



# **„European Class”**

- educational workshops for high school seniors -

## **REPORT**

**JANUARY 2007 – JUNE 2007**

Zagreb, July 2007

## **BACKGROUND**

During last several seasons of GONG's "I Vote for the First Time" project, high school teachers of *Politics and Economy* who participated in the project, have proposed developing similar workshop about European Union for additional education of first-time voters, high school seniors in Croatia. Similar questions and proposals also came from high school seniors who participated in "I vote for the first time" workshops and who were unsatisfied with the quantity and quality of information they receive about European Union.

According to that, in cooperation with Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, GONG has developed a new project based on the methodology of "I Vote for the First Time" project, that is, workshops about the European Union for the high school seniors in Croatia during the second semester of the school year.

The goal of this new project was to give students appropriate information about the European Union and the accession process. We expected to bring EU and its values closer to Croatian youth in order to overcome current prejudices and lack of understanding about what the EU membership brings and how it will affect Croatian citizens, specifically Croatian youth. Indirectly, we expected the project to contribute to higher awareness among Croatian citizens about the EU, resulting in development of rational views on Croatian membership in the European Union.

During February 2007, we launched the *European Class* project in high schools in all Croatian counties. The Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration officially recommended the project.

## **THE PROJECT IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2006/2007**

The *European Class* workshops were conducted in **143** high schools in the Republic of Croatia. **601 workshops** were held during the second term, **from 21 February to 7 May 2007**. **Twenty specially educated trainers** conducted the workshops with **more than 16,000 participating high school seniors**.

### **THE AIM OF THE PROJECT**

Project objective was to organize 600 workshops in approximately 150 high schools all over Croatia and to inform and educate up to 18,000 high school seniors. Overall objective was to raise awareness about European integration and to decrease the level of misunderstanding and prejudice toward the EU and Croatian membership in the EU.

Of course, the EU as a theme is very complex and to give a detailed presentation of it would take much longer than 45 minutes of one school class. Therefore, our basic goal was to get the high school seniors interested for the topic, to give them basic facts about it but also to encourage them for additional individual education and research on information about the European Union.

### **"EUROPEAN CLASS" WORKSHOPS**

The project consisted of interactive workshops for the final year students of Croatian high schools through which students were introduced to relevant issues regarding the Croatian membership in European Union in an interesting and interactive way and a special accent on matters concerning youth, their mobility, education and future employment.

The **first part** of the workshop started with a conversation between trainers and students about what the European Union represents to students. After that, a brief historical overview about European integration and introduction to main institutions of European Union was given to students.

The **second part** of the workshop dealt with the Croatian accession process to the European Union. For start, students briefly went through all important dates in history of relations between the European Union and Croatia, after which a part of the workshop called "What does the EU bring to us?" introduced topics such as internal market, Euro – official currency of the EU, Schengen regime, education policies etc.

At the end of every workshop, enough time was given to students to ask questions and to ask for additional explanations.

Trainers/lecturers used four thematic charts to present their subject matter more clearly. The charts contained the important dates and definitions and they were put on visible places around the classrooms.

After the workshop, each student was given the brochure "**Europska uniJA?**" which brings some basic facts about the European Union and other topics covered by the workshop. The brochure also contains links to web pages of European and Croatian institutions where additional information can be found.

After every workshop, students would write down their impressions on a piece of paper, and their teachers would fill in a questionnaire about their impressions, which we later used to evaluate the workshop.

"European Class" workshop is literally interactive – the students guided the trainers through the issues they were most interested in, so on various workshops trainers would give more time and information about different issues, making each workshop different from all others.

Since the topic of the EU is quite a sensitive issue in Croatia, the stress was put on objectivity and neutrality of presentation. Therefore, the trainers were asked not to express their opinion during the workshop or to support either opinion *pro* or *contra* the Croatian membership to the European Union.

## **TRAINERS / LECTURERS**

Since the sixth season of the "I Vote for the First Time" project ended in February, we offered a job of trainer on "European Class" project to those who worked on "I Vote for the First Time" workshops. 18 trainers (out of 24) from the "I Vote for the First Time" project have applied for the "European Class" project, so it was necessary to find new candidates for the job. This was needed even though the new project consisted out of 600 workshops ("I Vote for the First Time" had 800 workshops), so now 10 instead of 12 teams of trainers were needed.

