

# The „Promotion of Multiculturalism and Tolerance in Vojvodina“ project

## Introductory note

The indicators of the situation concerning the interethnic relations in a multinational environment, such as the AP Vojvodina, are the number, frequency and type of incidents committed on the grounds of national ethnicity. At the end of January 2005, the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities proposed, and the Executive Council of AP Vojvodina, at its 16<sup>th</sup> session, adopted *the INFORMATION on incidents on the grounds of national ethnicity that occurred in Vojvodina in 2003 and 2004*.

The information was prepared on the basis of the data provided by competent public authorities, especially bodies of the interior, information from the press and other media and based on the findings of the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities.

At the same session *the Executive Council of AP Vojvodina* concluded that it was necessary to initiate well-developed, persistent and organised activities of all social actors in the field of preventive action to prevent incidents and provocations on the grounds of ethnicity in Vojvodina and adopted the conclusions ordering the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities, in cooperation with all stakeholders, to prepare appropriate projects and devise preventive measures in the field of education, culture, media, justice and internal affairs, which will facilitate a systematic prevention of the escalation of incidents and interethnic intolerance, suppression of socially threatening phenomena, preservation of good interethnic relations and developing a spirit of tolerance, with particular emphasis on actions aimed towards young people.

## General notes

The project of the **Government of AP Vojvodina**<sup>1</sup> "Promotion of Multiculturalism and Tolerance in Vojvodina", whose main objectives are fostering cultural diversity and developing a spirit of interethnic tolerance among the citizens of AP Vojvodina, has been successfully implemented since 2005. The project holder is the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities and it is implemented in cooperation with many national and international organisations and institutions. The project is conceived as a complex and multi-thematic multicultural programme, based on the idea of strengthening interethnic trust among young people in Vojvodina. The project

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<sup>1</sup> By way of the Provincial Assembly Decision on the Government of AP Vojvodina ("Official Journal of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina", 4/10), which came into force on 1/4/2010, the Executive Council of AP Vojvodina changed its name into the Government of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.

involves many sub-projects and thousands of students from primary and secondary schools in Vojvodina are included through various activities in the events that take place on the territory of the entire AP Vojvodina.

The main aim of this project is to alleviate interethnic tensions, and in the long run - develop the spirit of tolerance, mutual respect and trust among the citizens of Vojvodina, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

The subject matter of the project is to foster and develop the values of a multiethnic and multicultural society of AP Vojvodina, as a modern European region, on the foundations of an open democratic society based on the rule of law and the project activities are focused on young people, primarily those aged 14 to 19, i.e. the senior grades of primary and all grades of high school. The immediate effects of the project should primarily relate to the participants in the project, but also to all of those entities that will be directly or indirectly involved in implementation of this project. Bearing in mind that the projects involve direct contact and involvement of thousands of young people, the implementation of the project would have an indirect impact on the general population in Vojvodina.

## Overview of Activities

**The first three phases** of the project “Promotion of Multiculturalism and Tolerance in Vojvodina” were implemented in the period from 2005 to 2008.

In **the first phase** of the project, out of the seven envisaged sub-projects, five proved to be successful and effective ("Cup of tolerance", the quiz "How Well do We Know Each Other?", the exhibition "Living Together", "Media Campaign" and "Return to good Business Practices"), providing a solid basis for their continued practice.

Unlike the first phase, in the **second phase** of the project three new sub-projects were designed and successfully implemented, thus increasing their number to eight, noting that all of them proved to be successful, which provided a valid reason for their further implementation.

**The third phase** of the project included thirteen sub-projects and was characterised by a significant increase in project activities compared to the first two phases.

The change in the structure of individual sub-projects and actions, with the aim of grouping content and organisationally related activities is characteristic of **the fourth phase** of the project. Subprojects, due to the complication and the increase of the project activities and the need to simplify and conceptualise these activities at a higher level, were grouped according to the similarity of the approach to problematic issues and implementation activities. This phase included eight sub-projects and eight individual activities grouped within the sub-project.

## **Structure of the fifth phase of the project**

The fifth phase of the project, completed in September 2010, was characterised by significant restriction of available resources, as a result of the ongoing financial situation, which required some reduction of project activities. This phase included seven sub-projects.

### **Subproject** Sport competitions with added contents "Cup of Tolerance"

"Cup of tolerance" includes the organising of sport competitions for primary and secondary school students in AP Vojvodina in five popular team sports, according to the cup system, in seven towns in AP Vojvodina.

The attention is primarily focused on youth as the main target group. Through cooperation with educational institutions from the entire Vojvodina, the number of participants increased, allowing the main project message to reach a lot of young people. In addition to sports competitions, a full day of additional cultural and entertainment programme is organised for all participants in the competition.

### **The Subproject** Quiz "How well do we know each other?"

#### **Activity 1**

##### **"How well do we know each other?" – TV quiz**

The subproject presents the organisation of the quiz competition in the knowledge on history and culture of national communities in the region of AP Vojvodina. The participants in the quiz are teams from secondary schools from the territory of the entire AP Vojvodina.

The aim of the project is to educate people, especially youth, about the common history and culture of various national communities living in Vojvodina, as well as to create the conditions for such mass education by involving students from Vojvodina in the quiz competition and ensuring its broadcasting in the media.

