That Croatia has received EUR 1.3 million from the European Union’s various programmes to fund different projects in the last fifteen years.

The EU SME guarantee facility has enabled almost 80,000 SMEs to obtain loans under more beneficial conditions.

The European Commission in cooperation with 42 European partners, supports the electrical vehicles project, Green eMotion, intended to facilitate commercial use of electric cars in Europe.

On the Path of European Funds – the new TV show on HRT!

European Council: Deal on Reinforced Economic Governance

Twelve Projects for the 2012 Single Market: Together for New Growth

EUR 9.6 Million Assistance to Belgian Workers for New Jobs

Strategy for the Integration of Roma in the EU
Two more Chapters provisionally closed - Agriculture and Regional policy

At the Accession Conference with Croatia on 19 April in Brussels, the chapters 'Agriculture and rural development' and 'Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments' were provisionally closed. Overall, with 30 chapters closed out of 35, Croatia has the closure of negotiations within sight. Regarding the two chapters provisionally closed, the Common Agricultural Policy will contribute to modernise the agricultural sector, while the EU regional policy can enhance the growth potential in Croatia and thus create new jobs and raise living standards. The Accession Conference was followed by the Stabilisation and Association Council. The meeting discussed the main outstanding challenges facing Croatia in this final stage of negotiation, notably the reform of the judiciary, the need to tackle impunity for war crimes and the fight against corruption as well as the restructuring of its shipbuilding sector in line with EU State aid rules.

European Commission President Barroso in Croatia

President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso accompanied by the Commissioner for Enlargement Štefan Füle made an official visit to Croatia on 7-8 April. President Barroso met with President of Croatia Ivo Josipović, Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor, President of the Croatian Parliament Luka Bebić and other high-ranking government officials. President Barroso also addressed the Croatian Parliament and used the opportunity to encourage Croatian leaders and citizens to continue with the implementation of the remaining necessary reforms to complete the accession negotiations. After the meeting with Prime Minister Kosor, Barroso said, 'The European Commission is looking forward to welcoming Croatia as the 28th EU Member State as soon as possible. Croatia must tackle the last difficult reforms before the accession process can be concluded. Now is the time for Croatia to walk the final mile!' President Barroso also briefly met with citizens at the Ban Josip Jelačić Square in Zagreb.

Signing of the Financing Agreement for the National Programme under IPA Component I 2010

Financing Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Commission of the European Communities concerning the National programme for Croatia under the IPA-Transition Assistance and Institution Building Component for 2010 was signed on 7 April. The Agreement was signed by the State Secretary Hrvoje Dolenec, from the Central Office for Development Strategy and Coordination of EU Funds on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and Alexandra Cas Granje, Director in Directorate General for Enlargement, on behalf of the European Commission. The total amount established is HRK 419 million of which almost HRK 286 million account for non returnable grants of the EU. 13 projects in the area of strengthening the efficiency of the judiciary, civil society facility, de-mining, strengthening the integrated land administration system, support to animal disease control, enhancement of the CTA administrative and institutional capacity in the field of application of VAT EU common system, integrated border management, support to the national visa system, development of flood hazard maps and flood risk maps, strengthening capacities for strategic environmental assessment at regional and local level, participation in Union Programmes and Agencies will benefit from the mentioned amount.

Find out more on the web pages of the Delegation and Central Office for Development Strategy and Coordination of EU Funds.
Western Balkans, towards a more integrated Europe: Joint Parliamentary Meeting

The EPP Group representatives in the European Parliament and in the parliaments of EU Members States took part at the two-day conference organised in Brussels on 13 and 14 April by the European and Hungarian Parliaments. President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso also delivered a speech at the conference. In his speech, President Barroso emphasized that the year 2011 was the year of challenges and opportunities for the region. “In this moment the Croatian pre-accession negotiations have entered the final stage, and Montenegro and Serbia are in a position to enter the next phase of the negotiations providing they maintain the same pace in reform implementation until October”. He reiterated the position he made in the Croatian parliament last week that a country must be fully prepared for joining the EU. “The crucial point is to be fully prepared. This is a question of credibility and mutual trust. It is also important for European citizens to know that once new countries join the European Union this means that they are indeed totally ready to become fully-fledged EU members”, said Barroso. President of the Croatian Parliament Luka Bebić also attended conference.


Ambassador Vandoren: Civil society is the cornerstone of a democratic society

Ambassador Paul Vandoren participated to the ‘People to People’ Seminar “Good practices in the consultation of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the local decision-making process in Croatia”, which took place in Zadar on 19-20 April. The seminar was organised by the European Commission in consultation with the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs and with the local Technical assistance to CSOs under IPA/Civil Society Facility/TACSO office. Participants discussed good practices whereby the EU member states have developed standards and practices which are applied and showing their results.

Ambassador Vandoren underlined the importance of a dialogue between the Croatian authorities at the national, regional and local level on one side, with the Civil Society Organizations in strengthening their capacities in various fields as the cornerstone of a democratic society. Where such a dialogue does not exist, ‘there is no ‘good governance’ and thus mistrust towards politics’, said the Ambassador and added that public consultation is a question of social cohesion and sharing of responsibilities.

Find out more on the web pages of the Delegation.