Since we especially lacked the candidates for trainers in Dalmatia, Istria and Slavonia, a job advertisement was announced on Law Faculties in those regions and Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb. In addition, we have sent an advertisement to volunteers in GONG's regional offices in Rijeka, Slavonski Brod and Zadar. In this way, we have received five more job applications.

Regarding complexity of the workshop's topic, all candidates received on their home address a handbook "EU for YOU". A testing of the candidates was conducted at the end of January 2007. After conducting tests and interviews, we selected 20 trainers of the "European Class" project - 3 new trainers joined the 17 trainers who have worked on previous project.

In total, **20 trainers/lecturers** were selected to perform planned workshops, as follows:

### **Regional office Slavonski Brod:**

- Osijek-Baranya County, Virovitica-Podravina County and Pozega-Slavonija County: Jelena Kamenko and Tomislav Pejak
- Osijek-Baranya County, Brod-Posavina County and Vukovar-Srijem County: Lidija Palik and Damir Zivkovic

### **Regional office Rijeka:**

- Istria County: Tamara Prekalj and Naim Krasnici
- Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and Lika-Senj County: Tina Bencic and Elena Erman

### **Regional office Zadar:**

- Zadar County and Sibenik-Knin County: Marina Vujevic and Josko Bellotti
- Split-Dalmatia County and Dubrovnik-Neretva County: Marina Mladineo and Marin Muzinic

**Regional office Zagreb:**

- The City of Zagreb: Marina Lochert and Suncica Vukelic
- Zagreb County, Sisak-Moslavina County and Karlovac County: Kristina Doric and Vitomir Vela
- Krapina-Zagorje County, Koprivnica-Krizevci County and Bjelovar-Bilogora County: Sanja Major and Sanja Zivoder
- Varazdin County and Medjimurje County: Izabela Oletic and Tomislav Fresl

Due to the higher number of schools and workshops in the City of Zagreb, all three teams of trainers who were covering the Zagreb surroundings, have conducted several workshops in the City of Zagreb.

In the beginning of February 2007, a several-days long educational seminar for all trainers took place on mountain of Medvednica near Zagreb. The seminar was organized in cooperation with the Directorate for Information and Education of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. Each trainer received a *Trainers' Handbook*, including rules for reporting to GONG staff and additional materials from the Directorate, which contained all the necessary information for conducting a quality workshop. The main goal of the seminar was additional education of trainers about European Union and Croatian accession process.



*Educational seminar, Sijeme, 10 February 2007*

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT**

An announcement of the beginning of the project was sent to the headmasters of all 349 high schools and *politics and economy* teachers by the end of January 2007. Application deadline was 9 February 2007, but since there was huge interest from schools, 143 schools have been assigned for all 600 workshops in the first week of the call. Most of the schools have already participated in GONG's educational projects but the project about European Union made several new schools to apply for the workshops. Because of the great interest of the schools, 20 schools have been put "on hold" in case some of previously applied schools drop off.

High schools from the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, Pozega-Slavonia County and Varazdin County showed the greatest interest in the project. We received the lowest response from the Osijek-Baranya County and Krapina-Zagorje County.

In order to achieve easier and more precise coordination of the large number of schools, classes, appointments, both held and planned workshops and to monitor the course of the project, GONG's

team upgraded the database from the "I Vote for the First Time" project and developed it into a new database for „European class“project. The database contained a list of schools and trainers and contact information in all counties and regional offices, information on scheduled workshops, information on conducted workshops and those not yet conducted, including the number of students who participated in the workshops and the totals by various parameters. Persons in charge from the regional offices and project coordinator updated the database on the daily basis.

*Dear colleagues,*

*We are pleased to hear that you have successfully developed a new model of workshops for our students, and the topic of European Union seems to be a perfect choice.*

*During last six years, we were participating in «I Vote for the First Time» project and we were very satisfied. Therefore, we are very interested to participate in a new project to and we would like to apply for the workshops.*

*With regards,*

*Economics school  
Varazdin*

*E-mail application from the Economics school in Varazdin*

The first workshops were held on 21 February 2007. One week before, trainers were practicing the workshops with their team partners. During the project's implementation course, packages were sent to trainers with material necessary for conducting the workshops.

