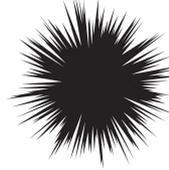




ERSTE Stiftung



**ERSTE Foundation
Award for Social Integration
2011**

Media Information
Prague, 20 June 2011

Croatian project “Shelter and Counselling Centre for Women and Children Victims of Violence” of the Autonomous Women’s House Zagreb wins the First Prize of the ERSTE Foundation Award for Social Integration 2011

The Third Prize winner is also from Croatia: project “Roses of Saint Francis Homeless Shelter in Rijeka” of the Order of St. Francis, Local Chapter “Trsat”

Prague was for two days the centre of social integration, welcoming organisations from 12 CEE countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic and Slovenia) at the final Ceremony of the ERSTE Foundation Award for Social Integration 2011. Over 650 representatives of the civil society, business and media organisations gathered in the famous Barrandov Studios on 20 June 2011 to applaud this year’s winners.

Six additional special prizes were offered: two by the jury; three by all 132 shortlisted organisations, who voted for the best peer projects (awarded with €15,000 each); one by all Erste Group employees, who voted for their favourite project.

The outstanding winners were selected by an international jury out of 132 shortlisted projects who were ranked by a group of national and local experts from a total of 1,850 submitted applications.

Andreas Treichl, chairman of the board of ERSTE Foundation and CEO of Erste Group, handed over the first prize: “We initiated this Award in 2007 because we believe in the existence of societies without prejudices and with equal rights for all. But in order to create such societies, we all need to contribute. These winning organisations dedicate their entire work to achieving this goal. The least we can do is to publicly honour their engagement and outstanding results, and try to follow their example” Treichl said.

36 winners will share 613,000 EUR money prizes, while all 132 organisations will receive benefits such as: media relations support provided by professional PR consultants financed by ERSTE Foundation for a 2-year period; participation in capacity building workshops (on topics such as: developing social businesses as an alternative way of financing, building media relations capabilities, acquiring social media skills); presence on the ERSTE Foundation’s Social Integration Network (www.socialintegration.org/network), an interactive database of best practice projects from CEE countries, whose aim is to attract the attention of potential funders, and thus to connect the non-profit with commercial sector.



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The jury of the ERSTE Foundation Award for Social Integration 2011 was made up of 18 experts in social integration issues: Haris Pašović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Andrea Feldman (Croatia), Terezie Hradilková (Czech Republic), Maria Nemenyi (Hungary), Shkëlzen Maliqi (Kosovo), Vladimir Milčin (Macedonia), Marija Todorovska (La Strada, winning organisation EFASI 2009, Macedonia), Corina Cepoi (Moldova), Mihajlo Jovović (Montenegro), Dana Deac (Romania), Miljenko Dereta (Serbia), Martin Bútora (Slovak Republic), Vlasta Jalušič (Slovenia), Franz Salm-Reifferscheidt (Member of the ERSTE Foundation Board), Andrew Baker, Francis Davis, Sandra Pralong (International Experts), Franz Karl Prüller (Regional Expert).

More about ERSTE Foundation Award for Social Integration here:
www.integrationaward.org

Contact

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ERSTE Foundation

In 2003, ERSTE Foundation evolved out of the Erste Oesterreichische Spar-Casse, the first Austrian savings bank. Currently, ERSTE Foundation holds 25.3% of the capital shares of Erste Group. The foundation invests part of its dividends in the development of societies in Austria and Central and South Eastern Europe. It supports social participation and civil-society engagement; it aims to bring people together and disseminate knowledge of the recent history of a region that has been undergoing dramatic changes since 1989. As an active foundation, it develops its own projects within the framework of three programmes: Social Development, Culture and Europe.



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Information about the winning projects:

First Prize (€40,000): Shelter and Counselling Centre for Women and Children Victims of Violence (Croatia)

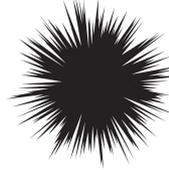
Autonomous Women's House Zagreb (AZKZ) has been enormously influential in pioneering support for victims of domestic violence in Croatia. At an undisclosed address, women and children affected by this societal scourge are given the time, space, and expert help they need to recover and rebuild their lives. Even by the highest international standards, the "Shelter and Counselling Centre for Women and Children Victims of Violence" is extraordinarily successful. It has a +90% success rate in preventing returns to violent situations; the women who recover there all leave the shelter capable of supporting themselves and their children. Starting out in the 1980s when domestic violence was legally ignored and no provision was made for its victims, AZKZ has paved the way in asserting women's rights to a life without violence.