Ambassador Vandoren visits Koprivnica

On 14 April Paul Vandoren, the Head of the EU Delegation visited Koprivnica. He met with the representatives of the business community and advised them to get well prepared for the EU Single Market. “There will be more funds available for solid, innovative projects,” he said while explaining which benefits EU membership will bring to Croatia. He also called upon the authorities and companies to work together on central, regional and local level. Ambassador also visited the Mura-Drava confluence, the former army complex where the municipality wants to create a campus, and the local grammar school. After getting acquainted with the EU funded project “Culturevive” which has been designed to revive old customs and traditions, the Ambassador held a lecture at the Koprivnica Polytechnic. He spoke about the advantages of EU membership and presented the state of play of the accession negotiations.

Find out more on the Delegation and Town of Koprivnica web pages.

Head of EU Delegation to Croatia Meets Auditor General of Republic of Croatia

Ambassador Paul Vandoren, Head of the EU Delegation, met Ivan Klešić, Auditor General of the Republic of Croatia in the State Audit Office on 5 April. At the meeting they discussed the current status of Croatia’s preparations for the EU accession, with a particular view to Financial control, in a part related to the further strengthening of the State Audit Office independency and capacities.

Find out more on the web pages of the State Audit Office.
Ambassador Vandoren’s Meeting with State Secretary Plenković

Head of the Delegation, Paul Vandoren, met State Secretary for European Integration Andrej Plenković in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration on 4 April. They discussed the UN General Assembly’s draft resolution on EU’s participation in the United Nations’ activities, the organisation of European Commission President José Manuel Barroso and Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy Commissioner Štefan Füle’s visit on 7-8 April as well as the current dynamics of pre-accession negotiations and plans for the closing of the remaining chapters by the end of June 2011. They also talked about the preparations for the Danube Summit scheduled to take place in Vukovar in late April.

Find out more on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration website.

ON THE PATH OF EUROPEAN FUNDS – the new TV show on HRT!

On Friday 15 April, Croatian Radiotelevision (HRT) started broadcasting a new show entitled ON THE PATH OF EUROPEAN FUNDS. Each Friday at 16.50 hrs Channel 1 of the HRT the viewers will be able to watch the show, a result of a joint initiative of the EU Delegation and the Central Office for Development Strategy and Coordination of EU Funds (CODEF) as well as cooperation with the HRT. The show will inform and educate the audience about the EU funds and programmes in the Republic of Croatia, as well as institutions involved in the preparation and implementation of these funds. Experiences of the beneficiaries of the projects financed by EU funds and the results of these projects will be presented together with information about all open tenders and relevant websites that can be consulted by the interested public. The re-run will go on Tuesdays around 11 pm after the News 3 on the Channel 1 of the HRT while the online archives of shows will be available on the web pages of the Delegation and CODEF, 24 hours after the broadcast.

Find out more on the web pages of the Delegation.

European Union Youth Orchestra in Zagreb for the First Time

The talented young musicians of the European Union Youth Orchestra (EUYO) performed at a gala concert at the Lisinski Concert Hall on 5 April. On the occasion, amongst the orchestra were two gifted young Croatian cellists. It is the first concert in Croatia held by EUYO. The concert was organised with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia and in collaboration with Jeunesses Musicales Croatia. This year’s tour of EUYO is co-financed by the European Union’s Culture Programme. The EUYO is one of the world’s most prestigious and dynamic orchestras. It unites 140 most gifted young musicians aged between 14 and 24, from all 27 EU Member States. They are selected from thousands of those who audition to join the Orchestra every year. Some of the world’s most famous conductors that have worked with the Orchestra so far include: Vladimir Ashkenazy, Daniel Barenboim, Leonard Bernstein, James Conlon, Sir Colin Davis, Carl Maria Giulini, Herbert von Karajan.

Find out more on the web pages of the Delegation and the Orchestra.

Around HRK 100 Million Worth of Support under IPARD Programme Approved

Over a year since the start of the implementation of the IPARD programme in Croatia, after the three tenders, the Agency for Payment in Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development approved almost HRK 100 million as the support for Measure 101 ‘Investment in agricultural farms’ and Measure 103 ‘Investment in processing and trading with agricultural and fishery products’. It includes 44 projects which applied for investment under these two measures. With every new round of tenders the quality of applications, level of preparedness and number of successful applications grew, announced the Agency. This can also be seen from the results of the third round of tenders for Measures 101 and 103 with a success rate around 82%. The fourth round of tenders for these two measures closed on 14 March and 43 applications in total were received with the requested support totalling HRK 86.4 million. This is the best response to tenders for the said measures so far and the Agency expects even better results in the future tenders.

Find out more on www.apprrr.hr.
National Info Day “CIP Eco Innovations 2011”
The Croatian Chamber of Commerce – European Enterprise Network and the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship are organizing the national Info Day “CIP Eco Innovations 2011” on 2 May to mark the opening of this year’s call. The purpose of the Info Day is to provide potential applicants with basic information and advice on how to develop a good project proposal and how to successfully apply for tenders, to explore the possibilities for finding a project partner, exchange of ideas and expertise as well as to enable individual consulting with the expert from the EU. Two successful Croatian projects approved for financing will be presented at the CIP Eco Innovations 2011 event. Everyone wishing to submit a project and to receive more information about the application procedure may attend the Info Day. Representatives of SMEs, European and national associations, public institutions, faculties, etc. are welcome. The CIP Eco Innovations 2011 Call for proposals officially opens on 28 April 2011.

Find out more on the web pages of the European Enterprise Network Croatia.

