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# EU CITIZENSHIP FIRST **20** YEARS



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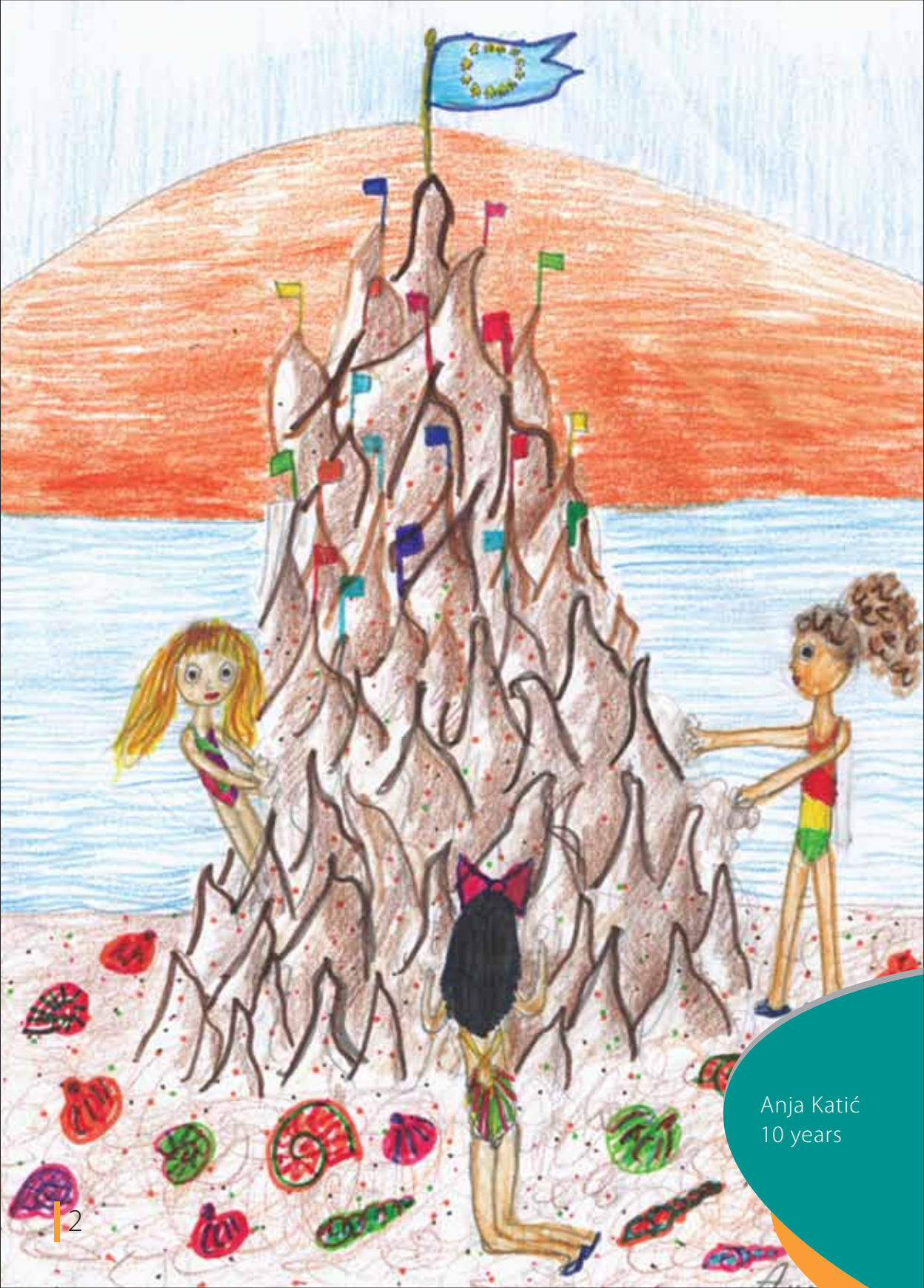
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The European Union was awarded Nobel Peace Prize for the year of 2012 for "over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe".

Pages 2, 6, 12, 18, 22, 28, 32 and 38 are illustrated with drawings made by Belgrade primary school pupils who participated in the European contest "What Does Peace in Europe Mean to You", launched on the occasion of the Nobel Peace Prize award given to the European Union.





## The European Year of Citizens 2013

The European Year of Citizens 2013 will focus on rights that every EU citizen has. All 503 million Europeans benefit daily from these rights – as does the European economy. The European Year will encourage dialogue at all levels of government, civil society and business, to explore where the citizens want the EU to be by 2020 – in terms of rights, policies and governance.

### Why?

The rights of EU citizens are enshrined in the Treaty on European Union and complement national rights. If people know about these rights and use them, they would benefit from them as an individual. The EU, as a whole, feels this benefit both economically and in terms of citizen support for the EU project. The 2010 EU Citizenship Report concluded that EU citizens are not benefiting fully from their rights because they are not aware of them – in particular their right to move and reside freely in other EU countries. In the same year, the European Parliament called on the European Commission to make 2013 the European Year of Citizenship. MEPs wanted to boost the debate on EU citizenship and inform EU citizens of their rights. Furthermore, new public opinion polls show further drop in citizens' level of knowledge on their own rights derived from EU citizenship: according to Eurobarometer 77 (2012), as much as 54% of citizens said that they are not informed about their rights, while they were 48% in 2010.



Anja Katić  
10 years

European Year of Citizens 2013  
[www.europa.eu/citizens-2013](http://www.europa.eu/citizens-2013)



### When?

The European Year of Citizens 2013 takes place at an important time:

**One year before the 2014 European Parliament elections.** The European Year complements efforts by EU institutions and countries to highlight voting rights and encourage people to vote.

**On the 20th birthday of EU citizenship.** The concept was launched by the Maastricht Treaty. The European Year of Citizens and the EU Citizenship Report 2013 will demonstrate, with concrete examples, which benefits EU citizenship offers citizens – as private individuals, consumers, residents, students, workers or political actors.

**During an economic downturn.** Commission president José Manuel Barroso stated in his 2009 Political Guidelines: 'Europe's raison d'être is to empower Europeans'. In times of crisis, the need to empower European citizens and to strengthen the citizen dimension is more important than ever.

