

## István Pásztor President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina



The eighth convocation of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (constituted on 2nd June 2016) has identified as a strategic priority the implementation of projects based on two "Is" - strengthening institutions and promoting innovation - since - both institutions and innovations are values that link horizontally and vertically: the business community and local authorities, academia, scientific research and public institutions as well as citizens. In the past three years, we have been dedicated to creating incentives to motivate the inhabitants of Vojvodina to remain living in their homeland with a life worthy of man, with full awareness that the significance of implemented projects is not only measured by their importance in regional or local contexts but, above all, by a unit of measure that reflects the availability of services and the mobility of people - with the aim of solving citizens' everyday problems more effectively and easily.

All of our activities were aimed at strengthening regional ties and regional institutions, by developing values of democracy, tolerance, understanding and respect for the human and rights of members of national communities, while creating and democratizing knowledge, stimulating economic growth by investing in research and development, innovation and human capital, and being committed to the promotion and protection of the common good. We cannot speak about the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in the year 2019 beyond the context of developing and promoting various forms of inter-regional and parliamentary cross-border cooperation and, certainly, we cannot speak of the dynamic development of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina outside the value and political climate of the European Union.

As contemporary witnesses of a time of great debate about the future of the European Union, as public officials and with full professional and human responsibility, we are of the view that the processes of internal reforms and EU consolidation cannot be successful without simultaneously opening and enlarging the EU to the Western Balkan countries. Undoubtedly, the intellectual and political debate on the future of Europe must strengthen European solidarity, generate ideas and visions that are strong enough to show which direction to go, and mobilize all the potential to build a powerful, courageous and lucid society. The Western Balkan countries also form part of these potentials. The intellectual and political debate about the future of Europe must restore confidence in the community of values and peace and social justice. Consequently, in the EU association and accession processes, all provincial institutions are involved in building a Europe of "regions, citizens and institutions". Although the accession process takes a long time, with visible disappointment and fatigue, it is undeniable that expectations from the new convocation of the European Parliament and the European Commission are still high. We expect the newly formed European institutions to understand and commit to the Western Balkans.

On that background, during 2019 the Assembly of the AP of Vojvodina has continued with the implementation of the activities started in the previous years in the processes of strengthening the European integrations, and for the sake of illustration we will quote a part of it:

1) Implementation of the activities set out in the Action Plan for the implementation of Chapter 23 "Judiciary and Fundamental Rights"; 2) Active support for the implementation of activities envisaged by the so-called Minority Action Plan (the implementation of the Minority Action Plan includes 7 provincial institutions and 17 national councils of national minorities based in the territory of AP Vojvodina); 3) Development of interregional and parliamentary cross-border co-operation, for example, in January 2017, five projects were approved under the Interreg-IPA Cross-border Programme Hungary-Serbia 2014-2020 Strategic Call, with a total value of over € 28 million, and among those approved is also a project "Multi-coloured Culture" (total value of 3.7 million euros), which among other things provides for the construction of two cultural centres: The Hungarian Cultural Centre in Palić (expected to open at the end of August this year) and the Serbian Cultural Centre in Mórahalom (inaugurated on 8th July 2019); 4) Active participation in European regional fora and macro-regional strategies - the Assembly of AP Vojvodina has been a member of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) since 2002; AP Vojvodina is a member of the Council of Danube Cities and Regions (since 2009), the President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina is Vice-President of the Council; for almost a decade, the Assembly of AP Vojvodina has been involved in the creation and implementation of the Danube Strategy, since 16 Vojvodina municipalities belong to the Danube basin.

Continued commitment to the improvement and development of the Danube Strategy is confirmed by the promotion of cooperation in the Danube-Sava Region, and in this respect in the forthcoming period, the focus will be on defining the level of horizontal and vertical communication on the one hand, and on the other, on identifying areas of cooperation between: the Federal states of Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria (FR Germany), the Vukovar-Srijem County (the Republic of Croatia), the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (the Republic of Serbia), the Posavina Canton (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the Bács-Kiskun and Baranya counties (Hungary). Cooperation will be developed through priority areas: 1. Agriculture, water management, infrastructure and logistics; 2. culture and tourism; as well as 3. economy, economic development and investment. Starting from the fact that European regional policies are based on solidarity, cohesion, inclusiveness and transparency, we see the improvement of cooperation in the Danube-Sava Region as an opportunity to agree on a strategy and guidelines for accelerating the process of regional integration, and conceptualize proposals for joint activities and joint participation in the use of EU funds.