EU Energy Efficiency Awards: Zaprešić among 25 Winners
Zaprešić is among the 25 winners from 14 countries across the three categories of this year’s edition of the Energy Efficiency Awards managed by the Joint Research Centre, the European Commission’s in-house science arm. These Awards are part of the three JRC programmes aiming to encourage organisations in both public and private sectors to cut energy consumption by using innovative and energy efficient technologies. Zaprešić was awarded under the GreenLight programme, for reducing its annual energy consumption for public lighting 57%, over 1,712 megawatt hours (MWh) in total. More than 1,000 participants throughout Europe have voluntarily taken part in these three programmes. The Award criteria’s are based on both innovation and energy efficiency. GreenLight encourages partners to install energy-efficient lighting technologies through several measures such as thermal insulation, efficient heating and cooling, intelligent control systems, and solar panels.

Find out more on the Delegation and European Union web pages.

Croatian Students Win ‘European Law Moot Court’ Competition
On 1 April, a team from the Zagreb Law School won the prestigious law competition in the EU – the ‘European Law Moot Court Competition’ that takes place before the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg each year. The team won in both categories they competed in – as representatives of a party in the case and Advocate General. It is the first time in the history of the competition that a team from a non-EU Member State has won the competition, and in addition they are the only team from the same university to win in both categories. The team consisted of (in alphabetical order): Vedran Barišić, Ana Bobić, Vanda Jakir (Advocate General), Ivana Kordić, Branka Marušić and Ivan Zrinjski. The team was prepared by Prof. Siniša Rodin and Junior Research Assistant Filip Kuhta from the Law School’s European Public Law Chair. 71 student teams from countries within the EU and the rest of the world participated in the competition. In the finals, the Croatian team excelled to win over their competition from Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium) and Columbia Law School (U.S.). Ambassador Vandoren, met the students on 8 April and congratulated them on their success.

Find out more on the Delegation.

University of Pula Becomes Member of EURAXESS Network
By appointing its Local Contact Point (LCP) in February, Juraj Dobrila University in Pula has joined EURAXESS network in Croatia, now consisting of nine scientific organisations. EURAXESS has a network of over 200 service centres throughout Europe and by joining this network the University will be able to strengthen its infrastructure for reception of international scientists. In co-operation with EURAXESS Service Centre, which is a part of the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes, Local Contact Points provide administrative, legal and other assistance to foreign scientists who wish to continue their careers in Croatia, as well as to Croatian scientists who travel abroad for further training. The University of Pula has demonstrated that it encourages the mobility of scientists as a means to improve the scientific efficiency and human resources management.

Find out more on the www.mobilnost.hr and University of Pula, the web pages.
CROATIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Announcement of the Europe week
EU Delegation to Croatia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, EU Member States accredited in Croatia and other partners, is organizing a series of events marking Europe Week. In addition to informative events organized in each county by the Councils for European Integration, the Delegation organized the European Film Evening with 4 movies, financed under MEDIA Programme, which will be shown in Osijek, Rijeka, Split, Sibenik, Zadar and Zagreb on 9 May, Europe Day. On Saturday, 7 May, an event called “Rhythm of Europe” will be held on Bundek. The event will be composed of day activities - for children of lower elementary grade (1st-4th grade), and evening activities – the concert for youth and interested citizens with popular performers like TBF and Elemental, Pikzibner, Doyobe (A), GMBisGerryMendes (NL) i Balkan Fanatik.

Find out more on the web pages of the Delegation.

NEWS FROM THE EU

European Council: Deal on Reinforced Economic Governance
On 24-25 March, the spring European Council gave the final go-ahead for a comprehensive package of measures to preserve the financial stability of the Eurozone and to strengthen economic governance. As part of the governance package, the summit finalised the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), a permanent fund which in 2013 will replace the temporary one in place to support Eurozone countries in the event of major economic difficulties. It also adopted the Euro Plus Pact, which will step up economic coordination with the aim of improving competitiveness. In addition to the Eurozone countries, Bulgaria, Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania have also joined the Pact. As regards Libya, it confirmed the Union’s political objectives: Qaddafi must go, and there must be a political transition, led by the Libyans. European leaders also expressed their support to Japanese people and actioned that there should be an urgent review on the safety of nuclear plants.

Find out more on the web pages of the Delegation and European Council.

Twelve projects for the 2012 Single Market: together for new growth
The Single Market is still the nucleus and the core economic driving force of the European Union. It also remains our most effective means of responding to the current economic crisis. Its growth potential has not yet been fully exploited, despite the progress made since it was created in 1992. The Single Market must therefore open the doors to new, greener and more inclusive growth. The Single Market Act adopted on 14 April by the European Commission aims to deliver twelve projects on which to relaunch the Single Market for 2012. These twelve instruments of growth, competitiveness and social progress range from worker mobility to SME finance and consumer protection, via digital content, taxation and trans-European networks.

Find out more on the web pages of the Delegation and European Commission.

EUR 9.6 Million Assistance to Belgian Workers for New Jobs
The European Commission approved an application from Belgium for assistance from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) on 14 April. The EUR 9.6 million requested by the Belgian authorities is intended to help 2,834 redundant workers from General Motors Belgium and four of its suppliers and downstream producers back into employment. The financial assistance from the EGF is targeted at all 2,834 workers and will help them on their way back into employment by offering them job search assistance, training and re-training, outplacement assistance and aid for business start ups. The total estimated cost of the package is EUR 14.7 million, of which the European Union has been asked to provide EGF assistance amounting to EUR 9.6 million. There have been 76 applications to the EGF since it began in January 2007, totalling approximately EUR 381.3 million and helping over 76,319 workers.