It is vital that EU citizens can make informed choices on their personal lives, the communities in which they live and democratic life at all levels.

*"We need the direct involvement of citizens in building a stronger and more political Union. That is why 2013 is the European Year of Citizens – a year dedicated to you and your rights as Europeans. Union citizenship is more than a concept. It is a practical reality that brings tangible benefits to citizens. The European Commission wants to help people understand how they can directly benefit from their rights and listen to their views about where Europe is headed. European citizens must be able to voice their concerns and prepare the ground for future European elections. It's time we all took ownership of our common future",* said Vice-President **Viviane Reding**, EU Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Commissioner.

Vice-President Viviane Reding,  
EU Justice, Fundamental Rights and  
Citizenship Commissioner





## ABC of EU Citizenship From Maastricht to Lisbon

Socrates once said, *'I am not an Athenian or a Greek, but a citizen of the world!* The concept of EU citizenship does not enable the phrase *'I am a citizen of the EU'* because citizenship involves a legal link between individuals and a territorial political entity, but to the EU citizens it gives today a set of special rights which lie at the heart of their everyday lives. The EU citizenship is destined to be the fundamental status of Member States' nationals: every national of one of the EU's 27 member countries (as of July 2013, 28 with Croatia as a new member) is automatically citizen of the European Union. The EU citizenship does not replace national citizenship, but complements it; although rights it confers are reserved for Member States citizens' only, it is an attractive perspective for all candidate countries, including Serbia and other Western Balkans countries. Once Serbia becomes the EU member, its citizens will fully enjoy the same rights without renouncing national citizenship.

**The Status of EU Citizen** was created by the Treaty on European Union or popularly known Maastricht Treaty that has entered into force on November 1st 1993. Prior to it, free movement in European Economic Communities was reserved for economically active persons. The Amsterdam Treaty (1997) and the Treaty of Lisbon (2007) state unequivocally that citizenship of the EU 'shall complement and not replace national citizenship'. The Court of Justice stated on several occasions that EU citizenship is destined to be the fundamental status of Member States' nationals, enabling those who find themselves in the same situation to enjoy within the scope of the Treaty the



Ana  
Vujadinović  
11 years



same treatment in law irrespective of their nationality. In addition, the Court has ruled that citizens are entitled to reside in another Member State purely as citizens of the Union, thus recognizing EU citizenship as a source of free movement rights. The rights given by EU citizenship are spelled out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights (into force since 2009, [http://europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_en.pdf](http://europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf)) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (into force since 2008, amended Rome Treaty). The citizens' perspective is reaffirmed in the new definition of members of the European Parliament as "representatives of the Union's citizens" (Article 14(2) TFEU) and not simply as "representatives of the peoples of the States brought together in the Community" (Article 189 of the Treaty establishing the European Community).

**EU citizenship rights are firmly anchored in primary EU law and substantially developed in secondary law.** Those who are taking advantage of the European project by extending aspects of their life beyond national borders, through travel, study, work, marriage, retirement, buying or inheriting property, voting, or just shopping online from companies established in other Member States should fully enjoy their rights under the Treaties.

**1. The right to move and reside freely within the EU and not to be discriminated against on grounds of nationality:** EU citizens have the right to travel throughout the 27 EU countries and set up home in any of them. However, some conditions apply. For example, when entering another EU country, an EU citizen may be asked to show identification. To live in another EU country for more than three months, he/she must meet certain conditions depending on whether is working, studying, etc.

EU citizens can acquire the right to **permanent residence** in another EU country after legally residing there for a continuous period of five years.

**2. The right to vote and stand as a candidate in elections:** every EU citizen has the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in elections for the European Parliament or in municipal elections in whichever EU country he/she lives, **under the same conditions as nationals.** Under new EU rules expected to be adopted during 2013, the procedure for EU citizens living in another country than their own to present themselves at the elections will be simplified.

**3. The right to petition:** the right to petition allows EU citizens to raise concerns or complaints with the European Parliament. They can ask the Parliament to address either a personal need or grievance, or a matter of public interest. The subject must fall within the EU's sphere of activity, and must directly concern a citizen who is filing a complaint. (see page 24)

**4. The right to complain to the Ombudsman:** for grievances concerning mismanagement by an EU institution or body, a complaint could be addressed to the Ombudsman. EU citizens can also contact EU institutions and advisory bodies directly, and they are entitled to receive a reply in any of the EU's official languages.

**5. The right to consular protection:** when in a non-EU country and in need of help, EU citizens are entitled to consular protection from the embassy or consulate of any other EU country. Assistance is provided in situations including death, accident or illness, arrest or detention, violent crime and repatriation.

**6. The right to ask the Commission to propose new legislation:** as of 2011, EU citizens have an additional right: the European Citizens' Initiative enables them to ask the European Commission to

*Tell us what you think!*

**YOUR RIGHTS  
YOUR FUTURE  
as an EU CITIZEN**



prepare a proposal for a legal act. The petition must be signed by at least one million citizens from at least one quarter of EU countries.

## CROSS-BORDER RIGHTS

### - Accessing social security

When moving within the Union, an EU citizen only pays social security contributions in one country at a time, even if s/he is working in more than one and generally will also receive social security benefits exclusively from this country. If s/he receives **unemployment benefit** from the country where became unemployed, going abroad will not affect his/her (or family's) rights such as health insurance, family allowance, pension rights, etc. **If s/he is not receiving any unemployment benefits** and want to look for work in another EU country, s/he will be entitled to social security cover (health insurance, family allowance, etc. ...) in his/her country of residence. Even if s/he does not have sufficient resources to support him/her and a family, a citizen cannot be forced to leave a new country as long as s/he can prove that is still looking for a job and have a good chance of finding one. As a migrant **workers** — employed or self-employed — EU citizens with dependents are covered by the host country's social security system. EU countries remain free to determine what benefits s/he is entitled to under their own laws, as well as the conditions to be entitled to benefits. If s/he has worked in several EU countries, then s/he may have accumulated **pension rights in each of them**. When the time comes for to claim a pension, s/he will have to **apply** in the country of living or in a country where s/he last worked.

