.8% of households have an Internet connection. More than 2.4 million people use the internet every day or almost every day, and 93.4 % of internet users aged 16 to 24 years have an account on a social network site (Facebook, Twitter etc.).

In a survey on the use of information and communication technologies in Serbia of which 2,400 households and 1,200 individuals took part, it was discovered that 31.6% of households have a laptop, 98.2% of households have a TV set, and 86.9% of households have a mobile phone.

Of the total number of large and medium-sized enterprises, 100 % have an internet connection, while that percentage stands at 99.5% in the case of small enterprises. Of the total number of companies, 100% use the computer in their business, and of those that have internet access, 87.6% use e-government services.

Contact: Serbian Statistical Office, tel: 011 2412 069
www.fren.org.rs

eGovernment of Provincial Authorities

The Government of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina made a Decision on e-Government Strategy for the Provincial Authorities in mid-2013, with an accompanying action plan to 2015. E-government Strategy defines the activities of the introduction of information and communication technologies in the work of the provincial administration.

For each year until 2015, the Government of Vojvodina will determine by a special act the amount of funds, the holders of activities and deadlines for implementation of certain activities from the action plan. The plan contains 29 projects, including: e-Archives, e-EU Tenders, e-Administrative Practice in Vojvodina; Energy Balance Sheets and Analyses of Energy Entities; Energy identity card of municipalities; Software systems for to support inspection surveillance; Information system of research and innovation activities; Spatial Data Infrastructure; e-Administrative Office and e-Sessions of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

Source: www.vojvodina.gov.rs

Youth Info Screen in Every School

A seminar for 60 pupils/students and 12 teachers from elementary schools, which was held in mid-September 2013, marked the beginning of the implementation of the project "Youth Info Screen in Every School". Unique in content and editorial policy, this programme will contribute to young people being better and more promptly informed, about details on topics that interest them, by looking at the big screen in the school hall. This resource will, to begin with, be available for about 15,000 elementary and high school students from the Palilula neighbourhood, including students of the "Stamenković Brothers" primary school for adult education and the idea is to eventually expand the project to all schools in Belgrade.

Teams of five students and one teacher from each of 23 schools will be responsible to objectively present their respective schools, to select and prepare a set of news, reports and stories on topics that are important for schoolchildren.

The "Youth Info Screen in Every School" project relies on the recommendations of the National Youth Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, and it is implemented by the organisation "Agenda" and the Palilula Red Cross, with the help of municipal and city education authorities and donors.

Source: www.politika.rs

"Opening Up Education" – EU Schools Digitalization

The Opening Up Education initiative is the European Commission's action plan to remove barriers to universities and schools in providing high quality education and digital skills which shall be required for performing 90% jobs by 2020.

In order to launch the initiative, the EC published its new website in September 2013 Open Education Europa, which shall help students, practitioners and education institutions to exchange free education resources.

Source: www.razvionica.edu.rs

Free Wi-Fi Zones in 229 Postal Offices

The Serbian Postal Service has introduced free Wi-Fi zones in 229 postal offices in 148 cities across the country as part of the company's strategic plan to provide citizens access to modern means of communication.

Source: B92

Education Flyers of NBS Intended for Citizens

The National Bank of Serbia printed at the end of September 2013 educational flyers, so that citizens could get more information on concepts such as variable interest rates and indexed insurance products, etc.

In addition to flyers concerning financial products offered others cover a number of financial products that have a value in certain periods of life, such as: starting studies at university' separation from ones parents; establishing a family etc.

The National Bank distributes these flyers in cooperation with the Service for Communication and Coordination of Relations with the Citizens of the City Administration of the City of Belgrade.

Contact: Agency for European Integration and Cooperation with Associations
tele: 011 715 73 61 www.beograd.eu.gov.rs

Global AgeWatch Index

On the International Day of Older Persons, the 1st October 2013, HelpAge International and its partners from around the world launched the Global AgeWatch Index 2013, the results of the first research about quality of life and well-being of older people. In Serbia, the partners are the Serbian Red Cross and the network HumanaS.

Of 91 countries included in the survey, Serbia is ranked in 64th place.

Global AgeWatch Index (GAI) has been developed with the help of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and covers 89% of the global population of older persons. The Fund promotes a better understanding of the circumstances in which nearly 900 million people aged over sixty live around the world and supports finding a response to poverty at an old age, as well as stopping discrimination on the basis of age and other violations of human rights of the elderly, whose number in the world will rise to more than two billion by 2050.

The index is based on how countries deal with the problems of the elderly part of their population, relating to safety of their income, health conditions, employment and education opportunities as well as accessibility to their surroundings.

Contact: Centre for the Development of Non-profit Sector, tel: 011 2626113, www.crnps.org.rs

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL TRADE AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

State Support to Information Society Development Projects

The Ministry of External and Internal Trade and Telecommunications of the Government of the Republic of Serbia signed contracts with 38 non-governmental organisations that were awarded funds as a result of a public call for projects concerned with Information Society.

More than a hundred organisations, foundations and endowments sent their programme proposals for the development of Information Society to the competition organised by the Ministry of External and Internal Trade and Telecommunications.

Incentives amounting from RSD 325,000 to RSD 3 million per project were allocated.

This year for the first time, the funds for projects of Information Society are set aside for the non-governmental sector, which has been recognised as a driving force of society and development in this sector.

The projects that have received financial assistance should contribute to improving quality of life, and an analysis of effects that the selected projects had will be made in a year.

Contact: Ministry of External and Internal Trade and Telecommunications, tel: 011 311 34 32

www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs

CALENDAR of Important Dates

OCTOBER

07–13 Children's Week

01 International Day of Older Persons

02 World Housing Day

03 International Children's Day

05 World Teachers Day

10 World Mental Health Day

14 World Organ Donors Day

15 Day of the Blind and the

International Day of Rural Women

16 World Food Day

17 International Day for Eradication of Poverty

22 International Stammering and Speech

Impediments Awareness Day

24 UN Day, Accessibility of Information Day

25 Voluntary Blood Donors Day

30 World Savings Day

NOVEMBER

07 European Day of Science

08 Teachers' Day

09 International Day against Fascism

11 International Day of Science and Peace

14 World Diabetes Day

15 World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

16 World Tolerance Day

17 International Day of Students

20 World Children's Day

23 International Humanitarian Day

25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

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