



Government of the
Republic of Serbia

APRIL 2010

2. 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 has launched active participation in the social inclusion process to improve the quality of life its citizens. The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit has been established in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration, assisting the Government and line ministries to develop and implement social inclusion and poverty reduction policies in a coordinated and effective manner.

ŽARKO ŠUNDERIĆ, TEAM MANAGER, POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION UNIT Expansion of Europe through Social Inclusion

2010 the European Year for Combating Social Exclusion and Poverty

The European Union marked 2010 as a year for fight against social exclusion and poverty. Currently, 78 million people or 16% of Europe's population live at risk of poverty measured by the relative poverty scale. According to the latest data of the Republic Statistics Office, the number of poor inhabitants in Serbia increased for the first time since 2000, as a consequence of the global financial crisis – 6.9% of persons lived below the absolute poverty line in 2009 as compared to 6.1% in 2008. On the other hand, measured by the relative scale, 13.6% of the population in Serbia lives below the relative poverty line. Certain categories of population are at a greater risk of poverty such as extended families with children, non-urban population, children up to the age of 14 and youth, persons over 65 and persons with incomplete primary school in particular.

Poverty implies various problems, from lack of funds for food and clothing, living in poor housing and even homelessness, to limited opportunities potentially resulting in social exclusion. Although the State guarantees the rights to all the citizens through the adopted and implemented legislation, the persons who are socially excluded remain deprived of information and access to numerous services they are entitled to. This category of the population is in dire need of support of the society. Therefore, we must develop additional incentives in order to help them exit the circle of exclusion and poverty and become active members of society.

With the EU accession, social inclusion and poverty reduction issues are increasingly becoming a subject of agreement between Belgrade and Brussels. The Government of Serbia is committed to active partici-

pation in the process of social inclusion and poverty reduction at the European level: starting with the establishment of proper incentives to combat poverty and exclusion, through allocation of funds required for their implementation, to monitoring the effects of implementation that should result in overall improvement of the living standards.

Being engaged in the social inclusion issues, we see that they tend much too often to be regarded as a burden on the society and the budget. In order to get involved in this process, as honestly as possible, and achieve lasting progress we need to change the perspective and recognize that resolving social exclusion issues represents the best way to avail ourselves of the potential of all the members of our society.

The social inclusion process should empower citizens to take an active approach to and part in all the aspects of social life. This involves access to education for the children and adults alike, access to labour market even if we are not highly educated, when we have some form of disability or when we belong to a minority, access to health care and social services for often we are not even aware that we have equal rights to them.

These are the incentives that we as a society need to develop in the next stage of EU integration. More than half a million excluded or poor citizens in Serbia mentioned at the beginning of the text are not and should not be a burden on any of us – they are the greatest potential for the development of our society. The sooner we include them in our society and the sooner they contribute to the overall development – the sooner will all of us as a society join the EU and ensure a better life for all the citizens of Serbia.

**MDG PROGRESS
REPORT
ADOPTED**

Page 2

**NATIONAL
EMPLOYMENT
SERVICE: NEW
PROGRAMMES**

Page 5

**DEVELOPMENT
OF RURAL
TOURISM**

Page 6

**GENDER
EQUALITY LAW
ADOPTED**

Page 7

**News
from the
EU**

- **Second Summit of the European Union on Roma Inclusion**
- **EUR 100 Million to the New EU Microfinance Facility**
- **New Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Commissioner**

page
3

VERAN MATIĆ, DIRECTOR AND EDITOR IN CHIEF B92

The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Process

In addition to my regular duty of the director of a media house, today I discussed the May work plan of the digital mamograph in the suburban municipalities of Belgrade, as well as the plan of promotion thereof in order to maintain the achieved, high, response of women – 87%, proving that we have managed to raise awareness about the importance of breast cancer prevention.

We also had to react to the cruel news that a criminal had severed all four paws to the bitch Mila. We have managed to identify a manufacturer of animal prostheses in Spain. I think we shall soon choose a potential adopter thus ensuring quality life for Mila. In the course of the day, I plan to negotiate the location in the South of Serbia that we shall send the 1000 secured parcels of food and home cleaning items that we have managed to secure for

our action "Food for All" from the Government of Vojvodina with which we maintain an excellent cooperation covering all the needs of soup kitchens in Vojvodina as well as towns where there are no soup kitchens. In a couple of weeks we shall be handing a transfusion-mobile over to the Institute for Transfusion within the framework of an action that we have been working on for over a year. On that day, all the B92 employees who are able will donate blood just as they have been doing every four months.

I have a meeting of the program and financial collegium to decide on the business model to reconcile the rat-race commercialization and tabloidization of the media market in Serbia and our responsibilities to the community in transition, burdened by numerous problems.

Continued on page 2

Government of Serbia Passes the Decision on the Establishment of the Civil Society Cooperation Office

The Government of Serbia passed the Decision on the Establishment of the Civil Society Cooperation Office that will maintain permanent dialogue of the state and the civil sector on the issues of general and common interest.

According to Milan Marković, Minister for State Administration and Local Self-Government, the establishment of this Office is an important step, for the Government has thus completed the policy related to development of civil society and setting up a legal framework for its operation.

"This is a crown of two years of work during which we passed the Associations Law. By establishing this Office we wish to build capacities of associations and other civil society organizations because we believe NGOs to be a sine qua non of democratic development of all states and societies, Minister Marković told a press conference after the Government session.

He added that the establishment of the Office would also contribute to a more efficient resolution of social and other problems that require engagement of all social resources, thus proving the proactive attitude of the Government in resolution of this and other problems and its readiness to create an open democratic society.

Analysis of the Impact of Crisis on the Labour Market and Living Standards in Serbia

The World Bank and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit initiated and supported a study "Analysis of the Impact of Crisis on the Labour Market and Living Standards in Serbia". In addition, the Centre for Liberal Democratic Studies (CLDS) analyzed the Labour Force Survey data and the data from the module on the impact of the global financial crisis conducted by the Republic Statistical Office in April 2008.

Within the framework of this survey, Strategic Marketing implemented a qualitative analysis which renders a better insight into the ways that the financial crisis impacted the most vulnerable categories of the population and the coping mechanisms.

The analysis provides a thorough overview of labor market characteristics in the period preceding the crisis and state these were unfavorable – low levels of economic activity and employment but high and decreasing level of unemployment. Labour market is viewed from different aspects with respect to gender, age structure, level of education, status per certain industrial sectors and per regional labour market structure.

Also, the overview of living standards in the period preceding the crisis marked primarily by significant reduction of absolute poverty is given. The Analysis provides for the impact of crisis through labour market, changes in employment per region, industrial sectors, gender structure, unemployment profiles, level of education with an emphasis on the status of vulnerable groups during the crisis.