### - Getting healthcare

**Under EU law, an EU citizen can seek medical treatment in another EU country and may be entitled to have the costs reimbursed by his/her national health insurer.** Before travelling to another EU country for a short stay - whether on holiday, a business trip or studies – s/he should get a European Health Insurance Card that enables getting **health**

**care** during the trip. This card proves entitlement to health care – it is a valid proof that s/he is insured in an EU country. A number of factors are making health policies and health systems across the EU **increasingly interconnected**. New legislation clears up years of legal uncertainty concerning the health policies in the EU – the 2011 directive clarifies the rules on access to healthcare in another EU country, including reimbursement. Still, **social security** systems, including **health insurance**, are different from one country to another.

### - Studying

Every EU national has the right to study in any other EU country under the same conditions as nationals: s/he cannot be required to pay higher course fees and is entitled to the same grants to cover course fees as nationals of the country. However, there is no automatic EU-wide recognition of academic diplomas. Individual governments of EU countries remain responsible for their education systems and are free to apply their own rules, including whether or not to recognise academic qualifications obtained elsewhere. Students have a chance to go on an Erasmus exchange abroad as part of studies, or complete a traineeship in a company.

### - Passenger rights

In case of problems with international rail travel or flights departing from the EU or arriving in the EU with an EU carrier from a non-EU country, an EU citizen may be entitled to a refund and possibly also compensation. European Commission has developed a service ([ec.europa.eu/transport/passenger-rights/en/index.html](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passenger-rights/en/index.html)), available on mobile phones also, that answers all possible questions.

- *Other cross-border rights for EU nationals tackle online shopping, cheaper mobile phone calls and consumer right to safe, secure and affordable energies.*





Milica  
Milosavljević  
12 years

## Active Citizenship

“Active citizenship is the glue that keeps society together. Democracy does not function properly without it, because effective democracy is more than just placing a mark on a voting slip... The European Economic and Social Committee’s mission is rooted in the principle of participative democracy, operating in addition to representative democracy, on the basis of a continuous dialogue between civil society and decision-makers. By definition, participative democracy requires people to get involved, to play an active role ... in their workplace, perhaps, or by taking part in a political organisation or supporting a good cause. The area of activity does not matter. It is the commitment to the welfare of society that counts”. – **European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) president Staffan Nilsson, 2012.** As the consultative body of the EU, the EESC defines itself as a “bridge between Europe and organised civil society” and advocates a more participatory model of society.

**TOGETHER FOR A BETTER LIFE.** The joint effort of the NGO sector and all levels of authorities have brought fruits of success: beginning of February 2013, two events initiated and designed by citizens demonstrated very clearly that their voice had been heard in the EU institutions.

### - Civil Case in Favour of 80 million EU citizens

Since 1996, the European Disability Forum, an independent umbrella NGO, represents the interests of 80 million people with disabilities. The main goal of this large network of civic organisations is to secure that **right of persons with disability** is to be fully involved in European policy-making process.

The work of EDF covers **all fields of European Union competence and includes**



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process of monitoring all EU initiatives and proposing new legislation to advance disabled people's rights. In this framework, EDF advocates for adoption of *European Accessibility Act* and *European Mobility Card*, insisting that those two documents will enable full accessibility which is an essential step for enabling the Freedom of movement. As a result of their constant activity, **on 5 February 2013 the discriminatory behaviour towards three disabled passengers of the British low-cost airline Easy Jet was condemned and fined by the Paris Court of Appeal** (the three wheelchair-bound passengers were refused to board the company's planes between November 2008 and January 2009). This is one of the first times that a civil case has been raised referring to an EU regulation (concerning the rights of disabled people and people with reduced mobility when traveling by air) and prevailed in court.

#### -Right2Water

Only week later, for the first time, a sufficient number of signatures is gathered to finalise the first **European Citizens' Initiative** procedure, as requested by the EU regulation, (see page 23). Organisers of the Right2Water initiative have announced that they have collected more than one million signatures: it could be the first European Citizens' Initiative to succeed in collecting the necessary number of statements of support. Organisers of the initiative believe that *'water is a public good, not a commodity'. They invite the European Commission to 'propose legislation implementing the human right to water and sanitation as recognised by the United Nations, and promoting the provision of water and sanitation as essential public services for all'. 'The goal of European Citizens' Initiatives is to spark pan-European debates on issues that concern citizens across Europe, and get those issues onto the EU agenda. Right2Water has certainly achieved that,'* Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič said.

## Active Citizenship Through EU Programmes

The EU encourages all citizens and organisations to play an active role in the development of the Union. **Projects linked to the themes of the European Year may be eligible for funding support from a variety of EU programmes and initiatives. As a candidate country, Serbia has access to most of them.**

- The **Europe for Citizens** 2007-2013 programme, with its EUR 215 million budget, funds initiatives in areas such as participation and democracy at EU level, intercultural dialogue, employment, social cohesion and sustainable development, and the societal impact of EU policies. Projects funded under the programme are run by local authorities, NGOs, think tanks, trade unions, universities or others. Projects bring people together to talk about the EU integration, policies and values, enhance mutual understanding between them, boost their awareness of the societal impact of EU policies and encourage them to participate in shaping the future of the EU. (see pp 29-31).

- **The Fundamental Rights and Citizenship** specific programme, for the period 2007-2013 and with EUR 93,8 million budget is designed to contribute to the **strengthening of the area of Freedom, Security and Justice**. The main aim of the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship specific programme is to ensure that EU citizens are provided with the rights they are afforded under the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and allow for an open dialogue regarding these rights. **The focus of the programme is protection of the rights of the child; combating racism, xenophobia**



and anti-Semitism; the fight against homophobia; active participation in the democratic life of the Union; data protection and privacy rights; training and networking between legal professions and legal practitioners. The programme is open for Western Balkan countries, including Serbia.

- **Youth in Action** programme. The aims of the programme are very much in accordance with those of the European Year of Citizens: to inspire a sense of active European citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union's future. Through a variety of actions like Youth Exchanges, European Voluntary Service, Mobility of young workers, networking of those active in youth organisations, the Youth in Action Programme contributes significantly to civic activism. The programme is open for Serbia and 2012 was its most successful year, with 60 international youth projects worth more than EUR one million.