Find out more on the web pages of the European Commission.
Strategy for the integration of Roma in the EU
The EU framework for national Roma integration strategies presented on 5 April sets EU-wide targets to raise Roma peoples’ quality of life, bridging the socioeconomic gaps that can separate them from mainstream society. There are Roma communities in almost all EU countries and many lack the education they need to find jobs. They often have shorter lives and reside in poor-quality housing. The set targets are for all Roma children to finish primary school (a survey in six EU countries found just 42% of youngsters now complete this stage), full access to vocational training, the jobs market and self-employment schemes (employment rates, especially for women, are well below the EU average), equal access to healthcare, preventive care and social services (with lower child mortality rates a priority) and non-discriminatory access to housing, including social housing.

Social Dialogue – Tripartite Summit
President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, the EU Commissioner responsible for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, László Andor, President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban met at the Tripartite Social Summit with European workers’ and employers’ representatives on 24 March. Their discussions focused on the effect of budgetary and fiscal consolidation on jobs and growth, as well as the governance role of social partners. President Barroso said: “We need an agenda for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, with a strong social dimension. The Europe 2020 strategy is fundamental part in delivering such an agenda. With the Annual Growth Survey and the Pact for the Euro we have clear common priorities for economic policy. When implementing them, we will fully respect national social dialogue, traditions for industrial relations and social partners’ autonomy in the collective bargaining process. We are committed to use the tripartite social dialogue mandate to achieve the social cohesion targets of the Europe 2020 strategy: fighting poverty, improving skills and increasing employment”.

European Commission Report on Protection of Fundamental Rights in EU
On 31 March, the European Commission published its report on the implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. This Charter has been legally binding for over a year, primarily for European institutions to use as a guide when preparing new European legislation, but also for National Authorities when implementing European laws. In 2010, the Commission received more than 4,000 letters from the citizens regarding fundamental rights. Approximately three quarters of these concerned cases outside the remit of EU law. In addition, a recent survey by the Ombudsman found that 72% of Europeans do not feel well informed about the Charter. The report should help citizens determine where they need to turn when they believe that their fundamental rights have been violated by an EU institution or a national authority.

Decision of the European Commission: Procter & Gamble and Unilever Coordinated Detergent Prices
The European Commission fined Procter & Gamble and Unilever a total of EUR 315.2 million for operating a cartel together with Henkel in the market for washing powder and detergents in eight EU countries on 13 April. The fine for the two companies includes a 10% reduction for acknowledging the facts and enabling a swift conclusion of the investigation. Henkel received immunity for revealing the cartel to the Commission. The three companies are the leading producers of washing powder in Europe. The cartel lasted three years and aimed at stabilising market positions and at coordinating prices in violation of EU and EEA antitrust rules. The cartel covered Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and The Netherlands.
Tempus@20: Ministerial Conference Marking 20th Anniversary of the Tempus Programme

Ministerial Conference marking the 20th anniversary of the Tempus Programme took place in Belgrade on 29-30 March, under auspices of European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy Štefan Füle and Serbian Minister of Education Dr. Žarko Obradović. Tempus is a EU programme for inter-university co-operation between EU Member States and partner countries from the regions of Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, North Africa and Middle East. The aim of the conference was to reflect on the past 20 years of the Tempus programme and highlight its successes. The conference presented positive results in encouraging reforms and modernisation of individual universities, faculties and departments participating in Tempus Programme and the impact of exposure to an EU environment on university staff. The conference pointed out that this programme is a practical expression of what Europe means with the term “people to people contact.”

Find out more on the web pages of the Delegation and Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

Commission Supports Development of Electric Cars

The European Commission will support the EUR 41.8 million worth Pan-European initiative ‘Green eMotion’ that brings together 42 partners from industry, utility companies, manufacturers of electric cars, cities, Universities and technological and research institutions. The goal of the initiative is to exchange and develop know how and expertise in manufacturing of electric cars in Europe. The Commission will support the initiative with EUR 24.2 million under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. The project is a part of European Green Cars Initiative. Its goals are to compare the 12 current regional and national initiatives for electric mobility in 8 EU Member States; to compare different technological approaches and to contribute to finding the best solutions for European market. The Project will include various types of electric vehicles, development of smart networks, innovative solutions in information and communication technologies and concepts for urban mobility.

Find out more on the web pages of the Green eMotion project.

 Majority of Europeans Embrace Green Travel

A Eurobarometer survey carried out in all 27 EU Member States on 24 March has revealed that most Europeans are willing to compromise on the price and performances of their cars in order to reduce harmful emissions. In addition, the majority of motorists (53%) agreed with existing car charges being replaced by new charging schemes based on the actual use of their vehicle. While most users choose to drive a car because of its convenience, nearly three quarters of EU citizens (71%) said they would consider using public transport more frequently if it would be possible to buy a single ticket covering all transport types. The majority of car users (66%) surveyed said they would be likely to compromise on the car’s size in order to reduce emissions and 62% said the same about the car’s performance e.g. the distance that one could drive before having to refuel or recharge the vehicle. Commenting on Eurobarometer results, Siim Kallas, Commissioner responsible for transport, said that the results were a great boost to the EU's efforts to make transport more sustainable. “They show that people understand what is at stake and are willing to change their habits to reduce the impact they have on the environment.”