The Analysis concludes that the living standards deteriorated and poverty increased during the crisis in Serbia, but that the poverty levels in the first half of 2009 is still lower than that recorded in 2006 and 2007. Similarly, although Serbian economy was characterized by low productivity, low levels of savings and exports in the period before the crisis, it still stood on its feet during the crisis. This is a result of the mildness of recession in the developed countries and small dependence on exports as well as the support of international institutions and some good steps of the National Bank.

In continuation of the Analysis recommendations are presented as to alleviation of impact of the crisis. In addition to the efforts the Government has been investing in order to alleviate the impact of the crisis, there is room to discuss and additionally redirect active labour market programmes and particularly public works towards regions and categories most affected by the crisis.

In the domain of state policies of support to the poor, it is especially important that the new Law on Social Protection be adopted as soon as possible and that parts thereof related to financial benefits to the poorest become effective during 2010.

Contact and information: Centre for Liberal Democratic Studies (CLDS), Phone: 011/324 6666, www.clds.rs

The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Process

Continued from page 1

If we were to take a pragmatic approach as almost all other commercial media, we would care about ratings irrespective of the effects of such programmes and contribution to the society. On the other hand, we wish to help in all possible ways – in the social, political and health domain - the most vulnerable strata of the society. We wish to advance rehabilitation and revival, creating a cultural model that would maintain authentic, original culture of the people, that would benefit all the advantages of communication with cultures, economic models, development, etc in the world.

This is a seemingly impossible mission, but we shall try to achieve it in some form at least, to prove it possible, to prove that the media must be socially responsible and act as watchdogs of public interest. Only as such will they help development of the community, contribute to a much brighter future than what it appears to be now. Our mission is to attract all the positive energy, to accumulate the strength and use it where it is most needed. The results of some of our projects are imposing and may serve as a model and an encouragement to others to try and embrace this model of behavior.

In the evening I have a meeting of the Steering Committee of the Serbian Association of Managers to explore the ways of strengthening the profession and making it more reputable and relevant. That being done, we shall analyze and approve projects we obtained from the civil sector organizations for co-production and partnership in strengthening civil sector initiatives. Namely, we have received more than 40 requests for partnerships at the competition of the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC). This is an incredible compliment and an enormous responsibility at the same time. I hope this partnership will add a level to the evolution of civil society and increase its efficiency. Governments will change but we need to have a strong NGO sector, influential partisan individuals and groups and activism as a way of life. This will secure more stability to the society.

Later in the evening, after news, I will be receiving calls from the politicians dissatisfied with our reports and I will debate with them, as I do time and again, about their mistakes and that it is not a shame to make mistakes but to keep repeating them.

I hope to end the day at least a bit satisfied with the performance and the new ideas to continue the activities.

I have written this editorial in the form of a diary for it seems to me that examples speak louder than views and ideas.

Veran Matić, director and editor in chief of B92

Millennium Development Goals Progress Report Adopted

At the 2000 Millennium Summit held in New York, 189 states signatories adopted the Millennium Declaration, a foundation for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) including fight against poverty, reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health, combating grave diseases, environmental protection, and development of global partnerships for development.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia has included the MDGs into the 2003 Poverty Reduction Strategy. The key objective of this Report is to monitor progress in implementation of national MDGs and indicators thereof, since the last MDG report in 2008 to date i.e. from 2005 to 2008.

The Report offers conclusions and recommendations on measures to be taken to achieve the set MDGs and the necessity to conduct additional surveys for a higher quality monitoring of the progress.

The Report will be submitted officially to the UN Secretary General in September 2010 when a special session of UN General Assembly will be convened to discuss global progress in achievement of MDGs. The aim of the plenary session involving heads of member states will not be to recall the statements of their commitment to achieve MDGs only but to initiate a concerted action of all relevant participants with a view to ensuring funding for realising MDGs by 2015.

For integral Report please see: www.inkluzija.gov.rs

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

EUR 100 Million to the New European Microfinance Facility

At the proposal of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe established a Microfinance Facility in the area of employment and social inclusion.

The aim of the Microfinance Facility is to create opportunities for development of entrepreneurship among the unemployed and the most vulnerable groups faced with obstacles in access to the conventional loan market.

The EU intends to fund the Microfinance Facility with EUR 100 million by 2013. The true significance of the Facility is perceived through cooperation with international finance institutions. This institution is expected to raise additional EUR 400 million in this way.

Microfinancing will target persons who have lost or will be losing their jobs, persons with difficulties in (re)entering the labour market, persons at risk of social exclusion as well as vulnerable groups who are in an unequal position in accessing conventional capital markets services or those who wish to start or develop their own micro-enterprise.

This microfinance instrument offers support to social economy structures with the aim of social reintegration of the excluded groups/individuals but also helps develop minimum skills required for undertaking long-term business initiatives.

The Facility supports non-commercial mi-

crofinance institutions, funds and banks to conduct socially responsible business and serve as a complement to the traditional banking market focusing on beneficiaries who do not have a satisfactory credit rating.

The Facility functions by directing the funds raised to public and private organisations taking part in direct provision of microfinance. These organisations must observe the principles of responsible lending in order to avoid that the loan beneficiaries find themselves in a situation of overindebtedness and confiscation of property. They should harbour a close cooperation with organisations representing interests of the end beneficiaries of micro-credits.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION**Andor – the new Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Commissioner**

László Andor was appointed the new Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities in the new sitting of the European Commission.

The priorities of the new Commissioner and his team over the next 5-year period are employment, combating poverty, efficient use of EU funds, reinstatement and intensification of social dialogue and work force mobility.

Andor said that dealing with economic and social consequences of the crisis in Europe needs to be a priority. He stated that the financial crisis represents a test for social cohesion in Europe and that the current social and economic upheaval represents an opportunity for employment and social policy to become the pillars of the new European 2020 Strategy.

At a session held in Strasbourg on 9 February, the European Parliament affirmed the members of the new European Commission, among them Mr Andor. The new sitting will be headed by the present president Jose Manuel Baroso. The mandate of this sitting of the Commission will last until 31 November 2014.

The key tasks of the European Commission in the forthcoming five-year period will be to secure long-term sustainability of development and competitiveness, combating unemployment and development of social cohesion, safety of the citizens of Europe.

Contact: EU Delegation in the Republic of Serbia
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THE SECOND EUROPEAN SUMMIT ON ROMA INCLUSION: Roma Issue Becomes of the Key EU Issues

The three states presiding EU by mid-2011 have adopted a joint statement undertaking a commitment to mainstream the Roma issue into the EU policies and budgets at the Second European Summit on Roma Inclusion.