In Serbia there are two officially accredited Contact Points, NGO Group "Let's..." (Grupa "Hajde da...") from Belgrade and NGO Educational Centre Krusevac. If you have some questions regarding the activities of Youth in Action Programme in Serbia you can get in touch with Contact Points via their e mails: [hajdeda@mladiukciji.rs](mailto:hajdeda@mladiukciji.rs) and [edukativnicentar@mladiukciji.rs](mailto:edukativnicentar@mladiukciji.rs).

- Other programmes through which projects linked to the European Year of Citizens themes could be eligible for funding are **Lifelong Learning, Erasmus, MEDIA, Science in Society 2013**. All of those programmes are open for Serbia.

Under the **IPA funds** available for Serbia, for the period 2011-2013 a budget of EUR 7,5 million has been allocated for civil society organisations. EU's support to civil society aims at strengthening its capacities and professionalism so they can become more influential in an open dialogue with the government. In addition, IPA funds allocated for other sectors like support to social development through better inclusion of minority groups, culture, and environment have been used by civil society organisations also.







Jana  
Vučković  
13 years

## Another Step Forward to EU

Six months after being granted candidate status, Serbia has joined one of the EU big programmes – ‘Europe for Citizens’ that enables Serbian nongovernmental and civic organisations to be beneficiaries of all four programme components (see page 30). Through this programme, citizens have the opportunity to be involved in transnational exchanges and cooperation activities, contributing to developing a sense of belonging to common European ideals and encouraging the process of European integration. Citizen associations, local self-government and regional government units as well as faculties and trade unions are also eligible to participate in this programme.

On November 9, 2012 **Gregory Paulger**, Director General of the EC's Directorate-General for Communication and **Ivana Cirkovic**, Director of Office for cooperation with Civil Society of the Government of the Republic of Serbia signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the participation of the Republic of Serbia in the ‘Europe for Citizens’ programme 2007-2013.

The signature allows for full participation of Serbian organisations in the programme. It gives an opportunity to initiate civil society projects, build partnerships between towns, exchange experiences between memorial institutions, museums and



Education and Culture DG

‘Europe for Citizens’ Programme

[eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php)



educational institutions. Serbia with its vibrant civil society will significantly benefit from its participation in the Europe for Citizens programme. In similar fashion the programme will be enhanced by the opportunities for partnerships it will offer to the EU based organisations, local and municipal authorities in Serbia and other countries of Western Balkans. (source: European Commission)

#### National Authority (Contact point) for the Europe for citizens Programme:

Government of the Republic of Serbia  
Office for Cooperation with Civil Society  
Blvd Mihaila Pupina 2, 11000 Belgrade  
Phone: +381 11 3130968  
E mail: europeforcitizens@civilnodrustvo.gov.rs

Director General of the EC's Directorate-General for Communication **Gregory Paulger** and **Ivana Cirkovic**, Director of Office for cooperation with Civil Society of the Government of the Republic of Serbia: Signing ceremony in Brussels



## 2013 - Towards Participative Democracy

The European Commission is working with a number of strategic **partners** to make the European Year a success, and to help reach citizens from all walks of life and at local, regional and national level. In addition to support from its various departments and Representations in EU countries, the Commission is relying on strong support from other EU institutions and external partners, among others:

- **The European Year of Citizens Alliance** (<http://ey2013-alliance.eu/>), an alliance that represents some 50 civil society organisations from all over Europe that advocate bigger participation of citizens into political life of the EU. In its manifesto for the European Year of Citizens, the Alliance said: *'For us, active citizenship means primarily active involvement of citizens as participation in the life of their communities, and thus in democracy, in terms of activity and decision-making. Active Citizenship is more than giving to charity, voting at elections or volunteering. Definitions of participation that focus on political participation or a narrow understanding of volunteering fail to capture the diversity of people's engagement across Europe.'* **The Alliance insists that it is necessary, in order to give "European citizenship its full meaning and scope, and to help downsize the gap between citizens and the EU institutions to take account of the new prospects opened up by Article 11 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) for citizens' participation in the democratic life of the European Union".** Article 11 of TEU stipulates that institutions shall give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action, and introduces Citizens' Initiative.

Although no Serbian civic association is yet a member of the Alliance individually, many of them participate in the Alliance through umbrella organisations that are official EYCA members: European Movement in Serbia, Civic Initiatives, Association Sport for All Serbia, Child Rights Center, etc.





## Active Citizenship Through EU Institutions

**1. European Commission:** Apart from managing programmes that concern citizens activism and promoting European identity through regular activities of Directorate-Generals, since 2011 the European Commission ([ec.europa.eu/](http://ec.europa.eu/)) is indirectly responsible for achieving the same goals through Citizens' Initiative. European citizens' initiative is an **invitation to the European Commission to propose legislation** on matters where the EU has competence to legislate. A citizens' initiative has to be backed by at least one million EU citizens, coming from **at least 7 out of the 27 member states**. A minimum number of signatories is required in each of those 7 member states. A citizens' initiative is possible in **any field where the Commission has the power to propose legislation**, for example environment, agriculture, transport or public health. In order to launch a citizens' initiative, citizens must form a "**citizens' committee**" composed of at least 7 EU citizens being resident in at least 7 different member states. The members of the citizens' committee must be **EU citizens old enough to vote** in the European Parliament elections (18 except in Austria, where the voting age is 16). The citizens' committee must register its initiative on this website before starting to collect statements of support from citizens. Once the registration is confirmed, organisers have **one year to collect** signatures.



Marija  
Milosavljević  
10 years



**2. European Parliament.** EU citizens can address the European Parliament ([europarl.europa.eu/](http://europarl.europa.eu/)) by sending a petition by post or online. Petitions to the European Parliament can be submitted by citizens of the Union as well by natural or legal persons residing or having their registered office in an EU member state, either individually or in association with other citizens or persons and must concern matters which come within the Union's fields of activity and which affects him/her directly. A petition may take the form of a complaint or a request and may relate to issues of public or private interest. Within the Parliament, the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) is in charge of most of the legislation and democratic oversight for policies linked to the transformation of the European Union in the area of freedom, security and justice. These policies are intertwined with the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in EU territory and with the strengthening of European Citizenship.