Find out more on the web pages of the European Union.
**EU Reinforce Citizens’ Rights to Consular Protection and Assistance in Third Countries**

One of the key parts of EU citizenship is the right to ask for assistance from any EU consulate or embassy when their Member State is not represented in the country. These rights are useful during emergencies, such as those currently happening in Japan, Libya and Egypt. EU Member States must help citizens to evacuate as if they were their own nationals. The EU Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights guarantee this right. Protection also covers everyday situations, like a passport being stolen or a serious accident or illness. However, many Europeans are not aware of this right.

On 23 March, European Commission set out concrete steps for raising EU citizens’ awareness of their rights. In addition, the Commission is launching a dedicated website on consular protection that provides addresses of consular or diplomatic missions in non-EU countries and access to all Member States’ travel advisory services.

Find out more on the web pages of the European Union and European Commission website on consular protection.

**Commission proposes clearer property rights for Europe’s 16 million international couples**

In Europe, there are around 16 million international couples, and at least 650,000 of them face these questions every year when their marriage or partnership comes to an end. Citizens lose time and money figuring out which law applies to their case and which court is competent to help them. The European Commission is therefore proposing EU-wide rules to bring legal clarity to the property rights for married international couples and for registered partnerships with an international dimension. The two proposed Regulations would help identify which law applies to a couple’s property rights and the responsible court. The Regulations also provide for rules for recognising and enforcing court judgments on a couple’s property in all EU Member States through a single procedure. Isto tako, propisi predviđaju pravila za priznavanje i izvršavanje sudskih presuda o vlasništvu nekog para u svim zemljama članicama EU-a uz jedinstvenu proceduru. Both proposals presented today are gender neutral and neutral regarding sexual orientation.

Find out more on the web pages of the Delegation and European Union.

---

**EU GLOSSARY: ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK**

Enterprise Europe Network is Europe’s largest business support network. The network contributes to the competitiveness of SMEs by making it easier for them to internationalise, innovate and access EU finance and funding. The network consists of almost 600 partner organisations and institutions (e.g. chambers, agencies, institutes) and provides excellent contacts and links with 40 countries and 83 consortiums: EU Member States, Norway, candidate states (Croatia, Iceland, FYR Macedonia, Turkey), Switzerland and third countries (Armenia, Chile, Russia). Enterprise Europe Network connects over 3,000 experts in entrepreneurship, innovation and transfer of technology in order to promote competitiveness and innovation on local and European level and further. In just three years, the Network has provided services to over 2.5 million SMEs and organised business events with over 600,000 participants. So far, the Network has helped around 4,500 SMEs to establish business co-operation, technology transfer or find partners abroad. Enterprise Europe Network is also one of the few ways for SMEs to take part in European policy development. The Network consults companies on the soon-to-be-adopted European legislation and gathers their opinions on existing regulation. Using the Network’s stakeholders, more than 10,000 expert opinions have already been collected which has contributed to the EU’s legislative process. Enterprise Europe Network Croatia is represented as the consortium of several partners, in charge of specific areas of business: Croatian Chamber of Economy, the Croatian Business Innovation Center BICRO, Croatian Institute of Technology HIT, Technology Park Varaždin, Technology Development Centre Osijek - TERA, the Regional Development Agency Porin from Rijeka and the Technology Transfer Office in the Split - UTT.

www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu
www.een.hr
Modernisation of school curricula in vocational education and training (VET) in line with the changing needs of the labour market and economy

Department for Financing and Contracting of IPA Programmes within the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education has launched a call for proposal for the allocation of grants – ‘Modernisation of school curricula in VET schools in line with the changing needs of the labour market and economy’ – under Priority 3, Measure 3.1., Operation 3.1.7. within the frame of Component IV of the IPA Programme – Human Resources Development.

The deadline for submission of applications is 20 May 2011. Details can be found here.

Call for proposals for projects to improve the position of women in Western Balkans and Turkey

European Commission DG for Enlargement launched a call for proposal for partnership activities with the aim to improve the position of women under the programme to support the civil society in Western Balkan and Turkey (‘Civil Society Facility’). The general aim of the project is empowering civil society in the scope of participatory democracy and to support strengthening the stimulating environment and culture for civil society development. The projects should include organisations from at least three pre-accession assistance beneficiary-countries (IPA countries) and at least one organisation from EU member countries.

The deadline for the submission of application is 31 May 2011. Details can be found here.

Call for project proposals in the area of socially responsible enterprises

European Commission DG for Entrepreneurship has published a call for proposals for financial support for the projects that will raise investors’ awareness of the enterprises which demonstrate efficiency and responsibility in the area of environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance.

The deadline for the submission of application is 3 June 2011. Details can be found here.

Two Calls for Proposals under the Programme of Association for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS

PROGRESS - the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity - focuses on five areas: employment, social inclusion and protection, working conditions, non-discrimination and diversity and gender equality.

1. Under the Call for Proposals ‘Industrial relations and social dialogue’, financial support will be provided for projects promoting social dialogue at the level of industry and sector level. It will finance consulting, meetings, negotiations and other actions aimed at achieving the goals and promoting actions emphasized in the European Commission Communication: European Social Dialogue, the promoter of innovations and changes and communication: Partnership for change in an enlarged Europe – Enhancing the contribution of European social dialogue.

The deadline for submission of Proposals is 30 August 2011. Details can be found here.

