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TIM
ZA SOCIJALNO UKLJUČIVANJE I SMANJENJE SIROMAŠTVA
SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION UNIT

41st NEWSLETTER

ON SOCIAL INCLUSION AND POVERTY REDUCTION

INTRODUCTION

More Social Justice for a More Effective Economic Recovery of the European Union – Impetus for the Social Dimension of European Integrations

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Should the European Union still worry only about economic growth and competitiveness, or should it also worry about the social rights of member states tackling their own social issues during the period of recovery from the crisis? Should the EU respond to issues faced daily by its citizens, both in the workplace, as well as their private lives?

The arrival of Jean-Claude Juncker at the head of the European Commission, with his 10 priorities for the mandate 2014-2019, along with the creation of the so-called European Pillar of Social Rights, it would be based on the social foundations of the EU, complementing the EU's ability to guide policies in the direction of a better life for the good operation and equitability of the social market economy, has created a feeling that the EU is more focused on the human and social process if now beginning, after the consultations concluded on the last day of 2016, as well as the resolution adopted in the European Parliament on 19 January 2017, with the participation of social partners, civil society and individual states, as well as representatives of unions, employer associations and non-government organizations included in the process since the very beginning, have reached the final phase. The Pillar, which is not a legal act, but as a result of several months of consultations with all the above stakeholders, were equalities living and work conditions, greater and better opportunities for youth, better jobs and greater social security, targeted at the creation of a more equitable and fair society, which, in the current circumstances of the European policy must be based on social progress. The European Commission proposals on the further institutionalization of the European Pillar of Social Rights is expected in March this year. In this phase, it will represent an obligation for European countries, but other EU states will also be able to join.

The Employment and Social Policy Reform Programme (ESRP), as part of the European Union accession process, is a strategic document of the Government of Serbia, which, in the 2016 reporting period, through multiple rounds of consultations with relevant stakeholders and the adoption of their comments and suggestions. The European Commission also repeatedly commended this document. The activities of the Government of Serbia in the process of the ESRP implementation, monitoring and reporting, from February, the time the European Pillar of Social Rights is being defined, thereby making the ESRP more current than ever.

Serbia has already recognized challenges regarding the labour market, the harmonization of knowledge and skills acquired through education with social and economic needs, poverty, child and social protection. An increase in the employment rate, greater participation of women in self-employment programmes, analyses of Government expenses for youth employment, and an increase in the number of beneficiaries of social cards, are the results of the implementation of the Employment and Social Reform Programme during the preceding period. However, the lengthy list contains measures such as the adoption of the Law on Social Entrepreneurship, improvement of the quality assurance system for deinstitutionalized social services, the adoption of the Law on Social Housing, establishment of the system of cooperation between social work centres and other bodies in order to improve the protection of beneficiaries and improve the accessibility of public facilities, still awaiting implementation.

The Employment and Social Policy Reform Programme brings together the goals and programmes of the Government of Serbia, individual ministries and institutions, with the civil and business sector also capable of contributing to the implementation of the ESRP. The ESRP is a key document, a comprehensive and key platform in Serbia's path towards the EU, regarding the issues it covers. Once this document is operationally harmonized with other strategic documents – particularly the Economic Reform Programme and the National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis – it will provide employment policy trends and be a more than equal participant in the *European Pillar of Social Rights*.

NEWS

Economic Development and Employment

- National Employment Action Plan 2017
- Reflection on the World Employment Social Outlook – Youth 2016 Report
- Support for Social Enterprises through the "Step By Step" Programme
- New ILO Resource Guide on Promoting Decent Work Opportunities for Roma Youth in Central and Eastern Europe Published

Social Welfare and Healthcare

- Regional Plan of Reaction to the Refugee and Migrant Crisis Announced
- EUR 6.4 Million for Municipalities Struck by the Migrant Crisis
- Serbia's Progress on the European List of Healthcare Systems
- Europe Donates Medical Equipment to Improve Women's Health

Education

- History Manuals For Reconciliation And Understanding In The Region
- Belgrade Gains 211 Peer Educators in Time for Human Rights Day
- National Call for Applications for Erasmus+ Projects for 2017 Announced
- Test PISA Exam to be Implemented Soon
- ACES: Call for School Initiatives Contributing to Social Development and Social Inclusion (Deadline: 28/2/2017)

Vulnerable Groups and Human Rights

- "Implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality at the Local Level" Conference Held
- Results of Annual Survey on the Status and Needs of Youth for 2016 Published
- Resolution Adopted on Equal Rights of Spouses over Common Property
- Global Human Rights Report for 2016

EU Integration

- EU Member States Agree to Open Chapter 26
- "Gender Equality in the Process of IPA Programming and Monitoring" – Regional Workshop Held
- Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for Chapter 23 in Q4 2016
- 18 Projects Aiming to Improve the Status of Women Approved
- Call for the Best Report on the Impact of EU Integration Process in Southeast and Southwest Serbia (by: 1/3/2017)

EU News

- The European Commission is Committed to all European Countries Introducing Guaranteed Minimum Wage for Workers
- The European Social Fund has helped almost 10 million Europeans to find a job between 2007 and 2014
- European Commission rewards British city Chester for enhancing accessibility in its city life
- Dementia a Growing Problem in the EU
- Europe is Nearing a Record Low Motherhood Rate

ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIAL INCLUSION UNIT

Public Call for Towns and Municipalities to Apply for the Prizes for Contributions to the Development of All Forms of Accessibility within their Territory in 2016

The Ombudsman, in cooperation with the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, is issuing a public call for awarding prizes to towns, municipalities and their representatives, for their contribution to the improvement of, and to the development of all forms of accessibility within their territory, and/or their environment in 2016.

