



„European Class”

- educational workshops for high school seniors -

REPORT

SECOND YEAR // JANUARY – JUNE 2008

Zagreb, June 2008.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

During last seasons of the "I vote for the first time" project, high school teachers of *Politics and Economy* classes who participated in the project, have proposed developing of a similar workshop about European Union for additional education of first-time voters, high school seniors in Croatia. Similar questions and proposals came also 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's about European Union.

In response to that, GONG has developed in cooperation with Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, a new project based on the methodology of the "I vote for the first time" project, which consists of interactive workshops about the European Union for the high school seniors in Croatia during the second semester of the school year.

The goal of the new project was to give the students proper information about the European Union and the assessment process. Through the project, we aim 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, the project contributes 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 first season of *European Class* project in high schools in all parts of the country. During the second term of school year 2006/2007, **601 workshops were held for more than 16,000 high school seniors in 143 Croatian high schools**. 20 educated trainers conducted workshops.

During February 2008, we launched the second season of the project with a goal to educate next 20,000 high school seniors through conducting 800 interactive workshops in all around Croatia. By the end of the second season of project, **22 trainers conducted 309 workshops for more than 8,000 high school seniors**.

After two years of conducting this project, 24,000 high school seniors were educated on 910 workshops in 157 high schools all around Croatia .
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In first two years of the project, European Commission, Delegation of European Commission in Croatia, Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and Royal Norwegian Embassy gave financial support for the project.

The project was officialy recommended by the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sport and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration.

THE PROJECT IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 2007/2008

During this school year, we conducted *European Class* workshops in **79** high schools in the Republic of Croatia. During the second term, **from March 17 to May 12, 2008, 309 workshops** were held. **22 specially educated trainers** conducted the workshops that were attended by **more than 8,000 high school seniors**.

THE AIM OF THE PROJECT

Project aim was to organize 800 workshops in approximately 200 high schools all over Croatia and to inform and educate up to 22,000 high school seniors. Overall objective was to raise awareness on European integration and to decrease the level of misunderstanding and prejudice toward the EU and Croatian membership in the EU.

Since we started developing this project, we were quite aware of the complexity of the main topic of the workshop and of the fact that its presentation would take much longer than 45 minutes of the school class. Therefore, our basic goal was to get the high school seniors interested for the topic, to give them some basic facts but also to encourage them for individual additional education and to get them interested in looking for more information about the European Union.

"EUROPEAN CLASS" WORKSHOPS

The project consists of interactive workshops for the final year students of Croatian high schools. These workshops introduce students to relevant issues of Croatian membership in the European Union in an interesting and interactive way, with an accent on matters concerning youth, their mobility, education and future employment.

The **first part** of the workshop starts with a conversation between the trainer and students about what meaning does the European Union have for them. After that, students are given a brief historical overview of the European integration and an introduction to the main institutions of the European Union.

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

Before the end of every workshop, students have enough time to ask questions and to ask for additional explanations.

During the workshop, trainers/lecturers use four thematic charts to present their subject matter more clearly. The charts contain the important dates and definitions, and these are put up on visible places around the classrooms (usually blackboards).

At the end of the workshop, each student receives 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 students can find additional information.

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

"European Class" workshop is completely interactive – the students guide the trainers through the topics they are most interested in, so trainers give more time to elaboration of those topics.

Extremely important in the workshop is the objectivity and neutrality of trainer's opinion – the trainers are asked not to express their opinion during the workshop or to support either opinion *pro* or *contra* the Croatian membership to the European Union.

COORDINATION OF THE PROJECT

The person responsible for the project implementation on the national level was the Project Coordinator Robert Maračić. He had the assistance of two other members from GONG-a Central office: Sandra Pernar, Program Coordinator and Albert Jedrejčić, Financial Director.

On the regional level, in charge of coordination between trainers/lecturers and schools were regional coordinators – one in each GONG's Regional Office:

- Regional Office Zagreb: Maja Kočiš
- Regional Office Rijeka: Vlasta Šanko
- Regional Office Slavonski Brod: Sanja Bešlić-Kozmus
- Regional Office Zadar: Ivana Marinkovska.