Spain, Belgium and Hungary have also committed themselves to funding concrete initiatives from the EU structural funds and agreed to develop a mid-term action plan for resolution of the Roma issue at the Union level.

Building on the results of the EU Platform for Roma Inclusion that defined Ten Joint Common Principles for Roma Inclusion last year, this summit represents a turning point in the EU policy on the Roma issue.

The Serbian delegation at the Summit was headed by Božidar Đelić, the Deputy Prime Minister for EU Integration.

He said that stronger impact of the measures implemented is required and that this may be achieved by pooling resources from the European

funds with the funds of the Council of Europe Development Bank.

Serbia intends to earmark more funds to Roma minority inclusion from its own budget as well as from the EU funds.

The programmes that are currently negotiated will be implemented for inclusion of socially vulnerable groups, Roma in particular, from 2011 to 2013. These include housing construction, micro-crediting, and special education programmes for the vulnerable minorities.

Đelić spoke of the Serbian experiences in implementing EU-financed projects for improvement of the position of Roma. Serbia was approved six projects that are funded by more than EUR 33 million from the IPA funds.

The Second European Summit on Roma Inclusion was held in Cordoba, 8-9 April on the occasion of the International Roma Day. The Summit gathered high representatives of EU institutions, EU members, international organisations and Roma civil society.

Development of the Serbian Version of EUROMOD

EUROMOD is an EU micro-simulation model offering the possibility of conducting comparative analyses and assessment of impact of taxes and social benefits in a country on household income and work incentives of the population. This programme enables assessment of impact of reforms of tax and social benefit policies as well as potential impacts of policy changes on poverty, inequality and budget revenues.

The model was developed by a team of researchers from the Institute for Social and Economic Research of the University of Essex, Great Britain. Thanks to the cooperation of the Fund for Development of Economic Sciences and the Essex team, the impact assessment of different policies on distribution, inequality, poverty, social exclusion and work incentives will also be conducted for Serbia. Our version of EUROMOD – SRMOD is significant not only for the researchers from the area of social sciences but also for experts dealing with practical issues from the areas of relevant policies and the decision-makers.

Contact: Fund for Development of Economic Sciences
Phone: 011 3021 069, www.fren.org.rs

EUR 3.5 Million EU support to Civil Society Organisations

The Delegation of the European Union in Serbia and the project “Strengthening of Serbia-EU Civil Society Dialogue” have organised informative seminars for civil sector representatives to present this project and the public call for proposals for projects of development of sustainable dialogue between the civil society in Serbia and the EU Member States.

The European Union has earmarked a total of EUR 3.5 million from the IPA 2007 and IPA 2008 in support of projects of civil society organisations.

The Civil Society Fund shall provide support to projects of all social structures that do not belong to the state administration be they based on voluntary or mandatory membership such as: professional organisations based with a view to advancement of a profession, trade unions and employers associations, consumer associations, association of patients, students, business associations, etc. non-governmental organisations, grass root initiatives, cultural and art associations and clubs, as well as media associations and networks.

Contact: EU Delegation in Serbia
Phone: 011 30 83 200, www.europa.rs
Project: “Strengthening of Serbia-EU Civil Society Dialogue”
Phone: 011 32 47 875, www.dijalog.org.rs

MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RSD 2.2 Billion for Start-ups

The Government of Serbia adopted a RSD 2.2 billion Programme of Favourable Crediting of Start-Ups at the proposal of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development.

RSD 1 billion was earmarked from the budget, while RSD 1.2 billion were collected from loan repayment proceeds in previous years.

The Ministry of Economy and Regional Development has announced a call for the Programme Start-Ups for the fourth successive year. 6,625 enterprises employing more than 21,000 persons were opened thanks to these loans over the past three years.

Entrepreneurs looking to start up their own business in 2010 may obtain favourable loans ranging from RSD 500,000 to 1.3 million from the Development Fund.

With respect to entrepreneurs, advantage shall be given to persons up to 25 who have attended trainings organised by the National Agency for Regional Development (the former SME Development Agency), the National Employment Service and the Business Innovation Programme.

Legal entities shall be eligible for loans ranging from RSD 500,000 to

2,5 million with 2.5% interest rate/annum, 3-5 years repayment period and 12 months grace period.

Start-up loans may not be used for programmes of primary agricultural production, crediting infrastructure, trade, purchase of passenger vehicles, crediting of organising chance games and lottery and of loans to third parties.

Contact: National Regional Development Agency

Phone: 011 33 46 107, www.sme.gov.rs

Development Fund of the Republic of Serbia

Phone: 011 26 21 387, www.fondzarazvoj.gov.rs

THE PROKUPLJE INITIATIVE

Training of Future Entrepreneurs

The municipality of Kuršumljia has allocated RSD 1 million in support of additional activities to the project "Businesses" aiming to build capacities of future entrepreneurs. The project is implemented by the Business Incubator Centre DOO from Prokuplje.

Approximately EUR 11,000 from the municipal budget were earmarked for participants of trainings to be organised within the framework of the project "Businesses". The participants will be asked to submit their business plans at the open call for proposals that the municipality of Kuršumljia will announce in the course of trainings planned by the project.

This project of the Business Incubator Centre DOO aims to influence poverty reduction and decrease the trend of migrations of able bodied population through direct work with potential entrepreneurs and the existing small and medium-sized enterprises.

Since the formal education system does not provide sufficient knowledge on entrepreneurship, a many people do not opt to establish their own business. The Business Incubator Centre DOO will work with individuals who have sound business ideas but insufficient knowledge to start and run enterprises.

The project "Businesses" is implemented by the Business Incubator Centre DOO in cooperation with the National Employment Service with the funding of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Holland and the Dutch non-governmental organisation SPARK.

Contact: Business Incubator Centre;

Phone: 027 339 338, www.bicprokuplje.co.rs

Municipality of Prokuplje,

Phone: 027 324 040, www.prokuplje.org.rs

SPARK, Phone: 011 32 86 053, www.spark-online.org

GOVERNMENT OF SERBIA

Minimum Salary Rises to RSD 15,660

The Government of Serbia has increased the price of labour in April to RSD 90/work hour, thus increasing the minimum salary to RSD 15,660.

The price of labour totalled RSD 87net/work hour in the period July-December 2009.

According to the Labour Law, the amount of minimum salary is established by the Socio-Economic Council taking on the basis of parameters including the cost of living, changes of average income, subsistence and social needs of employees and their families, unemployment rate, employment trends at the labour market and the overall level of economic development of the state.