Berlaymont,  
European Commission building,  
Brussels



**3. Council.** In 2009, the Council ([european-council.europa.eu/](http://european-council.europa.eu/)) has adopted the **Stockholm programme that aims** to deepen EU citizenship. The Stockholm Programme provides a roadmap focusing on the interests and needs of citizens in the area of justice, freedom and security for the period 2010-2014. One of its priorities, **Europe of rights**, aims to ensure that European citizenship confers on EU nationals the fundamental rights and freedoms set out in the EU Charter and in the European Convention on Human Rights. The main points of the programme are:

- **Europe based on fundamental rights:** The Union will accede to the European Convention on Human Rights. This will reinforce the obligation of the Union to ensure that in all its areas of activity, fundamental rights and freedoms are actively promoted.
- **Full exercise of the right to free movement** (enlargement of the Schengen area provided all the conditions are met by applicant country).
- **Living together in an area that respects diversity and protects the most vulnerable** (i.e. special measures for protection of children who are victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking as well as for vulnerable groups and victims of terrorism).
- **Rights of the individual in criminal proceedings** – as one of fundamental value of the Union, these procedural rights will be strengthened.
- **Protecting citizen rights in the information society**
- **Participation in the democratic life of the Union: in the spirit of enhancement the citizens' participation, a possibility of creating a common election day for elections to the European Parliament has been studied.**





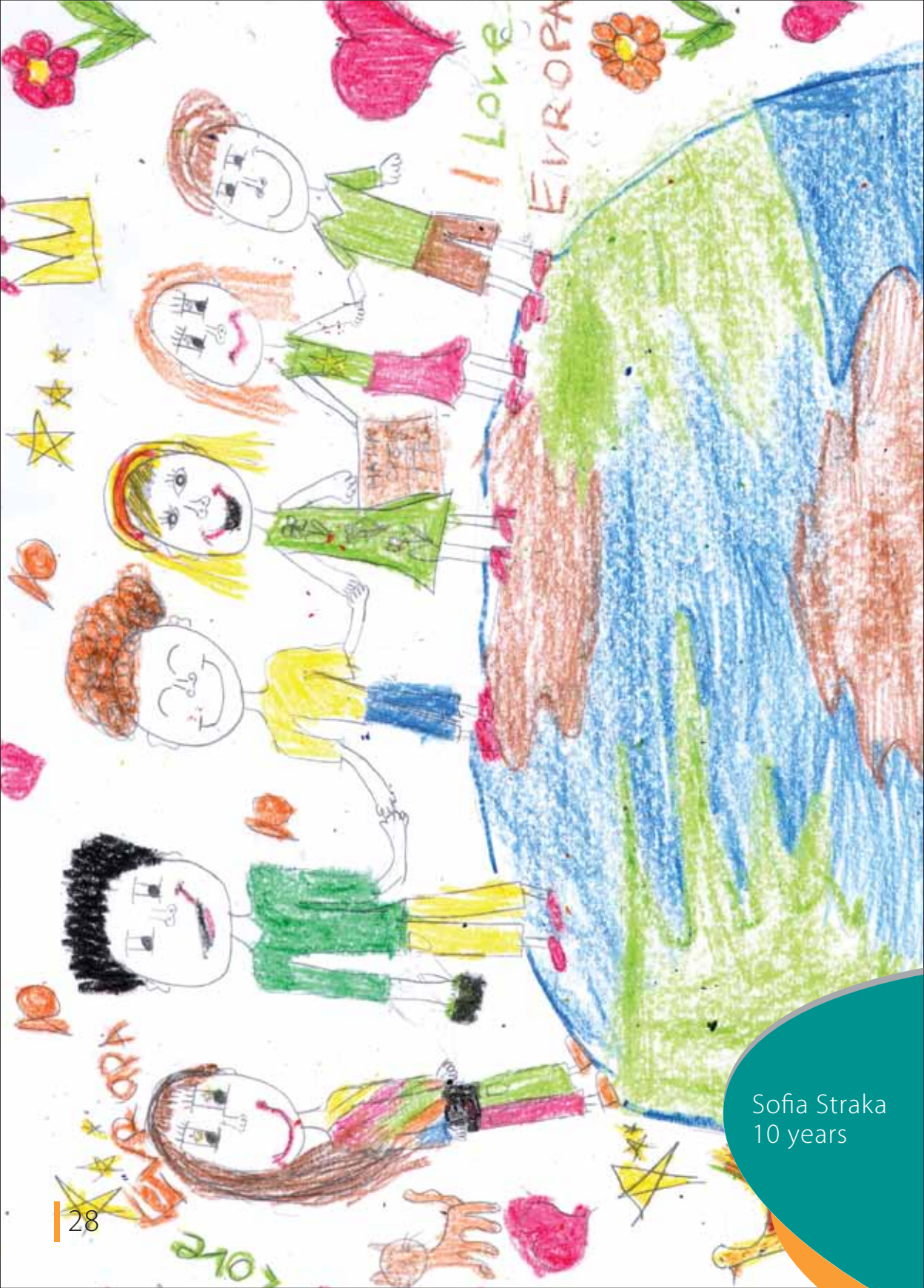
**4. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)** is a consultative body that gives representatives of Europe's socio-occupational interest groups, and others, a formal platform to express their points of views on EU issues. Its opinions are forwarded to the larger institutions - the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament. It thus has a key role to play in the Union's decision-making process. On 6 March – **Civil Society Day** – the EESC ([eesc.europa.eu/](http://eesc.europa.eu/)) is playing host to committed civil society players from all over Europe. This year, the Civil Society Day addressed key issues of active and participatory citizenship against the backdrop of a major financial, economic and social crisis that is in essence undermining democratic processes and challenging the very legitimacy of institutions and public policy at both national and European level. It is a major EESC initiative, bringing together key players in European and national civil society organisations, business leaders and entrepreneurs, academics, EU policy and decision-makers and interested media. 2013's motto is "As European as we can get! Bringing economy, solidarity and democracy together".

