

CITY OF NIS PROMOTES EUROPEAN LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK

The “European Local Democracy Week” (ELDW) is a pan-European event which aims at boosting local democracy and citizen participation. It is an initiative coordinated by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. Local authorities from all the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe, and their associations are invited to register and organize public events to promote and foster democratic participation at grassroots level. This year main theme of ELDW is “Local Democracy: Building Trust”. Trust between people and authorities is key to the good functioning of democracy, and local authorities play a crucial role in strengthening public confidence in the democratic system of governance. Open government is a simple but powerful idea that government will work better for people if it is transparent, participatory and accountable. These three concepts have now become the cornerstones of good democratic governance. Through this practice, citizens can understand and influence the workings of the authorities and hold them accountable. The main purpose of open government is to ensure better decision making, greater public trust, reduced corruption and more effective public services. Open government includes various practices, such as open data initiatives, access to information laws, political rights, whistleblower protection, public consultation and engagement processes, among many other. Since the right of citizens to participate in the conduct of public affairs at local level is enshrined in the preamble of the European Charter of Local Self-Government of 1985, and detailed in its Additional Protocol of 2009, it is fundamental for an established and functioning local democracy to promote education for democratic citizenship among young people

and children. Moreover, by engaging children and youth, local authorities will understand better their needs and will be able to develop more targeted responses for and with the younger generation, thus building a more inclusive democratic local community.

The first activity planned within ELDW is the presentation of the Youth Council is directed towards presenting the way how young people can approach the Youth Council and get involved in resolving youth issues. The Youth Council is commissioned by the local Assembly. The purpose of the Youth Council is to support, complement and monitor activities directed at youth policy development and implementation. Youth Council is a mechanism which enables young people to take an active role in decision making, and for networking and inter-sectoral cooperation of institutions dealing with the young people. The presentation will be followed by the debate in which the members of the Youth Council and Youth Office will try to provide information and answers to the questions of the general public.

City of Nis Office of the Mayor organizes the visit of the members of the pupils' parliament and senior classes of the primary school Njegos to Nis City Hall. They will have the opportunity to see what the Mayor does, how he makes decisions and ask him questions. The Mayor will provide information what the local government is doing for children and how problems are being solved or new activities being implemented.

Youth Office of the City of Nis is organizing the Youth NGO Fair in order to enable them to present their activities to the young and the way of cooperating with the local authorities and attracting young people to take part in their projects. The local government is supporting the young by supporting the work of youth NGOs. Youth Office improves youth politics in the area of education, sports, free time,

increasing employment, information, health, culture, gender equality, preventing crimes and violence. Some of the services which the Youth Office provides are: financing youth projects, providing career guidance, organizing internships, supporting volunteering, providing free seminars for increasing youth competences, informing the young, etc. Youth Office administrates the Public Call for financing projects for the young intended for the civil sector each year. Since 2012 until now there have been more than 160 projects financed through youth NGOs.

Open data can be viewed as raw material that enables the creation of practical solutions in the public and private sectors and forms a new generation of entrepreneurs and social innovators. City of Nis Office for Local Economic Development and Projects will present the concept of Open Data, good practice examples in Serbia and worldwide, as well as examples of reuse of those sets of data in order to create an added value and better and more transparent services provided to the citizens. The general public will also have the opportunity to have the insight into the open data of the City of Nis, as the result of the project "Open Data Appear on the Map" which has been realized within the national program "Open Data – Open Opportunities", implemented by the UNDP Serbia and the Office for IT and e-Government, supported by the UK Good Governance Fund and the World Bank. The presentation will be followed by the workshop which will provide the participants with the hands on experience to use the open data. The workshop participants will be representatives of local companies and star-ups, students and other individuals who will develop concrete solutions for the territory of the City of Nis.