## **CONDUCTING THE WORKSHOPS AND IMPRESSIONS**

From the start of the project on 21 February until 7 May 2007, 601 workshops were conducted in 143 high schools all over Croatia.

The workshops have proved our assumption of insufficient knowledge about European Union among Croatian youth, as they have often admitted it by themselves. Students did not lack motivation to learn something about the subject but they believe proper information about the European Union being unavailable to them.

On the other hand, trainers found students to be very interested for this type of interactive education that is more open handed than the lectures made *ex cathedra*. At the same time, teachers showed that they are more open for this kind of additional education, and especially for the project that covers the area they consider not covered well by the regular educational program.

At the end of each workshop, students anonymously wrote their impressions. More than 95% of students gave the workshop and its subject a positive evaluation. Most of the students stated that this kind of education should continue in the future because they find the access to the information about the European Union and the Croatian accession process unsatisfying.

Several students' evaluation papers:

- „The workshop was great! Before, when people would ask me my opinion about the EU, I would instinctively said «NO!», but now I caught myself thinking that there are some positive things in that...“
- „I think the workshop was good because they told us something we didn't know and they made us understand some things about the EU. Moreover, this is necessary because we are not informed well. “
- „It' is cool that I can learn something new! It is a good thing that you can ask somebody who is neutral to explain to us things we did not know. “

- „The lecture was very informative and educational. We were able to learn some positive and negative sides of EU from simple talk! Therefore, I think we are much better informed than before.“
- „All the facts were given to us in simple and understandable way, without some scientific expressions. Above all, it was realistic, without taking *pro* or *contra* side. Very interesting, I have learned something new...“

Teachers' evaluation was not much different from students' evaluation. The teachers consider this kind of education very important so they also support the continuity of the project.

- „The subject of the workshop was presented in a very interesting way. GONG trainers successfully motivated students to participate in the workshop. Congratulations for your work!
- „The subject of the workshop was presented to the students in a simple and interesting way for them. All terms were simply explained. Trainers have achieved good communication with the students.

### ***Interesting information!***

In June 2007, we have received a request for cooperation from the "Meridijani" publishing company. The editors of the "Meridijani" magazine have found our brochure "Europska uniJA?" to be a very attractive and educational material, so they planed to insert several thousand of brochures in their September edition of the magazine dedicated to the 50 years of the EU. In cooperation with European Union Information Centre and their financial support, we have reprinted additional 18,000 brochures and delivered them to the editorial of Meridijani. The Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sport recognizes "Meridijani" magazine as an expedient for history and geography classes in Croatian schools.

## **PROJECT EVALUATION**

The evaluation meeting took place in Zagreb on 21 June 2007. Trainers/lecturers and the staff from GONG's head office and regional offices participated in the evaluation. All aspects of the project were evaluated, experiences were discussed and several recommendations for even more successful performance were made.



*Project evaluation, Zagreb, 21 June 2007.*

All participants were very satisfied with the experience acquired in the project as well as the results of the project. Trainers who have worked on the "I Vote for the First Time" project stated that it was much easier to work on this new project because of already gained experience but also because the students have showed bigger interest for workshops about the European Union. The trainers were extremely satisfied with a fact that majority of students gave positive opinion about the workshop and with an interaction which took place during the workshops.

Since majority of trainers already participated in a similar project ("I Vote for the First Time"), there were no remarks whatsoever to the technical aspect of the project implementation (contacting schools, communication with GONG, distribution of material, project monitoring, etc.).

There were several recommendations for changes on some of the charts used during the workshops and revising some fragments of workshop text in a way to gain more objectivity and neutrality.

According to these recommendations, a plan for the next season of "European Class" project will be revised.

## THE MEDIA

Issuing a Press Release, sent to all national and local media on 23 February 2007, officially marked the beginning the project. A number of daily newspapers and radio stations reported on the workshops during the implementation of the project. News journalists and reporters of national and local TV and radio stations attended several workshops in schools. Apart from issuing information about the project, TV and radio programs also hosted trainers/lecturers and GONG representatives and so, we have to point out that we are pleased with the media interest in the project.