Minimum income is established per work hour for the minimum period of six months.

The decision is passed by the Government, in case the Council session cannot reach consensus required to pass a decision on minimum salary.

EUR 100 Million Programme for Starting Production in Underdeveloped Municipalities

The Government of Serbia has adopted an EUR 100 million programme of promotion of balanced regional development in 2010.

The programme aims to support employment and revival of production in the poorest Serbian municipalities.

EUR 70 million have been earmarked for starting production in 40 least developed municipalities whose level of development is below 50% of the average development rate in Serbia.

Mladen Dinkić, the Minister of Economy and Regional Development said that the best way to implement the programme is for the strategic partners to propose plans into one of the companies in underdeveloped municipalities to the Ministry.

The strategic partners will be given an opportunity to obtain investment loans ranging EUR 2-8 million with a 2% interest rate/annum, an 8-year repayment period, and a grace period of 2-3 years.

Part of the programme envisages loans for promotion of investments into production of clothes, footwear, wood processing industry, mechanical, vehicle and electrical industry in the total amount of EUR 20 million in 2010. This programme includes investments into 105 municipalities where the rate of development is below the average rate of development in Serbia.

The Programme for Balanced Regional Development in Serbia provides also for EUR 10 million for crediting SME development and entrepreneurship in underdeveloped municipalities.

The condition for approval of loans from the Programme for Balanced Regional Development is a market viability of investments. The Programme will be implemented through the Serbian Development Fund.

Contact: Ministry of Economy and Regional Development

Phone: 011 285 5067, www.merr.gov.rs

Development Fund of the Republic of Serbia, Phone: 011 26 21 387

www.fondzarazvoj.gov.rs

Responsible Young Entrepreneurs

In 2010, four organisations from the region that promote youth entrepreneurship will be implementing a pilot project aimed at combating corruption in the business sector and promoting ethically responsible youth entrepreneurship.

The pilot project is entitled "Responsible Youth Entrepreneurship – creating a culture of anti-corruption in the private sector". The project will be implemented for 12 months in the Western Balkans – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia.

The pilot project will be implemented by an NGO "Initiatives" from Prokuplje in cooperation with the YES Foundation from Skopje, Centre for Development of Entrepreneurship Potential INCEPTUM from Velenje and an Independent Development Bureau from Gradačac.

The project originates in the idea of these organisations that young entrepreneurs, in addition to assistance in accessing capital, technical training and skills, also need an "ethic orientation".

The objectives of the project include mobilisation of civil society organisations working on strengthening youth entrepreneurship acting against corruption, public discussion on corruption in SME business and contribution to creating ethically responsible young entrepreneurs who will promote sound business practices.

The implementation of this project is funded by the European Commission through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance – IPA.

Contact: Initiatives, Prokuplje

Phone: 027 329 042, www.theinitiatives.org

NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Youth Employment Programme

The National Employment Service (NES) in cooperation with the Programme "Youth Employment and Migration" announced an invitation for submission of applications for implementation of youth employment programmes.

The objective of the Youth Employment Programme is to support the young unemployed through trainings and employment preparation measures, employment and self-employment.

The Youth Employment Programme consists of individual measures such as "on-the-job training", "preparation for employment", "employer training", "subsidies for mandatory social insurance contributions", "probation period" and "self-employment" and there are eligibility criteria for each of the programmes.

The unemployed registered with the NES branch offices in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Vranje that are under the age of 30 at the moment when applying are eligible. The programme is targeting the unemployed who have up to the 2nd level of qualifications, with/without experience.

Priority will be given to persons with disabilities, Roma, refugees and IDPs, returnees in the process of readmission and beneficiaries of services provided by the Centers for Social Work.

The programme is financed from the Youth Employment Fund, established jointly by the Government of the Republic of Serbia and Spanish Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund, within the UN joint programme "Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration".

Contact: NES branch office Belgrade, Phone: 011 29 29 100

NES branch office Novi Sad, Phone: 021 48 90 800 / NES branch office Vranje, Phone: 017 407 100

Almost Two Billion Dinars for the "First Chance" Programme

The National Employment Service (NES) will allocate RSD 1.8 billion for the "First Chance" programme this year.

The programme will be implemented in two stages. During the first stage, trainees will volunteer in companies, while receiving remuneration in the amount of RSD 10,000 by the NES. During the second stage, employers will employ the best trainees. During the first year of their employment, the NES will pay the net salary ranging from RSD 18,000 to 20,000 i.e. around 28,000 gross salary and the employers will have to pay the wage tax (around RSD 2,000).

Upon programme completion, the employers will have to retain the selected trainees for at least one year as well as to pay for them all costs related to salaries, taxes and contributions.

Last year the "First Chance" programme gave an opportunity to around 16,000 young people to get an employment and to acquire the internship. The same number is planned for 2010.

The NES allocated about RSD million for self-employment programmes planning to provide subsidies to 1,875 people. The amount of around RSD 600 million is allocated for creation of new jobs for around 4,200 people.

The NES also allocated RSD 295 million for training enabling the unemployed to acquire knowledge and skills that they lack and that hinder them from finding an employment. Around 60 percent of those who attend the training, manage to find a job during the same year.

More than 730,000 unemployed were registered with the NES in December last year.

Six Public Calls and Competitions for Employment Subsidies

The National Employment Service (NES) announced six public calls and competitions encouraging employers to employ new employees, to provide trainings for jobs in short supply while encouraging the unemployed to become self-employed. The public calls and competitions are aimed at implementing employment policy programmes and measures in 2010.

The NES invited a competition for co-financing training programmes needed by employers, covering training costs for 1,400 unemployed people in accordance with employers' needs if there are no unemployed with required qualifications or provided with required knowledge on the NES records. NES will cover the training costs amounting up to RSD 80,000 per unemployed person and provide subsidies for employment upon termination of the training amounting to 3-months minimum salary or up to six-month minimum salary for persons with disabilities.

A public competition has been launched for public works implementation in 2010. The public works shall be carried out by employers appointed by the NES based on the public competition and public works can be organized in the fields of social, humanitarian, cultural and other activities as well as public infrastructure rehabilitation, environmental and nature maintenance and protection.

Public works can last up to six months, while the NES shall pay salaries to the unemployed involved in public works ranging from RSD 16,000 to 22,000.

The NES has launched a Public Call to employers for awarding subsidies for opening of new jobs. The subsidy for new jobs shall be granted to employers opening up to 50 new job posts offering jobs to unemployed people or employing surplus manpower. The amount of subsidy will depend on development level of the municipality in which people are employed. In the most under-developed areas the subsidy amounts to RSD 160,000 per person, people in underdeveloped municipalities will receive RSD 130,000 per person and RSD 80,000 per person in other municipalities.