**5. Committee of Regions.** The Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional & External Affairs (CIVEX) is responsible for coordinating the Committee of the Regions ([cor.europa.eu/](http://cor.europa.eu/)) work on issues which include justice and home affairs, fundamental rights and freedoms, smart regulation and the reduction of administrative burdens, citizenship and broader institutional issues such as governance and devolution. The Commission also intensively deals with the Union's external dimension, focusing on neighbourhood and enlargement countries, and decentralised cooperation for development.

**6. Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)** is one of the EU's specialised agencies. These agencies are set up to provide expert advice to the institutions of the EU and the Member States on a range of issues. FRA ([fra.europa.eu/](http://fra.europa.eu/)) helps to ensure that the fundamental rights of people living in the EU are protected. Fundamental rights set out minimum standards to ensure that a person is treated with dignity. Whether this is the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of the age, disability or ethnic background, the right to the protection of personal data, or the right to get access to justice, these rights should all be promoted and protected. Through the collection and analysis of data in the EU, the FRA assists EU institutions and EU Member States in understanding and tackling challenges to safeguard the fundamental rights of everyone in the EU. Working in partnership with the EU institutions, its Member States and other organisations at the international, European and national levels, the FRA plays an important role in helping to make fundamental rights a reality for everyone living in the EU.

**7. European Court of Justice** ([curia.europa.eu/](http://curia.europa.eu/)) interprets EU law to make sure it is applied in the same way in all EU countries. It also settles legal disputes between EU governments and EU institutions. Individuals, companies or organisations can also bring cases before the Court if they feel their rights have been infringed by an EU institution.





Sofia Straka  
10 years

## Europe for Citizens Programme from A to Z

The European Union is made of its citizens and for its citizens! With this in mind, the Europe for Citizens Programme 2007-2013 is funding projects and activities aimed at getting the EU's inhabitants to play a greater part in the development of the EU. By funding schemes and activities in which citizens can participate, the programme is promoting Europe's shared history and values, and fostering a sense of ownership for how the EU develops. The Europe for citizens programme aims to give the citizen a key role in the development of the European Union.

Budget envisaged for the period of duration the programme is EUR 215 million; projects funded under the programme are run by local authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), think tanks, trade unions, universities or others. Projects bring people together to talk about the EU integration, policies and values, enhance mutual understanding between them, boost their awareness of the societal impact of EU policies and encourage them to participate in shaping the future of the EU.

Implementation of the programme is held through several EU institutions and bodies: the European Commission is responsible for the management of the programme, the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency is responsible for its implementation and Member States and other participating countries through the "Programme Committee" have consultative role.





Europe for Citizens focuses on four key action areas:

**Action 1: Active citizens for Europe:** This action aims to bring people from different parts of Europe together in order to promote mutual understanding, a sense of ownership of the European Union and the emergence of a European identity to complement local and regional ones. It funds and supports town twinning, participatory citizens' projects as well as innovative actions and support measures which aim to help organisations to develop high-quality activities. Amongst them, town-twinning has long been an important mechanism for developing active European citizenship and a sense of shared identity.

**Action 2: Active civil society for Europe:** Civil society is a major component of European society. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), grass-root groups, think tanks, charities, associations and unions play a key part in public life. Such a role needs developing at the EU level, and this is precisely what 'Active civil society in Europe' seeks to do: to help and encourage civil society organisations to work together at European level and to foster action, debate and reflection in relation to European citizenship and democracy, shared values, common history and culture.

**Action 3: Together for Europe:** Although most Europeans consider EU issues to be quite complex and distant, they believe in the Union's democratic credentials. They would also like to see the Union becoming a more integral part of their national political landscapes. Nevertheless, millions of Europeans are held back from playing a more active role at EU level through a lack of knowledge: nearly four-fifths of citizens have admitted that they do not understand the structure of the EU and are unsure to whom they could turn with an issue or concern. In order to help address these and other citizen concerns, and to bring citizens closer to the Union, the Commission is trying to provide better and more accessible information on Europe, by organising high-visibility events, studies, surveys and developing information and dissemination tools.

#### **Action 4: Active European remembrance**

Decades of peace, stability and prosperity separate Europe from the devastation of World War II. But to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated, to appreciate

the present and plot a course for the future, it is important to keep the memory of that period alive. By remembering the atrocities and crimes of the past, citizens can reflect on the origins of the EU and on the history of European integration, which has kept the peace among its members and has helped them reach this prosperous present. Drawing on this, people can then chart a course towards the kind of Europe in which they wish to live in the future. This is the thinking behind Action 4: 'Active European Remembrance'.

#### **How Does It Work In Practice**

Organisations interested in active European citizenship meet regularly with the European Commission to discuss issues linked with the implementation of the Europe for Citizens programme. This is referred to as '**structured dialogue**'. This dialogue involves regular meetings between the Commission and approximately 50 key European organisations actively involved in the Europe for Citizens programme, which feed into a broader, annual event, the **Europe for Citizens Forum**. This regular process creates synergies to bolster the efficiency of the Europe for Citizens programme activities and it helps the Commission to better tailor the programme to the needs of its civil society partners.

#### **What Happens In The Future? Until 2020**

Europe has a challenging agenda for the next seven years, with serious issues at stake. With decisions and policies needed on issues ranging from economic growth, security and Europe's role in the world, it is now more important than ever for citizens to take part in discussions and help shape policies.

The general objective of the future programme, for the period 2014-2020, will be to "strengthen remembrance and enhance capacity for civic participation at the Union level". To this aim, the programme would contribute by developing citizen organisation capacity to engage citizens in the democratic life of the Union. **A budget of EUR 229 million for the period 2014-2020 is proposed to be allocated for the Europe for Citizens programme.**



Mina Pantić  
12 years

## Serbia – Stories of Success

Once the backbone of democratic changes in Serbia, the civil society today plays the equally important role in the transition and in the European integration process. It is an important partner of both the government and the EU in fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria, a set of conditions for joining the country the EU. Growing number of NGOs, in particular those dealing with youth, demonstrates that Serbian society has recognised the civil sector as a vector that will enable better participation of citizens in decision making process, shaping of their everyday lives and future of the country.