2. Under the Call for Proposals ‘Information, Consulting and Participation of Entrepreneurs’ Representatives’, measures for enhancing transnational cooperation between representatives of workers and employers with regards to information, consulting and participation in enterprises which include more than one country will be financed. Funds also cover the establishment of information points and monitoring in order to inform and assist social partners and enterprises in the creation of structures of transnational consulting, participation and information as well as to promote the relations among the EU institutions.

The deadline for submission of Proposals is 6 September 2011. Details can be found here.

These Calls for Proposals are primarily targeting social partners and organisations involved in social dialogue but universities, research centres, specialist institutions, local and regional Governments, Government bodies and NGOs can also take part.
Unemployment, particularly among youth, is a major problem, both in Croatia and the rest of the world. To help solve this problem and provide an example of active involvement, seven young people from Zagreb formed an informal group and submitted their project ‘Young Entrepreneurs’ Creativity against Growing Unemployment’ to the Youth in Action programme. The project was approved by the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes (which is implementing the Youth in Action programme in Croatia) and was successfully implemented in late 2010. The project consisted of two workshops on entrepreneurship and three creativity workshops where young unemployed people from Zagreb and the surrounding area had a chance to learn how to develop entrepreneurial ideas, how to present them to market and how to turn old, used objects into new, useful ones. This helped the participants to learn how creativity and a different view of existing things and situations can solve many problems. The workshops also included learning how to present yourself to potential employers as a job candidate.

The initiative lasted five months and over 80 young people of various profiles attended the workshops. Some of the participants are not unemployed any more! Talking about his experience of the workshops, Matija says: “Hanging around with others at the workshops was useful. Being without a job for a long time is frustrating, so I was glad to talk to other people with similar problems. I made new contacts and learned new things that will help me find a new job”.

EU’s Youth in Action Programme
Youth in Action is a European Union programme designed for young people and organisations working with young people, in the period between 2007 and 2013. The aim of the programme is to encourage active European citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and their inclusion in shaping of the European Union’s future.

Detailed information on the possibilities and requirements for co-financing under the Youth in Action Programme can be found at: www.mobilnost.hr.

BENEFICIARIES’ EXPERIENCE

We chatted to Pavle Polonijo, one of the members of the informal group, about the submission of the project and its implementation.

Why did you decide to apply to the Youth in Action programme? Was it hard to prepare the necessary documentation?
At that moment we were all unemployed and unhappy with our current situation. Our friends told us about the Youth in Action programme and that you can apply without having to have an association. It gave us additional boost because we did not have to waste our time on bureaucracy (registering an association, seal, statute and so on). The documentation was very hard to prepare, but we managed to do it with the help of our friends and the people from the Agency for Mobility and EU Programme, who were very helpful.

What did the project mean for your group and for the participants?
For us as a group, the project was a priceless experience of organizing things and working in a larger group. It was a chance for us to realize our ideas, learn useful things and help others around us. We realized that we can function as a team if we want to and that we can establish a successful association or another type of organization in the future. In my opinion, the participants saw the project as a release from the humdrum existence of young unemployed people in Zagreb and its surroundings; they met new friends and realized that others share their problems; they also learned new skills that could help them in the search for new jobs.
Enforcement of Aarhus Convention in the Adriatic countries

The right of citizens to be informed about the environment in which they live and their right to partake in decision-making processes were the key themes of the regional project ‘Enforcement of Aarhus Convention in the Adriatic countries’, funded by the EU. As an introduction to a final international conference envisaged for June, presentation of the activities undertaken in the last 20 months of the project was held on 19 April. Activities included interactive seminars for 25 judges, lawyers and journalists from the regions who, under the leadership of domestic and European experts, where they were informed about the implementation of legal tools which citizens can and must use in the area of environmental protection and sustainable development. Project is managed by GONG and Zelena Istra, jointly with partner associations from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Centre for Management, Development and Planning), Montenegro (MANS), Italy (Adriatic GreeNet) and Belgium (European Environmental Bureau).

Find out more on the www.gong.hr.

Closing presentation of IPA funded project ‘Strengthening Capacities of USKOK’

On 4 April, the closing presentation of the IPA 2007 project “Strengthening Capacities of USKOK” was held on the EU Information Centre. The project, worth 185,082 €, funded by the European Union, has resulted in the implementation of an IT system that will enable USKOK to efficiently store data in a new database of cases and their related documents with the analytical software. The main project partner was the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Croatia, who, together with USKOK, is one of the Beneficiaries of the project started in June 2010. Head of the Project Implementation Unit of the EU Delegation in Croatia, Jean-Marie Moreau in his addressing speech said that Croatia has made significant progress in fighting corruption but to close the Chapter 23 - Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, it is expected to meet all closing criteria.

Find out more on the web pages of the Delegation.

The 1,000 Faces Campaign ‘Say YES for...’

Within the project ‘Include me!’ financed by the European Commission, through the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) in the amount of EUR 54,500, the first public action ‘Say YES for...’ was held in Cakovec on 2 April. High school students involved in training through this project, photographed citizens and included them in the 1,000 Faces Campaign for promoting equal opportunities and social inclusion of the Roma and Croat school children. The citizens could choose one of the six messages – say YES for... cooperation, equal chances, love, education, happiness, understanding... and get photographed with the chosen message. Pictures are published in a photo-gallery on the web site www.ukljucime.udrugazora.hr. The project ‘Include me!’ is aimed at the activities such as integrated workshops in which the high school students of Roma and Croatian nationalities will interactively learn about human rights, mutual cooperation, teamwork and non-violent communication. All interested can upload their photo on the website. Once 1000 photos are collected, the top 30 will be selected and will exhibited in the gallery Scheier.