### Appearances in printed, Internet and electronic media

**DN**–Daily Newspapers, **WN**–Weekly Newspapers, **MN**–Monthly Newspapers, **NA**–News Agency, **IP**–Internet News and Portals, **TV**–television, **RA**–radio (shows, news, announcements, disclosures and read messages)

02/26	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.jutarnji.hr">www.jutarnji.hr</a> / IP
	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.rivaon.com">www.rivaon.com</a> / IP
	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.odlikasi.hr">www.odlikasi.hr</a> / IP
	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.odisej.hr">www.odisej.hr</a> / IP
	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.rivaon.hr">www.rivaon.hr</a> / IP
	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.mreznica.hr">www.mreznica.hr</a> / IP
02/26	"Europe class" project announcement	Radio Bljesak / RA
02/27	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.gradpula.com">www.gradpula.com</a> / IP
	"Europe class" project announcement	Metro Express / DN
	"Europe class" project announcement	Jutarnji list / DN
	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.virovitica.net">www.virovitica.net</a> / IP
	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.gradpula.com">www.gradpula.com</a> / IP
02/27	"Europe class" project; project info	Radio Centar Zadar / RA
	"Europe class" project; project info	Radio Zadar / RA
	"Europe class" project; project info	Radio Pag / RA
02/28	"Europe class" project info; Robert Maracic interview	Hrvatski radio Split / RA
	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.europe.hr">www.europe.hr</a> / IP
02/28	Ivana Marinkovska interview on "Europe class" project	Novi radio Zadar / RA
	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.europe.hr">www.europe.hr</a> / IP
03/01	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.vukovar.hr">www.vukovar.hr</a> / IP
	"Europe class" in city of Zadar	Slobodna Dalmacija / DN
	"Europe class" project info	<a href="http://www.vjesnik.hr">www.vjesnik.hr</a> / IP
	"Europe class" project info	Zadarski list / DN
03/01	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.vjesnik.hr">www.vjesnik.hr</a> / IP
03/02	"Europe class" project info	Narodni list / DN