With this text, by presenting the three-year activities of the Eighth convocation of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina, I tried at the same time to answer the question: "What is Vojvodina?". I deeply believe, and I hope that my opinion is shared by our partners of many years from the European regions, that Vojvodina is a space that guarantees freedom, giving the opportunity to every person, belonging to different national, religious and linguistic communities, to keep their identity; in the manner described by the great Vojvodina poet Miroslav Antić, who answered the question: "What is one horizontal line on which one vertical rises?" by giving Kantian answer: "A Man in Vojvodina".



## Investing in the future

### Damir Zobenica

Vice-President of the Assembly  
of European Regions – AER

Vice-President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina,  
Republic of Serbia

Interview with Mr. Damir Zobenica, Vice-President of the Assembly of European Regions and the Vice-President of the Assembly of AP Vojvodina, Republic of Serbia

**Q: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) praises Serbia for attracting foreign investments and it seems that the northern part of the country, the AP Vojvodina, has pulled up most attractive companies. Could you elaborate on this?**

I am very proud to say that after fiscal consolidation, which was the result of a four-year-long implementation of hard macroeconomic policy regime, Serbia has reached a strategic inflection point on the path from crisis to recovery.

In seven years, Serbia has transformed to a low inflation and stable growing economy, with fiscal surplus, declining public debt, significantly reduced external imbalances and labour market recovery. GDP growth in 2018 (highest in a decade) was driven by investments and exports, as well as labour market recovery. Growth trend continues in Q1 and Q2 2019, despite global slowdown.

Government budget posted a surplus in 2017 and 2018 (1.1% and 0.6% of GDP, respectively), and the same trend continued in Q1 2019 (surplus of 0.9% of GDP). Our economy is stable, and the current Government, led by the PM Ms. Brnabic and reinforced with the strong support from the President of the Republic of Serbia Mr. Vucic, is agile in terms of creating a balanced economy capable of growth.

Just this July, in Indjija Municipality, in AP Vojvodina, the Japan's Toyo Tire Company signed plans to open its first production facility in Europe, and invest, in a first phase, 390 million euro and employ more than 500 people. In spring this year, the German company ZF Friedrichshafen AG opened a factory of car, boat and rail components at the industrial zone in Pancevo (AP Vojvodina), which will employ around 300 workers in the initial stage. At the same time Siemens factory in Subotica (AP Vojvodina) expects to double the number of its employees in Serbia thanks to the additional increase in the production. In Serbia, Siemens operates in industry, energy, and oil and gas segments and has two factories, in Subotica and Kragujevac, with over 2,500 employees.

And this is just the tip of the iceberg concerning the foreign investments in Serbia. At the same time, we are strongly supporting domestic SME's and development and creation of new SME's, especially in the field of agriculture and IT.

**Q: As an AER Vice-president, last year you launched the First Regional Business Forum that hosted more than 140 companies from 3 continents. The results were very impressive and this year, Vojvodina is hosting the Second Regional Business Forum together with the Assembly of European Regions (AER).**

Last year, we had very good attendance, 140 companies from 16 different countries (including highest representatives from Chambers of Commerce of Turkey and Egypt), which made our event very diverse and successful.

The aim of the Regional Business Forum is to connect regional chambers of commerce, regional development agencies and/or other institutions supporting SME development and enhance regional investment climate. I am excited to see that the first business forum produced good results. At the meeting within the AER we have agreed to make this Forum a traditional event, giving regions a range of opportunities to connect, not only culturally and historically, but at the commercial and business level as well.

This year, we and the AER, together with the regional Chambers of Commerce, Regional Development Agencies and European Entrepreneurs Network, are hosting companies from different continents again at the Second Regional Business Forum that will be held in the first week of October. Last year several companies signed the contract, as a result of the B2B meetings that we facilitated. I would like to say that the reason why this event is so successful is the fact that the participation at the Regional Business Forum is free of charge.