The Public Call has also been directed to unemployed persons to award subsidies for self-employment, whereas an unemployed person is awarded the lump-sum subsidy for self-employment amounting to RSD 160,000.

Two public calls relate to employment of Roma population. Public call has been sent to employers to award subsidies for opening new jobs to employ the Roma unemployed. Employers who will open up to 20 new jobs to employ Roma registered at the NES will be awarded with lump-sum subsidies amounting to RSD 160,000.

Contact: NES, 011 29 29 800, www.nsz.gov.rs

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Risk Calculator for Investments into Municipalities

The National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED) and USAID/MEGA programme initiated a project "Calculator" aiming to establish an index of strain on local economy and the level of competitiveness of municipalities so as to provide potential investors with the information on start-up costs and define the annual level of expenditures of business operation.

The project will develop a database to be published on NALED website that may be searched by type of economic activity and municipality.

NALED is established within the framework of the programme Municipal Economic Growth Activity (MEGA) funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Urban Institute from Washington.

The aim of NALDED is to facilitate dialogue between the local and central authorities, institutions and the private sector thus creating an economic climate conducive to business operation in Serbia, attracting new investments and accelerating economic development.

Within its web presentation, NALED monitors regulations relevant to local economic development, from the preparatory phase to full implementation, relying on expert interpretation and analyses.

Contact: National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED)
Phone: 011 33 47 634

www.naled-serbia.org

US Agency for International Development (USAID), Phone: 011 30 64 675

<http://serbia-montenegro.usaid.gov>

New Internet Presentation of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit has announced an Internet presentation www.inkluzija.gov.rs / www.inclusion.gov.rs

The activities of partners in the process of social inclusion and poverty reduction in the Republic of Serbia may be followed at the webpage, as well as the latest publications and various statistical data and best practice examples in these areas.

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit was established in 2009 at the Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister for EU Integration and has a mandate to monitor capacity building of the Government to develop and implement social inclusion policies based on best practices in Europe.

The Unit supports the Deputy Prime Minister for EU Integration to coordinate, monitor and report on the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Serbia in the area of social inclusion.

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

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE: Preparation for IPARD Introduction Continues

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management is continuing the project to develop reviews of four sectors of agricultural and food-processing production - milk, meat, fruit and vegetables, that will receive EU pre-accession funds allocated to the rural development. The Project started in September 2009 supported by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and Delegation of the European Union in Belgrade and it has been continued in January 2010 with engagement of consulting companies developing the sectors' reviews.

The process of development of sector reviews will be finalised by July 2010 thus fulfilling another precondition required for using of EU funds from the fifth component of the IPA funds (IPARD) that will become operational as soon as Serbia acquires a status of an EU candidate-country.

Contact: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
Phone: 011 30 65 038

Rural Tourism Development

Within implementation of the Project "Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development" Eduardo Fajos-Sola, a regional representative for Europe of the UN World Tourism Organization visited the National Park Đerdap.

The Programme in which the National Park Đerdap is one of the key local partners in the region of Donje Podunavlje (lower Danube basin) will last 30 months. Besides the region of Donje Podunavlje, this Project covers the territory of Southern Banat, Central and East Serbia.

The following five UN agencies cooperate in the project implementation: UNDP, FAO, UNWTO, UNICEF and UNEP.

The national partners in the programme implementation are Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management.

The Project "Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development" is financed by the Spanish Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund made available to the Government in cooperation with the UN. The amount of USD 4 million is allocated by the Spanish Government to this project.

The Project is targeting development of local rural tourism and related business activities while local capacities in terms of providing services and products will be enhanced in accordance with the national strategy.

TELEDOM ASSOCIATION OF SERBIA: Telecottages and Teledoms Established in 74 Towns

As of 1999, the Teledom Association of Serbia (TSS) established in 74 towns in Serbia Teledom and Telecottages i.e. information and telecommunication centers disseminating IT knowledge and enabling access to ICT and Internet to citizens as well as supporting development of small communities and local entrepreneurs.

These centers are established within the Teledom programme with the aim to use modern technological devices to contribute to creation of equal opportunities of people from small, underdeveloped and rural areas, to their well-being and achievement of sustainable social and economic development of local communities along with preservation of their own values: language, alphabet, culture and tradition.

Teledom and Telecottages are open to all, regardless of their age, social status, nationality, religion and programme implementors are usually civil organizations.

In past ten years, TSS has trained over 18,000 people in computer skills out of which over 1,500 people were trained according the ECDL model (European Computer Driving License).

Within Teledom and Telecottages TSS has a wide range of training programmes: trainings for managers, handicraft and administrative jobs, entrepreneurship on the Internet, for business plans and projects, regarding basis of the modern entrepreneurship, on how to communicate and look for a job, foreign languages, etc.

As of 2004 in cooperation with Teledom and Telecottages this organization operates as a center for entrepreneurship development and over 1,000 people were trained in various kinds of entrepreneurship out of which 40 people according to the EBCL model (European Business Competence License).

Contact: Teledom Association of Serbia, Phone: 032 85 57 60
www.teledom.org.rs

SAŠA DRAGIN, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND WATER MANAGEMENT: Support to Individual Farms

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Saša Dragin, states that during the international economic crises it is of the greatest importance to take care of local individual farms and family farms where the agriculture is the sole source of income.

In the interview published in the "Ekonomist" magazine, Mr. Dragin says that prices of agricultural products on the market are pretty unstable and therefore all available funds should be given to farmers.

Minister reminded that this year the agricultural budget is by 25% higher and this will be the way to enable farmers to receive higher subsidies per hectare since they will receive RSD 14,000 instead of 12,000 they received last year.

He stated that greater investments are allocated for the local agriculture as well, which was not the case in the previous period and stressed that all milk producers can receive 50% of grant to improve their operations.

The Ministry will reimburse 100% of costs of planting permanent cropping and finance procurement of equipment needed for posts and wire to all farmers who have their farms registered.

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER Support to Civil Society Organizations

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) announces a new round of support to sustainable development in Serbia through support to civil society organization (SECTOR II).

SECTOR II Project provides financial support to civil society organizations active in the field of urban sustainable development for their projects and capacity building through four project components: project financial support (grants), capacity building, consultations, networking and media component.

The budget amounting to EUR 330,000 is available for the financial support to OCD projects (grants). This granting scheme will identify and support national projects of civil society organizations promoting urban sustainable development in Serbia. Grants will range from EUR 25,000 to 35,000.