Join the action on ukljucime.udrugazora.hr.

Assistance to Operating Structure in Implementation of Transport Projects

A presentation of the “Technical Assistance to the Transport Operating Structure for management of the Operational Programme and implementation of projects, Croatia”, co-financed from the IPA programme, took place in the EU Information Centre on 24 March. The implementation of this project with the value of EUR 354,000 started in May 2010. It is estimated to last two years. The project will improve the capacity of the Operating Structure bodies for management of OP and implementation of projects. In his welcoming address, Richard Masa, Head of Project Implementation Unit at the EU Delegation, underlined that the overall goal of the project is to prepare the Republic of Croatia for effective management and withdrawal of funds from IPA programme, thus increasing its capacity for efficient use of EU Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund after accession.

Find out more on the web pages of the Delegation.
Promotion of Eco-Social Economy Network

The project for the promotion of Eco-Social Economy Network in South and East Europe (ESENSEE) was presented on 23 March at the EU Information Centre. The general objective of the project is to promote the culture of socio-economic partnership, citizens' participation, social synergy and integrated, sustainable socio-economic progress of countries and communities in the region by means of principles and values of the ‘eco-social economy’ and socio-developmental capacities of the civil sector. The project is supported by the EU through the Social Economy Partnership Grant scheme, and a total of €453,000 has been allocated for its implementation. The consortium of partners engaged in the project implementation includes Zdravi grad from Split, Slap from Osijek, Autonomni centar (ACT) from Čakovec, ESCOOP– European Social Cooperatives from Italy, Grupa 484 from the Republic of Serbia, ORT from the Republic of Macedonia and Little People of Kosovo from the Kosovo Republic. UNDP - Project COAST, as an affiliated institution to the consortium, is also engaged in the project implementation.

Find out more on the web pages of the Delegation.

Introducing Trainings on the European Union in the Croatian Education System

The Forum for Freedom of Education has carried out the project “Education about the EU” with the aim to introduce themes related to the EU in the education system of the Republic of Croatia. Project activities, which finished by the end of 2010, covered the education of teachers, students and unemployed. As a result of the project, Guidelines for the Introduction of Education about the EU in the Croatian education system as well as training material: Teachers' Manual and Collection of material for teachers preparation and material for students were produced with the cooperation of stakeholders.

The teachers’ manual has been well received, it has surpassed its primary goal and it is used at several universities in Croatia. All publications were created during the project and they represent an example of a good practice in the area of education. They offer contemporary, critical, interactive and didactically well elaborated information about the EU and stimulate discussion about the EU topics and active participation in the accession process.

Find out more on www.fso.hr.
SMEs’ experience in the new Member States show that the benefits of accession to the EU are multiple and that adjustment to the state of the common market is required. The benefits include access to the European Union’s single market with more than 500 million consumers, better cooperation, networking and connecting with stronger industries, access to additional sources of financing from non-banking sources and state supports, strengthened loan guarantees and availability of new technological, organisational and managerial knowledge. In addition, the experience of companies that have adapted to the state of the common market show they have become more competitive, this is as a result of reduced operating costs and the costs of access to the European Union market. The costs of adjustment, on the other hand, include investment in human resources, adjustment to the new regulation, brought into line with the rules of the EU market competition and strengthening of competitiveness in general. However, since the EU has assigned the SMEs the role of basic source of innovation and new jobs, initiator of growth and proponent of structural changes and progress, there are various initiatives and instruments on an EU level intended for supporting and promotion of SMEs. For example, a few grant schemes for SMEs have been implemented in Croatia through PHARE and IPA programs. Also, in order to improve competitiveness, the European Union is financing a large number of research, technologies and innovation through the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development (FP7) and Framework Programme for the Community’s Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). Both programmes are already available to Croatian SMEs. Under the FP7 programme for 2007-2013, over EUR 50 billion is available, while CIP has provided EUR 3.6 billion for the same period. CIP is oriented to SMEs which are aiming for innovation, particularly in the areas of energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy, environmental technology and better use of information and communication technologies (ICT). One of the more relevant initiatives oriented to strengthening competitiveness in Croatia is Enterprise Europe Network for Croatia, created as a project supported by the European Commission through the Competitiveness and Innovation Program (CIP).

What EU programmes and initiatives are intended for small and medium enterprises?

Besides FP7 and CIP, there are other EU programmes that are intended for this sector. One of them is the Erasmus Programme for Young Entrepreneurs, offering new entrepreneurs an opportunity to learn from experienced colleagues about running SMEs in one of the EU Member States. It also encourages the sharing of experience between new and experienced entrepreneurs; facilitates access to new markets and the search for potential business partners; it encourages networking between business people and the development of new business connections. Also, through financial mediators, the European Investment Bank (EIB) distributes funds from the JEREMIE programme, a network that makes it easier and simpler for small firms to have access to financial instruments like guarantees, micro loans, share guarantees, export credit insurance, venture capital, the Business Angels Network Fund and technology transfer funds. This programme supplements the JASMIN programme, which is intended only for micro-financing in Europe, also under EIB, with the initial capital of EUR 50 million in a three-year pilot phase.