As a Vice-president of the Assembly of the AP Vojvodina, I am especially pleased to be the part of the regional government of Serbia that recognises business opportunities and creates new possibilities for its citizens and invests in the future.\*

Investors who are opening their facilities in Serbia have great possibilities for export of their products. Serbia can serve as a manufacturing hub for duty-free exports to a market of more than 1 billion people that includes the European Union, the Russian Federation, USA, Kazakhstan, Turkey, South East Europe, the European free trade agreement members, and Belarus. This customs-free regime covers most key industrial products, with only a few exceptions and annual quotas for a limited number of goods.

\*Development Agency of Serbia



## Enhancing regional development and interregional cooperation

### Ognjen Bjelić

Provincial Secretary for Regional Development,  
Interregional Cooperation and  
Local Self-Government

The Provincial Secretariat for Regional Development, Interregional Cooperation and Local Self-Government is continually focusing its activities on concrete measures aimed at enhancing the regional and local environment in the AP Vojvodina. We strive, through our commitment, to produce results that are clearly visible to our citizens, as well as to establish tangible forms of cooperation with our neighbouring partners, as the most active proponents of regional stability and connecting. First of all, through the institutional mechanism of the Budget Fund, established by the Provincial Government for the purpose of implementing the measures of the AP Vojvodina development policy, which also assigned the operational role to our Secretariat in carrying out the defined category of incentives, in 2017 and 2018, we implemented three public calls for proposals for creation of new jobs, whereas in one call for proposals we allocated funds for procurement of equipment for small and medium-sized enterprises. In these calls for proposals, the total of 770 million RSD was allocated for approximately 1500 new jobs. In 2019 we have reaffirmed the validity of this financial instrument that provides support to business entities and continued the positive dynamics of their co-funding. Furthermore, we have ensured the continuity and stability of that rather generous form of support, by allocating, through calls for proposals, additional funds, worth almost 300 million RSD, to business entities in the territory of AP Vojvodina for the same purposes. We believe this to be an extremely important factor in reducing the unemployment rate and stimulating the economic growth, which are the two crucial macroeconomic indicators of the overall AP Vojvodina development.

In the sphere of interregional cooperation, the Provincial Secretariat has successfully coordinated a number of activities concerning the signing of interregional agreements, creating the environment suitable not only for pursuing diverse forms of cooperation with compatible regions, but also additionally stimulating the European integration process of our country. At present, we have as many as forty active interregional agreements with the total of thirty European and other regions, which has lifted the intensity of our interregional cooperation to a very high level. It is essential to emphasise that the importance of these agreements is reflected in concrete arrangements, particularly in the field of economic cooperation, which has contributed to activation of foreign companies intending to implement their investment projects in the AP Vojvodina in the form of foreign direct investments.

The Provincial Secretariat, in cooperation with other provincial institutions, has taken an active part in all available cross-border cooperation projects within the IPA II programme of the European Union. Currently, there are 24 ongoing cross-border and transnational cooperation projects, worth 46 million EUR in total. The fact is that never before has such a great financial potential been invested in this region, which will certainly improve the mutual cohesion factor, enhance the cross-border infrastructure and result in further development of economic relations with neighbouring countries. Finally, the Provincial Secretariat assigns a great value to good cooperation with local self-government units, by fostering the participatory "bottom-up" approach and taking care of the actual needs in the functioning of local institutions and related civil society stakeholders. Autonomy of the local self-government sector in our system has been very pronounced, so the provincial administration has a mainly facilitating role, in terms of enhancing the local institutions. Based on the financial plan in 2017 and 2018, the Provincial Secretariat launched the total of ten calls for proposals for municipalities and cities, associated with joint projects supported by local budgets, with the total of 56 million RSD of the funds allocated. In 2019 we have launched the call for proposals for additional 20 million RSD for municipalities, with the aim of improving their administrative capacities in the exercise of local competences and more efficient provision of services to citizens at the local level, being the level at which more than 70 percent of their overall life and business-related needs are met.