Contact: Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC CO Serbia), Phone: 011 72 92 899, www.rec.rs

FUND FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: EUR 400,000 Credit to Support Environmental Protection Activities

The Fund for Environmental Protection will provide loans amounting to EUR 400,000 to people interested in investing in environmental protection activities i.e. waste collection and treatment, recycling as well as other fields of the green economy.

Besides credits, this Fund will provide subsidies amounting to 20% of each commercial credit taken for environment-related activities.

The Fund for Environmental Protection has EUR 100 million of revenues which is rendered possible by the Decree on Waste Streams and those proceeds are channeled to those willing to work in the area of the environmental protection.

Contact: Fund for Environmental Protection, Phone: 011 21 69 368
www.sepf.gov.rs

WAKE IT SERBIA UP - SUSTAINABLY AND LAWFULLY Recycled Computers for Schools

BIS Recycling Center and People's Office organized an initiative to provide used computers to educational institutions called "Wake IT Serbia Up - Sustainably and Lawfully".

This initiative envisages donating recycled and used computers, with legal software installed in line with rules of the Community MAP programme (Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher) and in accordance with environmental protection and sustainable development goals.

Computers are being collected from private and public companies that can donate computers by mid-May whereafter they will be refurbished in the BIS Recycling Center and donated to schools.

Contact: BIS Recycling center, Phone: 013 361 444, www.it-recycling.biz

PONTIS AND CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY COMPETITION: **Researching Slovak Experience in the Process of the EU Accession**

Five Projects are selected at the competition organized by the Slovak Pontis Foundation and Center for Democracy aimed at developing studies regarding the Serbian EU integration process and providing recommendations to government institutions and other stakeholders.

The Pontis Foundation and Center for Democracy announced the competition to award grants for projects aimed at Serbia's EU accession through researches and analysis of the Slovak experiences regarding the EU accession from 2000 to 2004.

The Evaluation Board reviewed 41 project proposals taking into consideration originality of the topic and approach, impact on the target group, sustainability and applicants' expertise.

Studies will focus on the following topics: the use of pre-accession funds in the area of consumer protection, food safety standards, absorption capacity of Serbia for usage of EU Funds, attraction and directing foreign direct investments, development and application of social protection and employment policies, the role of structural funds related to the pension system and labor.

Grants amounting up to EUR 3,000 will be awarded to individuals doing researches independently in Serbia while those intending to research in Slovakia will receive the additional amount of EUR 1,500. Organizations will receive the amount of EUR 5,000.

CORPORATIVE PHILANTHROPY

Virtus Award for 2009 Presented

The winners of the 2009 Virtus Award for Corporate Philanthropy are: B92, Eurobank, EFG, Erste bank, 3 DOO from Subotica and Societe General Bank.

RDP B92 was awarded the price for their contribution at the national level. Virtus is awarded to Eurobank EFG from Belgrade for their contribution to the local community. Erste Bank from Novi Sad is awarded for the support of the most innovative project of the year, Inforstud 3 DOO from Subotica got Virtus for their contribution in the small and medium-size enterprise category, and Societe General Bank Serbia is awarded for a long-term partnership between the business and non-profit sector.

This traditional annual award which honors companies and organizations distinguished for their support to public or non-profit actions is being organized by the Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF) thanks to financial support provided by the USAID's Civil Society Programme implemented by the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC). It has also received significant support by the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation and Agency for Cooperation with NGOs and European Harmonization of the City of Belgrade as well as by numerous other partners.

Contact: Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF), www.bcif.org

MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL POLICY **RSD 880 Million for the Poor by the End of the Year**

By the end of the year the amount of RSD 880 million will be allocated to nine groups of vulnerable population, but most of the poor will remain unsatisfied because the money is not sufficient to help all of them, says Rasim Ljajić, Minister of Labor and Social Policy.

The amount of RSD 232 million is needed for operations of soup kitchens, RSD 131 million for lunch packs to rural elderly households and RSD 400 million will be allocated to development of social services in 40 most vulnerable municipalities.

Rasim Ljajić stated these proceeds are not envisaged in the budget and therefore internal reserves will be used, mainly from the Property Directorate that has significant quantities of foodstuffs, clothes and footwear. Proceeds from the World Bank project will be utilized, as well.

Ljajić said that the largest problem represent people in so-called green area of poverty i.e. people that are not eligible to receive support due to formal legal reasons, people whose salary exceed the ceiling by RSD 1,000 or who possess non-arable land or elderly households whose members cannot work land. The problem is shared by 500,000 pensioners who receive pensions amounting to less than RSD 13,000.

Contact: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy Phone: 011 363 11 60
www.minrzs.gov.rs

INITIATIVE "FOOD FOR ALL"

Additional 32 soup kitchens needed in Serbia

RDP B92 issued a public invitation to companies and citizens to join a new initiative within the action "Food for All" and to take part in establishing soup kitchens in areas where they are needed at the most.

Companies can foster one soup kitchen by providing grants to cover expenses during the period of at least six months. Depending on the size of national kitchens, costs can range from EUR 15,000 to 30,000.

Companies can help by providing in-kind help, as well if they produce basic foodstuffs. The Serbian Red Cross is channeling these in-kind grants to existing soup kitchens.

Citizens can help this initiative by donating to the B92 Fund, sending SMS to 2500 (RSD100) or purchasing a plate "Food for All" (RSD 100).

So far the number of soup kitchens increased from 55 to 67, therefore stopping the negative trend of closing down soup kitchens due to impact of the economic crisis. However, Serbia needs 99 soup kitchens in order to satisfy basic needs of the most vulnerable citizens.

The objective of the initiative "Food for All" is to mitigate impacts of the crises to the most vulnerable population and to tackle the issue of famine. The initial objective is to provide at least one meal every day to those living in the extreme poverty. The number of people suffering famine in Serbia increased from 500,000 to 700,000 in 2009 which is almost 10% of the population.

The initiative "Food for All" has managed so far to raise over two million kilos of food and RSD 15 million allocated to provide food for the existing and open new soup kitchens.

Contact "Food for All", Phone: 011 301 20 60, www.hranazasve.com
B92 Phone: 011 301 20 00

FOOD BANK

78 Tons of Food for 10,000 persons

Within its 58 actions in 2009, the association of citizens "Food Bank" collected and distributed 78 tons of food of the value of RSD 13 million to around 10,100 beneficiaries.

In January 2010, the "Food Bank" delivered 125 kg of various candies to 250 children whose mothers are members of the Single Mother Association from Niš and 60 boxes or 24 kg of candies were delivered to 60 pupils of the elementary school "Miloš Crnjanski" in Novi Kozjak.