Thus, in addition to awarding the above prize, the Ombudsman wishes to promote good practice examples in the field of accessibility at the local level, as well as to achieve better horizontal cooperation among towns and municipalities in the Republic of Serbia, in order to establish the situation in the field of accessibility, to exchange good practice examples, to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities and services to persons with disabilities and mobility impairments, not only those with a wheelchair, but, as well as to formulate recommendations and plans for improvements within their competence.

The deadline for applications is 28 February 2017. More information and the application form can be found at www.ombudsman.rs

"Mapping of Social Protection Services under the Competence of Local Self-Governments in the Republic of Serbia" Survey Published

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia initiated the implementation of the survey "Mapping of Social Protection Services under the Competence of Local Self-Government Units in the Republic of Serbia", implemented with the support of the Republic Institute for Social Protection, and the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA), and the Swedish Fund, to contribute to improving the capacities of local self-government units in this field.

The mapping of social protection services was implemented across 145 local self-government units. All local self-government units, i.e. local service providers, participated in the survey, which was carried out in 2015. Based on the methodology used during the survey implemented in 2012, data was collected on the number of beneficiaries of social services in local self-government units, their distribution, availability, efficiency and quality.

"Presentations for the European Social Fund: Analysis of Local Self-Government Unit Capacities" Analysis Published

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in cooperation with the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA), and the Swedish Fund, implemented "Preparations for the European Social Fund: Analysis of Local Self-Government Unit Capacities". The analysis aimed to explore the issues of successful use of European Union funds and Swedish funds, and to improve the capacities of local self-government units in the field of social inclusion and poverty. The Swedish Fund, to contribute to improving the capacities of local self-government units in this field.

The results of the survey have shown that the local level of authorities in Serbia has certain administrative capacities and experiences in the preparation and implementation of development projects financed from European Union funds. However, the analysis also indicated the necessity for coordinated support to local self-government units in the preparation and implementation of development projects, the improvement of the capacities of local self-governments for managing European Union funds in a more efficient and transparent use at the local level, once Serbia becomes a European Union member state.

Training Held on Gender Sensitive and Affirmative Media Representation of Vulnerable Groups

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia organized a training on 6 and 8 December 2016 in Belgrade on gender sensitive and affirmative media representation of vulnerable groups. The training was led by journalists Antonia Riha and Tamara Skrozza, with journalists from ten cities participating. The workshop was attended by electronic media.

This encounter provided for a dialogue on the important role of media in improving gender equality and promoting the rights of vulnerable groups, and the importance of reporting on these topics in a manner in accordance with the basic ethical principles as defined in the Code of Journalists of Serbia. The training also provided for dialogue between journalists and representatives of citizens' associations working with and for certain vulnerable groups.

The training inspired journalists to seek out new subjects, and their work during the coming period will contribute to improving gender equality and the social inclusion of vulnerable groups. It was implemented as one of the activities to contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan for Chapter 23 and to the promotion of relevant strategic documents of the Republic of Serbia in the domain of fundamental rights of citizens.

OPEN CALLS

- Caritas Serbia: Call for Project Proposals for Civil Society Organizations (Deadline: 20/2/2017)
- RAS: Call for the Selection of Best Project Ideas for Regional Development (Deadline: 31/3/2017)
- Volunteering Challenge: Open Call for Volunteer Activities (Deadline: 15/10/2017)

You may follow the news on open calls regularly at: socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/tenders

READ MORE...

- The Law on Housing and Building Maintenance has been Adopted
- The Results of the "Citizens' Attitudes on Discrimination in Serbia" Survey Presented
- Press Presented Reports on Statelessness, Early, and Forced Marriages
- The Tenth Jubilee VIRTUS Philanthropy Award Held
- Serbia is the First Country in the Region with the National Corporate Social Responsibility Index
- The Winners of the "Brave Steps Forward in New Cultural Practices" Competition Announced
- "Speak out – Fight against Violence" Round-Table Held
- The Results of the "Roma Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Perspectives" Survey Presented
- Corporate Volunteering Awards Presented
- KOMS: The Council for Equality and Inclusive Society Established

You may follow the news on social inclusion and poverty reduction regularly at:
socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/

SOCIAL INCLUSION BLOG

NEOSTART: He Is Our Child, Too

Two weeks ago the NEOSTART hotline received a call from the employees of the Higher Court in Belgrade. They were helping a young man who left the juvenile detention centre in Kruševac that day. At that moment, he had nowhere to sleep, nowhere to eat a meal, no ID card, and no clear idea what to do now. [...]

As a child, he lived in the street. However, since he learned to read and write at the age of four, he was very interesting for people, where he would approach and easily win their affection. Therefore, he always managed to find something to eat, somewhere to sleep, and spent most of his time in games shops. This is where he learned some street swindles, and

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Newsletter on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction

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