## Pančevo – Vojvodina’s economic lighthouse

**Saša Pavlov**  
Mayor of the City of Pančevo

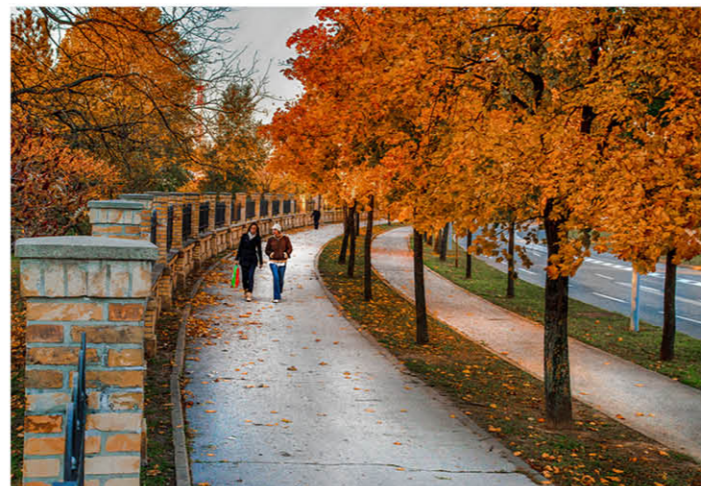
Pančevo – the city with a growing number of SMEs, family-owned businesses and craft shops, the city in which the rate of unemployment is constantly decreasing, the cultural centre in which festivals and events, such as the International Art Biennial, International Pančevo Carnival, Weifert Days, renowned Pančevo Jazz Festival and other cultural events are held. The city which with its 26 national communities having lived together for centuries reflects the spirit of Europe. The city with developed agricultural production, but also the seat of modern industrial production, with an influx in the form of direct foreign investments. The administrative centre of South-Banat District and driving force of Vojvodina, Serbia and the wider region – the city for everyone!



After 40 years of waiting, Pančevo got the first direct Greenfield investment, the world’s global leader in the field of automotive components, ZF Company (ZF Friedrichshafen AG) from Germany. This investment is one of the largest ones in Serbia, which will amount to EUR 160 million in total in its two phases and provide at least 1000 new workplaces. The first factory, i.e. the first phase of the investment has been finished and the opening ceremony was held on 12 June 2019 in the presence of the President of the Republic of Serbia. 400 people have already been employed in the first phase of the construction of the German ZF Company. The construction of the second phase and the research center as the third phase is underway. The arrival of ZF has shown how important this is because such a reputable company immediately attracted new investments.

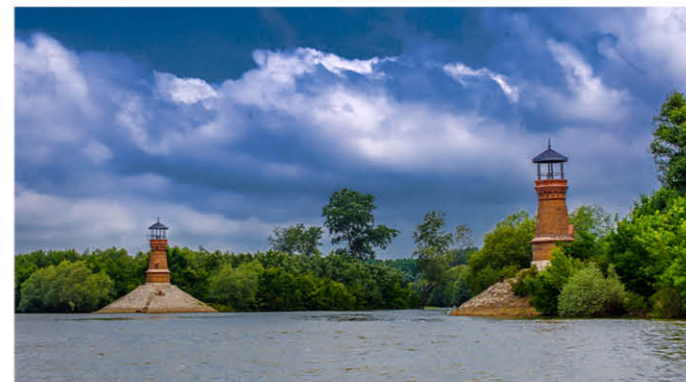
The ZF investment would certainly not be in Pančevo if we had not carried out financially demanding activities in the previous years to define and equip the North Business Zone, in which local companies found their place covering an area of 6 hectares of land in total with a capacity for at least 150 new jobs and as a momentum for the further development of most important micro and small business sector.

There would be no functional business zone if we had not made the decision to take on the most serious infrastructure project in the last ten years, which is being implemented on the territory of Pančevo, and it is the construction of the city sewage collector known as Potamiš Collector, which



is co-financed by the Provincial Government, making Pančevo one of the few local governments in Serbia that have this infrastructure necessary for the quality and safe functioning of the utility sector and further attraction of new investments.

Moreover, I have to underline that the fast and quality administrative apparatus of the City Administration has allowed to provide rapid necessary logistical support for two large investments at the site of the South Industrial Zone, i.e. the construction of deep processing plant and cogeneration plant, an investment of Gazprom Energy Holding, which is implemented according to plan, and these plants will provide employment for additional ca. hundred citizens in the coming years.



The fact that there is interest in investing private capital into the public sector proves that the economic environment we have created has been recognized as an incentive. With that in mind, Pančevo is a pioneer in the country and the first city to enter into public-private partnership projects – by implementing 3 major projects that will significantly improve the quality of utilities - public lighting, public transportation and the construction and reconstruction of local roads exceeding 65 km while maintaining the stability of public finances. This will improve competitiveness in the labour market and allow people to stay and make money here.