Second Prize (€30,000): The Roma Press Agency (Slovak Republic)

The "Roma Press Agency" counters the negative reporting – due largely to media ignorance – of Slovakia's Roma people. The first stage in setting up the agency involved identifying Roma individuals willing to complete their education and pursue a media career. With the establishment of an editorial office, the newly trained journalists were able to bring greater objectivity to media reporting on Roma issues; they also served as role models, inspiring Roma youngsters to follow their path. The agency's work has led to a dramatic increase in the use of the Roma language in Slovak TV and radio. Innovatively, it has taken the Roma struggle for equality into new spheres of society: middle-class professions, helping not only to integrate a community but also to empower it.

Third Prize (€20,000): Roses of Saint Francis Homeless Shelter in Rijeka (Croatia)

In a country whose laws simply ignore the existence of homelessness, the "Roses of Saint Francis" homeless shelter in Rijeka is a vital resource. Set up by the Secular Franciscan Order, it is, uniquely, open 24 hours a day and offers a comprehensive resocialisation programme. Those who find themselves homeless through addiction, poor psychological or physical health, or lack of family and social support, are helped to again become valued members of society. An expert team and volunteers run the programme, which includes creative activities and group therapy. Around 60% of those who pass through the shelter become "resocialised", with many beating their addictions and finding work and accommodation. Publicising the issues around homelessness is also a key, and so far successful, aim of the project.



Twenty-eight Honours Awards (€16,000 each) went without ranking to the following projects (from 4th to 31st place, in alphabetical order by country):

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Delta Project - Centre for Drama Education, Mostar

Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Mine Victims through Water Sports - Eco Sports Group, Sarajevo

Social Integration of Young People in Podrinja - IPAK - Youth Builds the Future, Tuzla

Youth Culture Festival 2010 - Bridge of Peace, Prijedor

Croatia

Diving for People with Disabilities - Diving Club "GeRonimo", Zagreb

Czech Republic

Fair School - The League of Human Rights, Brno

From an Institution to a Firm and a Flat - JURTA, Děčín - Nebočady

We're in it together - Assistance, Prague

Hungary

Bódvalenke Fresco Village - Hungarian Reformed Church Aid Foundation, Budapest

Integration without boundaries: Baráthegy Farm - Symbiosis Foundation, Miskolc

Retextil - Ecological Recycling Program - Retextil Foundation, Pécs

Romani program not only for the Romani - Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, Budapest

Secret Years - Civil Works Association, Budapest

Kosovo

Integration of Children with Autism in Society - United for Autism, Pristina

SOS New Kindergarten - SOS Childrens Village, Pristina

Macedonia

Creative Minds Create Work Opportunities - Municipal Public Library "Miladinovci Brothers", Radovis

Social Partnership in Responsible Society - Polio Plus, Skopje

Moldova

Educational inclusion of children with disabilities in the Republic of Moldova - HOPE Center, Chisinau

Romania

Better Homes - Foundation for Social Assistance and Youth, Săcele

Close to School - Association for Promoting Social Inclusion, Campia Turzii

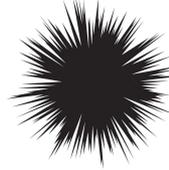
Concordia Bakery - Concordia Humanitarian Organisation, Bucharest

Democracy in Padureni - Pro Democracy Club Association, Timisoara

Diversity, the reality around us! - ACCEPT Association, Bucharest



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International Romani Art Festival - TURN Cultural Association, Timisoara

Serbia

Assisted living - Half Way There, Pančevo

Third Age - Association for Local Development Kamenica, Nis

With Health Against Poverty - Association of citizens and parents of children with needs for special support, Kruševac

Slovak Republic

Social Theatre - a Tool against Social Exclusion and Poverty - The Theatre without Home, Bratislava

Two Special Prizes of the Jury (€15,000 each) were awarded to the projects: "**Hospic**" of the Slovenian Hospice Society, and "**Together for Integration of People with Intellectual Disabilities**" of Women's Safe House from Montenegro.

The Erste Group employees from Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovak Republic, Serbia and Ukraine voted for their favourite project as well. The winner of the **FIRST Choice Prize given by Erste Group employees** is "**Concordia Bakery**" by Concordia Humanitarian Organisation from Romania. The initiative will receive special benefits by BCR, Erste Group's subsidiary and biggest retail bank in Romania.