The "Food Bank" also helped families with large number of children, sick family members, single-member families as well as IDPs and Roma families in Belgrade, Crvenka and Niš by providing around 400 kg of various basic food items. The help was provided to the Center for Children without Parental Care "Jovan Jovanović - Zmaj" in Belgrade and Single Mother Association in Niš.

Niš Sport Association, supporting the initiative of the RTP B92 "Food for All", collected 290 kg of various food items and candies during its sport day and donated to children of the Association of Dystrophy Sufferer and Association of Cerebral Children Paralysis. Food items were collected by spectators-fans bringing one or more items instead of buying tickets.

Donors are Delta Maxi Group, that is an organizer, as well, Nestle company, Craft Foods, employees from the Belgrade Club "Aleksandar".

The "Food Bank" is currently intensifying its efforts in searching financial resources necessary for its operations i.e. covering of operational costs of the association: office costs, remunerations to employees, costs related to grants distribution: loading-unloading, fuel, vehicle maintenance.

Contact: Association of citizens "Food Bank"
Phone: 011 31 32 810, www.bankahrane.org

Conference on Access to Social and Affordable Housing

The National Conference was held on February 11, 2010 co-organized by the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integrations and Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning aimed at sharing experiences on social and affordable housing policies in Serbia and other European countries.

Following the adoption of the Law on Social Housing in August 2009, development policy instruments, appropriate models and mechanisms for solving housing issues of the most vulnerable groups have become a priority of the Government. 2010 is the Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. Combating poverty and social exclusion is one of the main EU objectives and building of more inclusive Europe is vital to achieving the European Union's goals of sustained economic development, creation of new jobs and social cohesion.

At the Conference, organized with support of the Government of Italy and the technical assistance of UN-HABITAT, three main topics important to the ongoing housing reform process in Serbia were discussed while the focus was on good practices and challenges faced by other European countries and representing experience to date regarding various housing policy options.

Contacts: UN-HABITAT, www.unhabitat.org.rs

BCIF COMPETITION: Public Advocacy in Local Communities and "Social Transition" Programme

The Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF) announced the opening of the "Public Advocacy in Local Communities" competition with the financial support of the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The objective of the competition is to promote and support civic associations in Serbia to develop successful models for public advocacy in local communities.

10 organizations were selected and each of them sent two representatives to take part in a public advocacy training programme. The training is organized as a three-day seminar in February, March and April 2010. Upon completion of the training, the best developed projects will receive grants amounting up to EUR 12,000.

The other competition announced by the Balkan Community Initiatives Fund relates to the "Social Transition" programme, aimed at awarding grants amounting up to EUR 20,000 as support to the transition process of the social protection system providing funds to local, non-governmental and non-profit organizations dealing with social issues. Registered non-governmental and non-profit organizations from Serbia dealing with social issues are eligible to apply.

Contact and information: Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF), Phone: 011 26 22 511, www.bcif.org

Programme of Sustainable Economic Inclusion of Victims of Human Trafficking in Serbia

The objective of the project regarding economic inclusion of victims of human trafficking is to strengthen capacities of the National Employment Service to be able to promote and implement programmes regarding economic inclusion of victims of human trafficking.

Project activities go into various directions: strengthening capacities of employees in the NES to apply their knowledge and skills when working with victims of human trafficking respecting specific needs of this group; developing particular training programmes, additional training and vocational re-training for interested programme beneficiaries; connecting interested employers with beneficiaries. The Programme of sustainable economic inclusion of victims of human trafficking in Serbia is implemented by the National Employment Service, NGO Atina and International Organization for Migrations (IOM).

Contacts: National Employment Service Phone: 011 29 29 800, www.nsz.gov.rs

NGO Atina, Phone: 011 30 33 523, www.atina.org.rs

International Organization for Migrations (IOM), Phone: 011 382 17 03, www.iomntfserbia.org

MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL POLICY Days of Activism

During the international campaign "16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women" held from November 25 to December 10 the project "Fight against Sexual- and Gender-Based Violence" supported organization of 18 round tables throughout Serbia.

Local bodies for gender equality gathered in round tables representatives of all relevant local stakeholders promoting in that way exchange of experiences, good and bad practices and networking of stakeholders to establish basis for creation of integrated services for victims of family violence.

It has been concluded, inter alia, that it is necessary to adopt the strategy on fighting violence in family, develop protocol regarding procedures in case of violence and define procedures for collection of data and keeping victimological statistics.

The project "Fight against Sexual- and Gender-Based Violence" is being implemented as of June 2009 under the umbrella of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy - Directorate of Gender Equality with the technical assistance of the UN Development Programme and financial support of the Norwegian Government.

Contact: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Directorate of Gender Equality

Phone: 011 33 45 665, www.minrsz.gov.rs

STRENGTHENING WOMEN STATUS: Ministry of Labor supports Labris

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy provided financial support to Labris project therefore becoming the first ministry to support work of a lesbian organization in Serbia.

Labris project "Sensitization of female and male experts regarding health care and LGBT rights and needs" took part at the competition invited by the Directorate of Gender Equality of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in cooperation with the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

At the competition regarding Strengthening of status of women from dual and/or multi dis-

criminated groups, Labris has been awarded funds amounting to RSD 445,773 while the Labris project is one of nine projects supported by the Directorate. This is the first time that Labris implements its activities in cooperation with the state authorities.

The project is a part of Labris broader education programme regarding LGBT rights.

Contact: Labris, Phone: 3347 401,

www.labris.org.rs

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Directorate of Gender Equality, Phone: 011 33 45 665,

www.minrsz.gov.rs

The Law on Gender Equality Adopted

The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia passed the Law on Gender Equality on its session on December 14, 2009. This Law guarantees the gender equality implying equal participation of men and women in all areas of public and private life in accordance with generally-accepted rules of international laws, confirmed by international agreements, Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and laws as well as European Social Charter.

The Law regulates creation of equal opportunities of exercising of rights and obligations,

undertaking of particular measures to prevent and remove discrimination based on gender and sex and legal protection of people subject to discrimination.

The Law covers and regulates the following areas: employment, social and health protection, family relations, education, culture and sport, political and public life and court protection.

Article 57 of the Law stresses the policy of equal opportunities, ban on

gender-based discrimination, ban on violence and harassment of any kind.

Innovations in the Law regard employment, social and health protection and especially the right to equal pay for equal work is guaranteed.

Furthermore, the Law envisages so-called affirmative action measures i.e. positive discrimination in order for the state to improve the position of less represented gender through certain programmes.

