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2008 AWARDS FOR THE BEST JOURNALISTS' FEATURE REPORTS ON SERBIA'S INTEGRATION WITH EU

The European Integration Office of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the Delegation of the European Commission to the Republic of Serbia, the Embassy of France and Erste Bank have awarded authors in five categories for the best media feature reports on the European integration process of our country, published between 1 January and 1 November 2008:

1. Nenad Vulovic, FONET Agency journalist for the **best newspaper story (daily and periodic press, agencies)**
2. Jelena Jevremovic, a journalist, with respect to the text published in Glas javnosti, for the **best newspaper story (daily and periodic press, agencies)**
3. Aristeja Stakic, Radio RTV Panonija journalist, for the **best feature report in the local media (TV, radio, press)**
4. Boban Trajkovic, Mreza Production Group journalist, for the **best television feature story (TV, independent productions, agencies), and**
5. Goran Janicevic, Mreza Production Group journalist, for the **best feature report on small and medium-sized enterprises within the European integration context.**

The awarded journalists will participate in a study visit to Brussels and Paris to take place between 7 and 13 December 2008, where they will have an opportunity to meet with the European Commission representatives responsible for the enlargement, outreach and communication, representatives of the French administration, as well as their peers to establish and improve mutual professional co-operation.

The award for a radio feature report was not given because there were no programmes which would fully meet the criteria of the competition. The jury, therefore, decided to award two authors in the category of the best newspaper story.

Members of the jury included: Ljubica Gojic, RTV B92, Aleksandar Djordjevic, Delegation of the European Commission, Mirjana Sakic, ERSTE Bank, Jelena Mandic, Embassy of France, and Ivana Djuric, European Integration Office.

The competition was financially supported by the Delegation of the European Commission, the Embassy of France, and the ERSTE Bank.

The awards will be officially delivered at the annual reception of the European Integration Office on 5 December 2008.

JURY'S PRIZE JUSTIFICATION

There were 19 (nineteen) of application from 14 (fourteen) of individual media outlets.

The majority were from either television stations or video productions which have TV stations as their clients.

However, what is somewhat of a disappointment is that unlike last year, there were less applicants from media operating outside Belgrade and from media which are not with national coverage or circulation. This is somewhat of a surprise to us, having in mind that last year the majority of prizes went to local media.

Considering this year's awards, the general impression is that coverage of European integration is quite specialised and that European integration issues are still not topics which enter into mainstream news, as parts of reports on a broad range of issues. The professional approach in the reports or feature stories that were submitted for this competition was more to show the viewers and readers some of the European practices and examples in various segments of life, rather than to show what has already been done to bring European standards into existing practices in Serbia. There are numerous examples of this and we hope that in the competitions that will be continued in the years ahead this approach will start to dominate.

This year's winner in the category for written press and agencies is Mr NENAD VULOVIC from FONET NEWS AGENCY. He did a very lively and picturesque reportage from a travelling tour of Europe organised by the Austrian embassy and the European Movement for a group of Serbia students. In his writing Vulovic in an explicit way explains and shows the importance of free movement and exposure to other cultures for an average citizen of Serbia, specially the young who regard this freedom as one of their ultimate wishes.

Due to the lack of adequate submission in the radio category, another prize was awarded for a written piece, to JELENA JEVREMOVIC from GLAS JAVNOSTI daily. Similarly to her awarded report from last year, Jelena again concentrated on a very life-meaning and emotional issue which has rarely caught the eye of the media - significant assistance the Serbian community in Kosovo is receiving from the European Union in order to improve its economic potential, but also to support the population's intention to stay in their homes.

Travelling around Europe was the center piece of another report, awarded for the best report in a local media outlet. ARISTEA STAKIC from RTV PANONIJA accompanied a group of Serbian students who travelled by rail around Europe. Her fine contrasts of Serbia and European countries, specially the state of the railways in a subtle way showed why Serbia should build its closer relations with its neighbours and European countries in a broader sense.

BOBAN TRAJKOVIC from PRODUCTION GROUP MREZA is also a returnee among the prize winners. In his feature story Boban covered agriculture and animal breeding as one of the leading economic topics. Introduction of European standards in animal registration and care which collides with still unstructured and not fully reformed legislative system is put into a context of the future relations and export opportunities that Serbia has with the European Union, but cannot utilise to the full extent.

GORAN JANICIJEVIC, also from PRODUCTION GROUP MREZA, takes this year's newly introduced prize for best report about medium and small enterprise development. The introduction of innovative technology into production of our everyday household appliances and the opportunities this opens for a small producer to enter the huge European market in a very graphic way shows that the essence of European integration is not the political sphere, but in things that bring better quality of life.