	"Europe class" in city of Zadar	Slobodna Dalmacija / DN
<b>03/03</b>	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.smz.hr">www.smz.hr</a> / IP
	"Europe class" project info	<a href="http://www.smz.hr">www.smz.hr</a> / IP
<b>03/03</b>	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.smz.hr">www.smz.hr</a> / IP
<b>03/05</b>	"Europe class" project info	<a href="http://www.novilist.hr">www.novilist.hr</a> / IP
	"Europe class" project info	<a href="http://www.rtl-radio.hr">www.rtl-radio.hr</a> / IP
<b>03/05</b>	Robert Maracic statement on "Europe class"	Otvoreni radio / RA
	Robert Maracic statement on "Europe class"	Z 1 television / TV
	Robert Maracic statement on "Europe class"	Radio Student / RA
	Trainers and students statements on "Europe class" workshop in Zagreb high school	HTV (Zagrebacka panorama) / TV
	"Europe class" workshop in Karlovac high school	HTV (Zupanijska panorama) / TV
	About "Europe class" project	Radio 101 / TV
	"Europe class" project announcement	<a href="http://www.rtl-radio.hr">www.rtl-radio.hr</a> / IP
<b>03/06</b>	"Europe class" project announcement	Vecernji list / DN
	"Europe class" project announcement	Jutarnji list / DN
<b>03/06</b>	News about "Europe class" in Bjelovar-bilogora county	NET TV / TV
<b>03/07</b>	"Europe class" project info	<a href="http://www.entereurope.hr">www.entereurope.hr</a> / IP
<b>03/07</b>	"Europe class" project info	<a href="http://www.entereurope.hr">www.entereurope.hr</a> / IP
<b>03/08</b>	"Europe class" in Koprivnica-krizevci county	<a href="http://www.radio-koprivnica.net">www.radio-koprivnica.net</a> / IP
	"Europe class" in city of Bakar	Novi list / DN
<b>03/10</b>	"Europe class" workshop follow up	<a href="http://www.public.srce.hr">www.public.srce.hr</a> / IP
	"Europe class" workshop announcement	<a href="http://www.radio-mreznica.hr">www.radio-mreznica.hr</a> / IP
<b>03/12</b>	"Europe class" workshops announcement	Dugoselska kronika / IP
<b>03/12</b>	"Europe class" project info	Dugoselska kronika / IP
	"Europe class" project info	<a href="http://www.radio-koprivnica.hr">www.radio-koprivnica.hr</a> / IP
	Interview on "Europe class" project and workshops announcements	Radio BnM / RA
<b>03/14</b>	"Europe class" project info	<a href="http://www.medijmurje.com">www.medijmurje.com</a> / IP
<b>03/14</b>	About "Europe class" project in generally and workshop clip	Gradska televizija Zadar / TV
<b>03/15</b>	"Europe class" project in Sisak-moslavina county	Novi Sisacki tjednik / WN
	"Europe class" project info	<a href="http://www.vjesnik.hr">www.vjesnik.hr</a> / IP
	"Europe class" project info	<a href="http://www.limun.hr">www.limun.hr</a> / IP
<b>03/16</b>	"Europe class" project info	<a href="http://www.vjesnik.hr">www.vjesnik.hr</a> / IP
<b>03/20</b>	"Europe class" workshop in city of Nasice high school; report	<a href="http://www.ssik.hr">www.ssik.hr</a> / IP
<b>03/21</b>	"Europe class" workshop in city of Pazin; report	<a href="http://www.glasistre.hr">www.glasistre.hr</a> / IP
	"Europe class" workshop in city of Pazin, report	Glas Istre / DN
<b>04/10</b>	"Europe class" project info	<a href="http://www.os-rovisce.skole.hr">www.os-rovisce.skole.hr</a> / IP
<b>04/20</b>	Project information's	<a href="http://www.hkdrustvo.hr/euinfo">www.hkdrustvo.hr/euinfo</a> / IP
<b>04/23</b>	About "Europe class" project	<a href="http://www.bukvalno.blog.hr">www.bukvalno.blog.hr</a> / IP
<b>04/24</b>	"Europe class" workshop report (Dugo Selo)	<a href="http://www.dugoselska-kronika.hr">www.dugoselska-kronika.hr</a> / IP
	"Europe class" workshop report (Dugo Selo)	<a href="http://www.dugo-selo.hr">www.dugo-selo.hr</a> / IP
<b>05/08</b>	Project coordinator about the project; interview	HRT / TV
<b>06/08</b>	Great interest for "Europe class" project	<a href="http://www.pbzinvest.hr">www.pbzinvest.hr</a> / IP
<b>06/12</b>	About "Europe class" project	<a href="http://www.poslovni.hr">www.poslovni.hr</a> / IP
<b>06/14</b>	143 high schools in "Europe class" project	<a href="http://www.civilnodrustvo.hr">www.civilnodrustvo.hr</a> / IP
<b>06/29</b>	Project coordinator about the project; statement	HRT / TV



## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The European Commission (328,447 kn), Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (40,000 kn) and the Royal Norwegian Embassy (40,000 kn) gave their support for 2006/2007 project implementation. Additional funds, through regular GONG activities were covered by the Open Society Institute Budapest, the National Foundation for Civil Society Development and the Academy for Educational Development.

With a donation of 1,800 brochures on European Union and the assessment process, which were given to the school libraries of the high schools participating in the project, the project was supported by the Information Centre of the European Union and Directorate for Information and Education of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration.

<b><u>Itemized Statement of Project Expenses</u></b>	<b><u>HRK</u></b>	<b><u>EUR</u></b> Exchange rate: 1 kn = 0,14 €
<b>1. Salaries and taxes</b>		
a) Project Coordinator	52,181.69	7,094.15
b) Regional Coordinators	57,197.11	7,776.00
b) Trainers	164,633.83	22,382.11
<b>2. Office supplies and equipment</b>	2,476.39	336.67
<b>3. Telephone, fax and postal expenses</b>	24,191.69	3,288.88
<b>4. Travel expenses</b>		
a) Training and evaluation expenses	28,170.11	3,829.75
b) Workshop costs	49,828.88	6,774.28
<b>5. Printed material</b> (brochures, posters, etc.)	51,484.35	6,999.34
<b>6. Other expenses</b> (audit, bank charges, etc.)	46,208.47	6,282.08
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>476,372.52</b>	<b>64,763.24</b>