There are, both at the individual and collective level, plenty of successful stories about citizen activism in Serbia. Numerous are examples of individual actions of civic activism that led to improvement of citizens everyday life: the latest example in early 2013 was a successful campaign of association "Roditelj" (Parent) and web portal [www.bebac.com](http://www.bebac.com) for the refund of VAT levied to the baby equipment. Many successful projects have been realised with the support of the EU, such as:

- Within the project **Supporting Access to Rights, Employment and Livelihood Enhancement of Refugees and Internally Displaced People in Serbia**, the EU has financed in 2012 in total of 28 projects which were implemented in 25 municipalities, targeting social integration of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as vulnerable population into their communities.
- **The Strengthening Serbia-EU Civil Society Dialogue** Project, from September 2009 until 30th November 2011, launched by the Delegation of the European Union to the



Republic of Serbia in order to provide further support to Serbian civil society organisations in their active participation in Serbia's EU accession process. The focus was on the partnership building and joint initiatives with EU-based CSOs, on sharing experience, know-how and EU best practices. The Project supported 32 actions. The web site "Citizens are those who decide" (<https://sites.google.com/a/gradjanske.org/gopa/>), led by the Civic Initiatives, encompassed the examples of good practices in civic participation in the decision making process in the EU, Western Balkans region and in Serbia. In the country, some 40 successful projects were presented, among them: Association of citizens from Barajevo "Local level" has initiated action to improve transport of elementary school pupils from home to school; Peoples' parliament in Leskovac advocated adoption of new Referendum and peoples' initiative law as well as citizens' participation in adopting the city budget, etc.

- **The Support to Civil Society** (<http://www.civilnodrustvo.rs/>) project which was launched by the Delegation of European Union to the Republic of Serbia in October 2010 with the overall goal to support active civil society participation in Serbia's EU integration process. In total 43 civil society organisations have received grants. Several projects won regional recognition, like a short film titled 'Here I am – Legally Invisible' produced within the project 'European Good Practices - Advocacy Tool in Serbia' and implemented by Praxis organisation (film won third award at the Supetar Film Festival in Croatia 2012).

- **EXCHANGE 3** (<http://www3.exchange.org.rs/>) is an EU funded project led with the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities as a direct beneficiary and cities/municipalities and their citizens as final beneficiaries. The main aim of the programme is building capacity of local governments to further participate in the decentralisation process in line with EU standards. The programme, worth EUR 13 million, covers the whole territory of Serbia, and its implementation is envisaged from

2010 to March of 2013. It has five components: support to development of local development strategies and infrastructure projects evaluation, improvement of municipalities' financial management, coordination and training, grant schemes and providing support to donor assistance programming. In total 67 projects were financed through the EXCHANGE3. Civil society organisations, public companies, regional agencies and educational institutions are partners in the implementation of the programme. The number of municipal projects is implemented with EU partners, like E-uprava.Vranje.rs project whose counterpart is the municipality of Greek town Trikala. Another example is Integrated Solid Waste Management System in Dimitrovgrad whose partner is German Morbach municipality. The example of a good practice is also opening of the Citizen Contact Centre in Krusevac, including computer equipment and even Android application so the citizens can obtain demanded information within a delay of 48 hours.

- **EIDHR Programme (European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights - <http://www.eidhr.eu/>)**. The general objective of the programme is strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, in supporting the peaceful conciliation of group interests and consolidating political participation and representation. The EU Delegation in Serbia launches a call for proposals on annual basis out of which approximately 20 organizations receive grants. Some examples of successful projects are:



Krusevac: Citizen Contact Centre

- 'Dignity, integrity and safety for women – joint action by women's organizations' by Autonomous Women's Centre (<http://www.womenngo.org.rs/o-nama/tekuci-projekti/>),

- 'Youth in dialogue – Pro et Contra' by Open Club - Association for development of children and young (<https://www.facebook.com/mladiudijalogu?ref=ts&fref=ts>) and

- 'Personal Data Protection as a Basic Human Rights' by Partners for Democratic Change (<http://partners-serbia.org/privatnost/about-the-project/>).

- **EU Progres** (The European Partnership with Municipalities - <http://www.euprogres.org>) is a joint Programme of two major donors - the European Union and the Government of Switzerland which have been providing continuous support to the people living in 25 municipalities in the South and South West Serbia. By following the key strategic documents of the Government of Serbia the EU PROGRES works with the national and local stakeholders to implement their priorities. Its holistic approach means that both immediate infrastructure needs are addressed (construction of schools, replacement of water pipes, installing of heating boilers, etc), but also that conditions for larger investments are created (e.g. preparation of spatial plans and technical documentation). In its work EU PROGRES applies good governance principles which consequently

Citizens' Assistance Centre in Trgoviste



New school in Kumarevo

bring about sustainable improvement of municipal and inter-municipal management capacity. The key Programme partners are the national Ministries, local self-governments, regional development agencies, national minority councils and civil society organisations. So far, smaller projects implemented within EU PROGRES created 50 permanent employments, while larger infrastructure projects are expected to contribute to creation of 1,250 new jobs. Almost 2,000 people received free legal aid, 800 Roma families will get access to clean water, while one of the largest projects, the Green Zone in Leskovac, will attract investments of around 7.5 million Euros.