#### **Activity 2**

##### **"How well do we know each other – send an SMS" – the radio version of the quiz**

The radio version is designed as a talk show, in the form of a quiz with topics in history and culture of national communities of AP Vojvodina, with answering questions via text messages and giving prizes to listeners.

#### **Activity 3**

##### **"We know too" – the competition of associations of persons with disabilities**

The competition in the knowledge of history and culture of national communities in AP Vojvodina between associations of persons with disabilities, which is traditionally held twice a year, organised by the associations themselves, with the logistics and material support of the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities.

#### **Activity 4**

##### **"How well do we know each other" – the book about AP Vojvodina**

The subproject involves editing and publishing the handbook on AP Vojvodina, with the involvement of relevant experts, highlighting a multi-perspective approach to the problem and promoting the handbook as an additional teaching resource and secondary literature.

The subproject is in part aimed at educating teachers of higher grades of primary and all grades of secondary schools, in terms of improving knowledge about the events and periods of common history, cultural and other forms of intertwining of nations from the region of AP Vojvodina.

#### **Subproject "Living together"**

#### **Activity 1**

##### **"Homeland near the Danube" – the cohabitation of Germans and Serbs in Vojvodina**

This activity includes the creation of museum exhibitions and organisation tours in several cities in Europe (e.g., Ulm, Brussels) and in AP Vojvodina. The objectives of the activities are to promote the positive values from the shared history between the two nations, interaction and mutual cultural influences of the Serbs and Germans, as a significant contribution to the historical and European experiences in the development of multiculturalism and multi-ethnic tolerance.

#### **Activity 2**

##### **"Living together" – the cohabitation of Serbs and Hungarians – mobile form**

The subproject implies the organisation of an exhibition, which shows, in an original, modern and multimedia manner, the topics associated with the common history and culture, along with the resulting interaction and mutual influence of the persons belonging to Serbian and Hungarian community in AP Vojvodina.

#### **Activity 3**

##### **"Richness of diversity"**

This activity envisages the competition in amateur photography on the topic of multiculturalism AP Vojvodina, selection of the best works by the jury and organisation of exhibitions of submitted works at several locations in AP Vojvodina. The goal of this activity is to draw the attention of the public on project ideas through information about the competition and announcements of the exhibition and its staging in different towns, thus, to indirectly promote multiculturalism as a value of AP Vojvodina through modern artistic expression.

#### **Activity 4**

##### **"Together" – documentary TV series**

A documentary series that records the diversity of AP Vojvodina, as well as the common life and customs of its inhabitants in an original manner.

"Together", with its film and music records, presents the common history, interaction and influences, differences and similarities, as well as multiethnicity of Vojvodina. The broadcast of the TV show should contribute to the systematic education of the population,

especially youth, then, to better mutual acquaintance, understanding, coexistence and more tolerant relations.

#### **Subproject** Media campaign – multiculturalism in AP Vojvodina

This subproject presents the promotion in the media and highlighting of the ideas of multiculturalism and tolerance as universal values of each society, through various forms of media presentation, via short messages about the aforementioned topics. It is implemented through the print (the production of printed promotional materials), television and radio campaign and activities in terms of promoting and informing the public about the activities of the project.

#### **Subproject** "Ethno Day"

The subproject involves the creation and organisation of a series of presentations by national communities living in AP Vojvodina, with their folklore, cultural, historical, culinary and other characteristics, implemented by primary school pupils in AP Vojvodina, as well as the training of teaching staff to give presentations autonomously. The objectives of the subproject "Ethno Day" are to promote awareness and knowledge of the specificities of culture, folklore and history of different national communities living in AP Vojvodina and accept these differences as advantages and wealth of the area.

#### **Subproject** „InterEthno Festival"

This festival includes organising festival stands, craft shows, different programmes, ethno music concerts and folklore and music groups from Vojvodina and from abroad, as permanent and changing content programmes. It is held every year in August in Subotica. The aim of this project is to create conditions for learning about the tradition of folk art and culture of other nationalities, through mass participation of citizens, especially young people, resulting in a direct and closer familiarisation with the cultural heritage of AP Vojvodina and contributing to the extent of knowledge of the multicultural AP Vojvodina.

#### **Subproject** Evaluation of the situation concerning the interethnic relations among youth in AP Vojvodina

The evaluation of the situation concerning the interethnic relations among youth in the AP Vojvodina is carried out through practical and systematic monitoring and evaluation of the current status of interethnic relations among young people in AP Vojvodina, as well as through the introduction of monitoring mechanisms for educational institutions and training of personnel for the independent evaluation of the situation.

## **Additional Activities within the Project Implementation**

### **Activity**

#### **The Award Trip**

Within the project 'Promotion of Multiculturalism and Tolerance in Vojvodina', the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Communities, as its holder, organises a trip for all the winners of the 'Cup of Tolerance' sports competitions and the two best ranked teams in the 'How well do we know each other?' quiz.

The concept of this trip supports the main ideas of the project, with the aim of promoting its values and acquainting the people and places that are close to the AP Vojvodina in terms of culture. Since 2006, the most successful participants in the project had the opportunity to see Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna, Salzburg, Passau, Ulm, Strasbourg and Brussels, as well as the universities in Bologna, Padua and Bolzano. The thematic trips brought the participants closer to the most important institutions of the European Union, some of the oldest universities in Europe, the institutions that emphasise the importance of cooperation in the Danube region, as well as many cultural and historical landmarks of Europe.