The role of the Envoy for SMEs is to open a communication channel between the European Commission on one side and SMEs and their representative organisations on the other side. In addition to that, the Envoy for SMEs acts as a promoter of their interests in the whole European Commission, taking particular care that the ‘Think Small First’ principle is implemented effectively.

In the following links, you can find other initiatives and financial instruments for support to small and medium enterprises.

You can find out more on: ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme and www.hamag.hr
EU regional policy

EU regional policy is one of the oldest and financially most relevant common policies of the European Union. Although the EU and its Member States make one unique entirety, particularly with regards the common single market, there are still huge economic and social differences among them and among the 271 regions. Hence, in order to attain a harmonious, even and sustainable development and to strengthen its economic and social cohesion, the Union is trying to reduce regional disparities in terms of income and opportunities through its regional policy. The EU regional policy key values are solidarity, as this policy is aimed at citizens and regions which are, in terms of their economic and social situation, in a less favourable position compared to the EU average, and cohesion, since for all Member States there exist positive advantages in reducing the gap in income and wealth between poorer countries and regions and those which are better-off.

In the period from 2007 to 2013, the expenses for regional policy are totalling approximately 35.7% of the EU budget, i.e. EUR 347 billion. Regional policy has been primarily focused on the EU Member States from Central and Eastern Europe, but also on the regions of other EU Member States with special needs. From the total EU budget reserved for regional policy, approximately 51% has been planned for the so-called new Member States, i.e. countries which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. In the previous budgetary period (from 2000 to 2006), EUR 213 million was earmarked for the EU-15 and additional EUR 2 billion was secured from 2004 to 2006 for the new members. The implementation of regional policy in that period resulted in the following achievements:

- **Accelerated income growth in the poorest regions:** GNP per capita in the poorest regions of EU (so-called “Target 1” regions) increased from 66% of the EU-25 average in 2000 to 71% in 2006;
- **Creating of new jobs:** it is estimated that around 1.4 million jobs have been created, of which around 1 million in entrepreneurial sector;
- **Environment improvement:** 20 million people have been connected to a modern water supply network and additional 23 million have been given access to wastewater treatment system;
- **Modernisation of traffic infrastructure:** Cohesion Policy has financed the construction of 4,000 kilometres of motorways and 1,200 kilometres of high-speed rail lines;
- **Support to the development of entrepreneurship:** a total of 230,000 SMEs received financial support (mainly grants, but also loans and venture capital) and additional 1.1 million of them were received free consulting and support for networking, which resulted in creation of about 1,000,000 new jobs at the EU level;
- **Investment in research and innovation:** almost 38,000 research and development projects have received support, which resulted in creation of 13,000 long-term jobs.

The EU Regional policy is being implemented through various funds, the so-called regional policy instruments. These are:

- **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF):** this Fund covers programmes which include general infrastructure, investment and innovations. ERDF funds are mainly intended for the least-developed regions.
- **European Social Fund (ESF):** its funds are used for strengthening of human resources with the aim to increase chances for employment, improve work productivity and stimulate economic growth. In addition to this, the projects actively work towards combating against discrimination and the development of partnership in employment and social inclusion.
- **Cohesion Fund.** Cohesion Fund provides financial support to the projects in the area of transportation and environmental protection. This Fund is dedicated exclusively to the EU Member States whose GNP is below 90% of the EU average and its funds may be used by all regions in such countries.

The European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) was set up to respond to major natural disasters and offer European solidarity to disaster-stricken regions within Europe. So far, the Fund has financed assistance in 45 various natural disasters, including floods, forest fires, earthquakes, storms and droughts. 23 European countries have received support in the amount of over EUR 2.4 billion so far.

Croatia has also received almost EUR 5.5 million from this Fund, for covering the expenses of clearing of the areas flooded in May and June 2010, as well as in September 2010.

[ec.europa.eu/regional_policy]
What’s in it for me? – Croatian version
Publication Office, translation: EU Delegation to Croatia, 2011
This booklet provides brief information on some of the programmes that the Directorate-General for Education and Culture runs.

Letak - Europska godina volontiranja 2011. – Croatian version
EU Delegation to Croatia, 2011
The leaflet gives a brief overview of the objectives and activities of the European Year of Volunteering in the European Union and Croatia, including information about European Year of Volunteering Journalist Award.

Let’s explore Europe!
Publication Office, 2010
Learn more about Europe in a fun and way. Book is full of interesting facts and colourful illustrations, it gives a lively overview of Europe and explains briefly what the European Union is and how it works. For kids roughly 9 to 12 years old.

An overview of other titles available in the EU Information Centre can be found in the electronic catalogue.

EC President José Manuel Barroso walks the street of Zagreb and enjoys the cafee with citizens at the Ban Josip Jelačić Square.
The question in the last issue was: **What is the name of the EU programme in the field of education designed for preschool, primary and secondary education?** The correct answer is: **COMENIUS.** The winner, drawn from among those who sent correct answers, is Mićo Dujak from Zagreb. Congratulations!

**THE NEW PRIZE QUESTION IS:** **What is the name of the EU programme that aims at strengthening the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry?**

Send your answer to info@euic.hr by 18 April 2011, specifying “EU bulletin prize question” in the Subject field of your e-mail. In this issue we have ten pairs of tickets to be won for the European Film Evening screenings in Osijek, Rijeka, Split, Šibenik, Zadar and Zagreb to celebrate Europe Day on 9 May. To win, make sure you’re one of the first 10 readers who send us a correct answer.