TRAINERS / LECTURERS

A job of trainer on "European Class" project was offered to those who were trainers in "I vote for the first time" project, whose seventh season GONG implemented at the end of 2007, finishing the project in December.

16 trainers (out of 22) 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. Since there was a lack of candidates for trainers in Dalmatia, Slavonia and in Zagreb, a job advertisement was announced on Law Faculties and Faculties of Political Sciences in those regions. An advertisement was also sent to volunteers in GONG's Regional Offices in Zadar, Slavonski Brod and Zagreb. In this way, we have received ten more job applications.

Regarding complexity of topic of the workshop, all candidates received on their home address a brochure "Europska uniJA?" with the links to important websites. The testing of the candidates was conducted at the end of February 2008. After conducting tests and interviews, we selected 22 trainers of the "European Class" project - 6 new trainers joined the 16 trainers who have worked on "I vote for the first time" project.

In total, **22 trainers/lecturers** were selected to perform planned workshops, as follows:

Regional office Zagreb:

- The City of Zagreb: Tena Filipović and Anita Pilić, Svebor Gretić and Vitomir Vela
- Zagreb County, Sisak-Moslavina County and Karlovac County: Kristina Dorić and Tomislav Fresl
- Krapina-Zagorje County, Koprivnica-Krizevci County and Bjelovar-Bilogora County: Ivan Mazal and Sanja Živoder
- Varazdin County and Medjimurje County: Izabela Oletić and Romina Krušec

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 as well.

Regional office Rijeka:

- Istria County: Ivan Nekić and Naim Krasnici
- Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and Lika-Senj County: Tina Benčić and Ivona Car

Regional office Zadar:

- Zadar County and Sibenik-Knin County: Marina Vujević and Josko Bellotti
- Split-Dalmatia County and Dubrovnik-Neretva County: Antonija Stipičić and Rukija Štrkljević

Regional office Slavonski Brod:

- Osijek-Baranya County, Virovitica-Podravina County and Pozega-Slavonija County: Dragan Pupavac and Tomislav Pejak
- Osijek-Baranya County, Brod-Posavina County and Vukovar-Srijem County: Martina Levaković-Banović i Tomislav Šimić

In the beginning of March 2008, two-day long educational seminar for all trainers took place in Zagreb. The seminar was organized in cooperation with the Directorate for Information and Education of the Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and the European Union Information Centre.

Each trainer received a *Trainers' Handbook* and additional materials from the Directorate, which contained all the necessary information for conducting a quality workshop, including rules for reporting to GONG staff. The main goal of the seminar was additional education of trainers about European Union and Croatian accession process.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

We sent an announcement about the beginning of the project to the headmasters of all 350 high schools and *politics and economy* teachers by the end of February 2008. Application deadline was March 7, by which we assigned 624 workshops to 167 schools. Most of these schools have already participated in GONG's educational projects.

High schools from the Medjmurje County, Slavonski Brod-Posavina County and Karlovac County showed the greatest interest in the project. We received the lowest response from the Krapina-Zagorje County, Vukovar-Srijem County and Pozega-Slavonia 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 developed and upgraded a new database for „European class“ project in 2007, from the „I vote for the first time“ database which already existed. The database contained a list of schools and trainers and contact information in all counties and GONG Regional Offices, information on scheduled workshops, information on workshops that were conducted and those that were not yet conducted including the number of students who participated in the workshops and the totals by various parameters. Persons in charge from the GONG Regional Offices and Project Coordinator updated the database on the daily basis.

The first workshops were held on March 17, 2008. One week before, trainers were practicing the performance of workshops with their team partners. During the project's implementation course, trainers were sent packages with material necessary for conducting the workshops.

PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTATION

During 2007, GONG applied to several potential donors for ensuring financial support for the new season of the project. According to applications, most of donors were supposed to announce their decisions in February and at the beginning of March, and prior to that, a financial support from Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, Delegation of European Commission and Royal Norwegian Embassy was ensured. Thereby, the beginning of project season was scheduled for the end of February, when we were to know donors' decisions. In this way, there would be enough time for the implementation of the project before the end of the school year.

Unfortunately, at the beginning of 2008, we were informed by most of potential donors that a deadline for decisions on projects' proposals was set forward for the mid-March and the beginning of April. Therefore, we also postponed the beginning of the project season for beginning of March, and searched for additional sources of funding the project. We have applied to Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations and to several foreign embassies.

With already ensured funds, we started the second project season by organizing educational seminar for trainers/lecturers and sending a call for applications to all high schools in the Republic of Croatia.

At the beginning of April, we received negative answers from several potential donors and all embassies so we had to revise our financial plan and end the project prematurely.

CONDUCTING THE WORKSHOPS AND IMPRESSIONS

In the period between the March 17 and May 12, 2008, we conducted 309 workshops in 79 high schools all over Croatia.

Unlike the last year, trainers noticed much better knowledge among high school seniors about the European Union and Croatian accession process. They noticed also much more positive attitude towards the European integrations among students.

Most of the high school seniors reacted positively to the workshop and actively participated in it by stating their opinions and questions.

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.

Teachers' evaluation was not much different from students' evaluation. The teachers also consider this kind of education very important so they also support the continuity of the project. In addition, in all high schools in which we had to cancel the workshops teachers expressed their regrets for premature end of the project and lack of interest for the project by donors.

Again this year, a great interest was shown for the brochure "Europska uniJA?" and we received several requests for the donation of the same. In April, 1,600 brochures were delivered to the European Union Information Centre, and several packages were donated to the Croatian Agency for Education for their activities. In May, 200 brochures were given to the Alliance of Unions "Naša djeca" with the similar cause – education of their members about European integrations.

PROJECT EVALUATION

Since this season was marked with the problems regarding the financial support for the project, with the intent to conduct as much workshops as possible, funds provided for the evaluation of the project were reassigned for conducting of the workshops.

Thereby, evaluation of this project season was carried out through evaluation questionnaires that were filled out by the teachers in high schools, evaluation papers of high school seniors and evaluation questionnaires of trainers/lecturers.

Teachers stated in their questionnaires that the trainers were very well prepared and educated for their role, they were satisfied with trainers methodology and the way in which they communicated with students, principally their neutrality and objectivity toward the main topic of the workshop. Similar to that, students expressed advantages of this form of learning, also with the accent on trainers' neutrality.

Materials used in the workshop (charts, brochures) were also given positive remarks especially for their usability in education out of the workshop.

Since this was the second project season, trainers did not find necessary to recommend changes of the text of workshop in a greater extent. Still they proposed the shortening of the part of the workshop that deals with the enlargement of the European Union.

THE MEDIA

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. Unfortunately, since this project season ended prematurely, there was not enough time for better promotion of the project in media.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Support for 2007/2008 project implementation was received from the Delegation of European Commission in the Republic of Croatia, Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration and Royal Norwegian Embassy.

<u>Itemized Statement of Project Expenses</u>	HRK	EUR
	Exchange rate: 1 HRK = 0,14 EUR	
1. Salaries and taxes		
a) Project Coordinator	27,757.50	3,886.05
b) Regional Coordinators	28,100.00	3,934.00
b) Trainers	44,522.86	6,233.20
2. Office supplies and equipment	5,511.38	771.59
3. Office rent and utilities	7,321.10	1,024.95
4. Telephone, fax and postal expenses	15,200.50	2,128.07
5. Travel and accomodation expenses		
a) Training and evaluation expenses	14,000.39	1,960.05
b) Workshop travel costs	17,171.00	2,403.94
6. Printed material (brochures, posters, etc.)	21,300.00	2,982.00
7. Other expenses (administrative costs, bank charges, etc.)	19,119.00	2,676.66
TOTAL:	200,003.73	28,000.52