## EU Progres In Action...



Good Governance  
The new buzz words

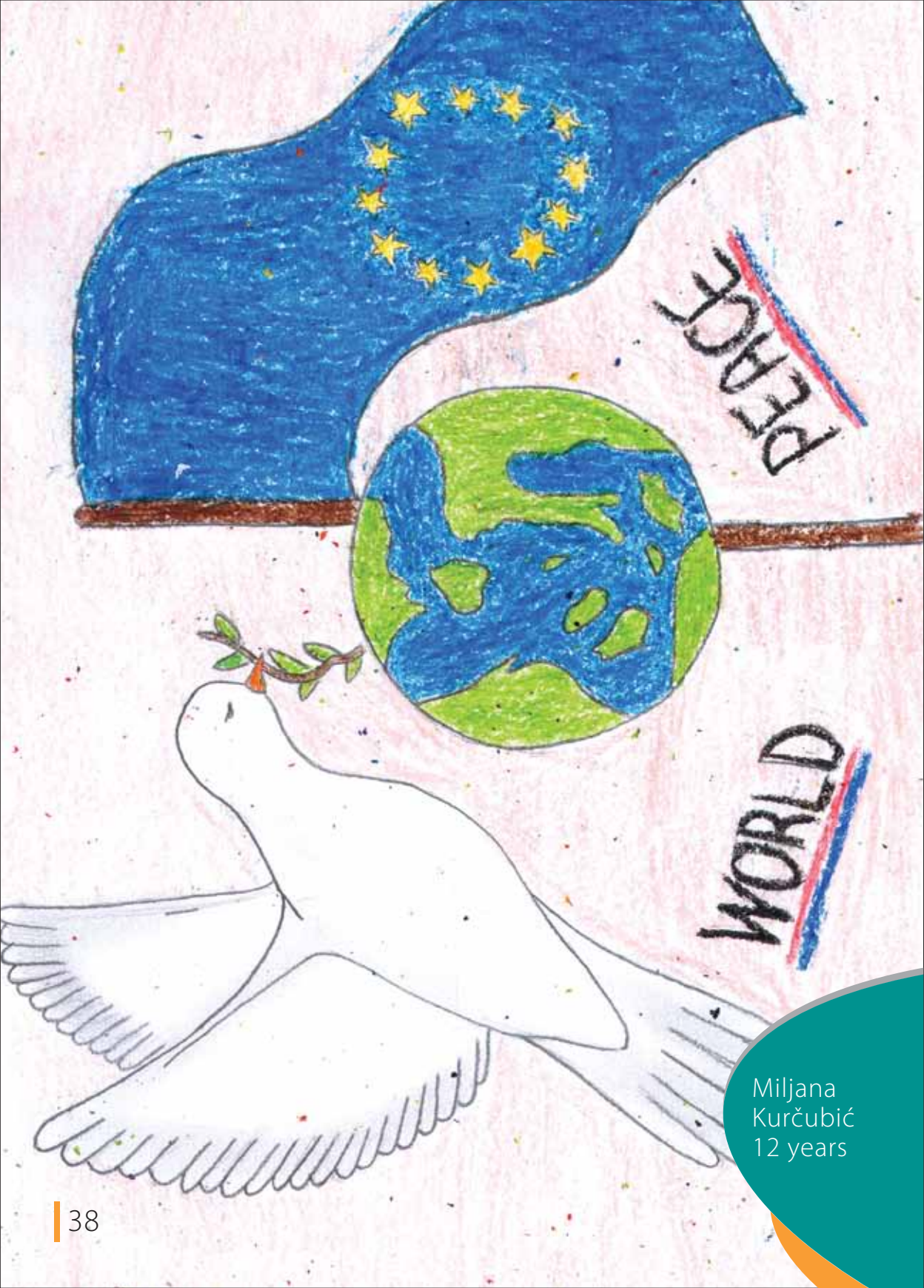


Leskovac Gets New School

EU Ambassador to Serbia Vincent Degert during his visit to Presevo and Bujanovac







Miljana  
Kurčubić  
12 years

## Useful links

### IN THE EU

<http://europa.eu/citizens-2013/>  
<http://ey2013-alliance.eu/>  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>  
<http://www.eesc.europa.eu/>  
<http://cor.europa.eu/en/Pages/home.aspx>  
<http://ec.europa.eu/>  
[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/index_en.htm)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/enlargement/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/enlargement/index_en.htm)  
<http://fra.europa.eu/en>  
<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/homepage>  
<http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome>  
[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php)

### IN SERBIA

<http://www.europa.rs/>  
<http://civilnodrustvo.gov.rs/>  
<http://civilnodrustvo.gov.rs/evropa-za-gradjane-i-gradjanke/>  
<http://www.crnps.org.rs/>  
<http://www.seio.gov.rs>  
<http://www.skgo.org/>  
[http://www.nadzor.org.rs/o\\_koaliciji.htm](http://www.nadzor.org.rs/o_koaliciji.htm)  
<http://chris-network.org/>  
<http://www.europa.rs/>  
[http://www.beogradeu.gov.rs/sr\\_cir/](http://www.beogradeu.gov.rs/sr_cir/)

### IN THE WESTERN BALKANS REGION

<http://www.rcc.int/>  
<http://www.balkanbsd.net/>  
<http://www.zarekom.org/>  
<http://www.igman-initiative.org/>

# European Union Information Centre

Since May 2011, the EU Information Centre, located in Dom omladine Beograda, is a place where citizens can inform themselves about the EU and participate in various cultural events. The mission of the EU Info Centre is to offer answers on site, by phone or mail, to EU related questions and provide help in finding information and guidelines for access to the EU projects, programmes and funds. The Centre aims to improve general awareness on the EU accession process and to bring European Union closer to Serbian citizens as well as to answer all their queries concerning the EU, its history and functioning.



EU Info Centre  
Decanska 1, hall  
Tel +38111 322 9922  
[www.euinfo.rs](http://www.euinfo.rs)  
[www.facebook.com/euinfo.rs](https://www.facebook.com/euinfo.rs)  
<https://twitter.com/EUICBG>

## Working hours

Monday-Friday 10:00-19:00  
Saturday: 10:00-15:00

## ★ ASK US

In the EU Info Centre you can find answers to all your questions related to the EU: from the history of the Union to the latest changes in EU laws. We are here to offer you help also in search of information about EU funded projects and programmes. You can ask us in the Centre or via e mail: [info@euinfo.rs](mailto:info@euinfo.rs). The information you will obtain are adapted to Serbian perspective and the needs of Serbian citizens as the EU Info Centre strives to get closer to citizens and what they really want to know.

## ★ VISIT US

The Centre is open for group visits; it organizes seminars, workshops, debates and other events on EU integration issues, as well as cultural events and art exhibitions. The Centre is accessible to all citizens of Serbia: all you need is to announce group visit in advance via e-mail or by phone.

## ★ LIBRARY DATABASE

Almost 2000 publications and books (in Serbian and English) are at your disposal: fact sheets, booklets, brochures about the EU, its policies, enlargement, relations between Serbia and the Union, etc. All sorts of publications are available either in hard copy if you visit the Centre, or in electronic format which can be downloaded from the following websites: [www.euinfo.rs](http://www.euinfo.rs), [www.europa.rs](http://www.europa.rs) and [www.eubookshop.eu](http://www.eubookshop.eu).







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