Adoption of the Law on Gender Equality is one of the first steps to be undertaken aimed at ensuring changes necessary to happen in our society in this respect. In order for this objective to be reached, it is necessary to focus on increasing public awareness regarding complexity of the problem of the gender equality which is, inter alia, the role of mass media. It is their obligation, according to the Law, not only to promote the gender equality through their programmes, but also to influence changes of cultural and social patterns, customs and practices impacting creation of the stereotypes, prejudices or discrimination.

Data Base on Scholarships in Europe Established

A scholarship data base presenting scholarships that can be obtained in 33 European countries for which Western Balkan students are eligible to apply. The Internet address is www.s4wb.eu. This data base covers seventeen fields in 33 European countries (EU and EFTA).

The data base contains wide range of scholarships offered to Western Balkan students and researchers and provides information regarding financial support for basic, master and doctoral studies.

The data base provides to Western Balkan students access to information regarding possibilities of studying abroad including financial information.

The internet presentation was developed by the SPARK and the maintenance will be financed by the Belgian King Baudouin Foundation (KBF) aimed at promoting mobility of Western Balkan students.

Contact: The Scholarship Database for Western Balkan Students

First "Family House" Operational

In the Mother and Child Health Institute "Dr Vukan Čupić" in Belgrade the first "Family House" in Serbia is opened where children with malignancy and their parents can stay during the treatment and recovery.

During the treatment, parents usually need to rent an apartment so as to provide appropriate accommodation to their children and in order to be able to go to check-ups and treatments on a daily basis. Many families do not have financial resources for that. The building is built using the existing auxiliary building of the Institute of the total area of 864 sq.m.

There are 12 equipped apartments within the Family House i.e. 8 apartments for accommodation of parents and children and 4 apartments for accommodation of doctors enrolled at post-graduated study in the Institute or foreign experts that will work in the Institute. The house contains a living room for children, kitchen, dining room, rest room, laundry room, as well as offices and it is connected with a passage way to the Institute.

The organizational and technical support will be provided by the Association of parents of children with malignancy "Zvončica".

Contact: Serbian Mother and Child Health Institute "Dr Vukan Čupić",
Phone: 011 31 08 108, www.imd.org.rs

Scholarships for Roma Students

The Open Society Foundation announces a competition to award scholarships to Roma students (Roma Memorial University Scholarship Programme - RMUSP).

The competition is intended to students of the final year of the secondary schools who intend to enroll at universities in the following school year 2010/2011 as well as students that are already enrolled in order to get Bachelor, Master of PhD degree.

This is the sole academic scholarship intended solely to Roma students in Serbia and after 10 years since the establishment of the programme in 2009/2010 there were only 159 candidates.

Contact: Open Society Foundation,
Phone: 011 30 25 847, www.fosserbia.org,
REF/Scholarship Programme
<http://ref.rmusp.org>

COUNCIL FOR STRENGTHENING ROMA POSITION: Support to Roma Community Institutionalized

In last two years, Serbia achieved significant progress in terms of strengthening of Roma status, says Božidar Djelić, Deputy Prime Minister for European Integrations, presiding at the Fifth Session of the Council for Strengthening of Roma Status and Implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

Besides adoption of the Strategy for Strengthening of Roma Status and Action plans for its implementation, laws are passed containing inclusive and anti-discriminatory solution, as well.

The Government established the Council for Strengthening of Roma Status and Unit for Implementation of the Strategy for Strengthening of Roma Status is an integral part of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights.

Support for the Roma population is integrated in programmes regarding employment, education, social protection, housing and health. Resources are much better used through EU instruments aimed at improving the Roma community status in the country and in the region.

Djelić said that Roma are not only the largest minority in Europe with 10-15 million people, but also in Serbia, where between 200 and 400 thousand people live.

Contact: Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Phone: 011 311 24 10
www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs

Seventh Guidebook on Local and Foreign Financing Sources

The NGO Civic initiatives prepared seventh Guidebook on local and foreign financing sources for NGO projects, local self-governments, companies, entrepreneurs, individuals, etc.

Civic initiatives prepared the Guidebook in cooperation with the Social Inclusion and Poverty reduction Unit of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Ministry of Finance/Sector for Programmement and Managing EU Funds and Development Aid.

Contact: GI, www.gradjanske.org

NOVI SAD HUMANITARIAN CENTER

Proposals for Improvement of Roma Girl Education

Novi Sad Humanitarian Center (NSHC) and CARE Serbia issued a publication "Proposals for Improvement of Accessibility and Quality of Elementary Education for Roma Girls" within the project "Chances and Choices for Roma Girls".

The project objective is to contribute to accessibility and quality of education of Roma girls through improved support of education institutions, better accessibility of education institutions and increasing level of knowledge about importance of education of Roma girls and Roma community.

Contact: Novi Sad Humanitarian Center, Phone: 021 423 021, www.nshc.org.yu
CARE International North West Balkans, www.carenwb.com

CENTER FOR QUALITY EDUCATION: Club for connecting children with disabilities and children from the general population

The Center for Quality Education in partnership with Phoneenor Foundation opened the Club for children and young people within the Special Primary and Secondary School "Vukašin Marković" in Kragujevac.

The Club represents a new model of communication between children and young people with disabilities and other children and young people from the general population. It should contribute to reduction of negative impact of segregation that these children and young people are exposed to.

The Club should establish social link, increas-

ing children abilities and opportunities for more equal inclusion in the society in the future.

By its organization and contents, the Club represents operationalization of the local action plan for children in Kragujevac.

Upon establishing the Social club within the Special Rehabilitation and Orthopedic Prosthetics Hospital in Belgrade, this is the second joint project of the Phoneenor Foundation and the Center for Quality Education.

Contact: Center for Quality Education
Phone: 011 26 52 228,
Telenor Foundation, www.telenor.co.rs

COMPETITION OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL POLICY: Improvement of the Status of Persons with Disabilities

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy announced a public invitation to social and humanitarian organization to submit project proposals aimed at improving the status of persons with disabilities.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy will support projects improving accessibility of physical environment, improving spatial-technical conditions of work of organizations of persons with disabilities, humanitarian and other programmes aimed at improving the position of persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

Contact: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy,
Phone: 011 363 14 51, www.minrzs.gov.rs

COMPETITION FOR THE PROJECT CENTRIFUGA 2010: Cultural Life Launching

Erste Bank Novi Sad together with the Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF) announces a competition to award grants within the programme Centrifuga 2010.

The objective is to encourage young people aged 15 to 30 to initiate cultural activities in places where Erste Bank has its branch offices, except in cities of Belgrade, Niš and Novi Sad.

The competition will last until 2 June and is intended for youth organizations and non-profit groups while grants will amount to RSD 100,000 - 400,000.

Contact: BCIF, Phone: 011 26 22 511, www.bcif.org

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