Given the process of re-industrialization we have unstopably started, it is realistic to expect that in the coming years there will be a trend of demographic growth, which will again assume further improvement in the quality of service provision in the field of health, culture, education and branding of Pančevo into a city of event tourism and utilising the full potential of the city’s location on two rivers - the Tamiš and the Danube.

The complete reconstruction of the quay in Pančevo is planned to commence in 2020. The plan involves building several children’s playgrounds and a large sports and recreation centre with volleyball, handball, basketball and futsal courts. The plan also involves the preparation for catering facilities - small prefabricated facilities with a garden to be built near the bank of the Tamiš. The plans do not end there, and in addition to the reconstruction of the existing hiking trails, there is a wish to build new hiking and biking trails. In the near future, a skate park should be built, which would be used as such in spring, summer and autumn, whereas as an ice rink in winter.



The new investors, the opening of new workplaces, as well as the revitalisation of the Potamiš are the most important strategic goals of the city administration. Pančevo is facing a new development cycle and the development of the following seven-year strategy, on the pillars of what we have achieved in the previous period. That is why we are proud of the accomplished results and we are enthusiastic about the next phase, the one which should position Pančevo as a rich and developed economic and industrial city in the long run, a city which is growing in every aspect, highly urbanized, infrastructurally well-equipped, a city of high standards in terms of utility services, fertile for work and comfortable to live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



# THE RESPONSE TO THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGE: *YOU NOW*



At the beginning of the process, we asked the question – why does Novi Sad want to become the European Youth Capital? First, we asked young people and representatives of organisations. They informed us about their challenges and problems, things they wanted to improve, as an answer, we designed our programme. We have deeply entered the year of the capital when we are counting hundreds of thousands of young people, who have undergone the OPENS programmes, thousands of activities, tens of manifestations supported by OPENS, tens of thousands of seconds of radio and TV programmes, hundreds of thousands of views on social networks, tens of thousands of young people who have undergone the Youth Club programme, and finally, we have covered thousands of kilometres.

## *YOU NOW*

We have addressed the needs aiming to improve young people's lives, to increase participation in the social-political process with a strong feeling of "ownership" of the development of the city. We had testing years (2017 and 2018) and programmes which were pilot ones and heated up while we were collecting feedback from young people. Hence, this year, we have had a much larger Festival of Colours for over 4000 of people, participatory budgeting for twice more secondary schools and secondary-school pupils, an educational programme with new technologies - Young People, Great Deeds, conference on innovations in youth work after the youth worker has been recognized as a profession this year, or the three-day fundraising congress and the goal for 500,000 young people to undergo our programmes until the end of 2020. Young people are directly engaged in programme creation when it comes to youth activities, as well as in their implementation. We have directly built the capacities of some young people who, after being volunteers, are now members of the OPENS team.



Photo by Vladimir Veličković, OPENS

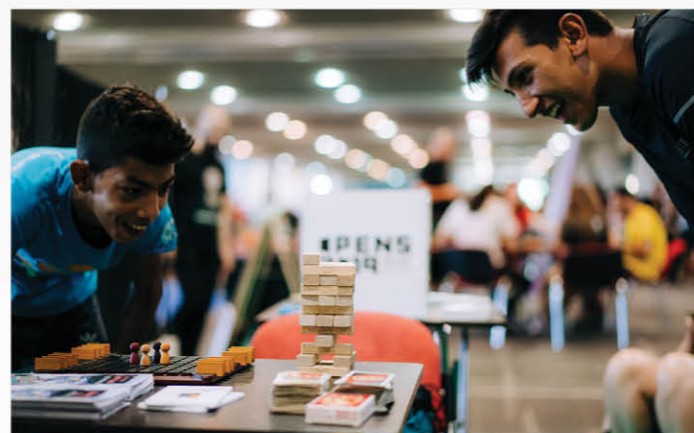


Photo by Vladimir Veličković, OPENS

## *NEW NOW*

The success of OPENS is not only counted by numbers. Youth organizations have been supported systemically with 3-year programme grants, allowing them to improve their activities and increase their capacities, and at the same time to improve their programmes for the young. Young people have applied for grants, they are leading the programmes and they are their beneficiaries for at least 3 years.

In October, Novi Sad will host a round table for the youth capitals of Europe and Africa with an idea to connect better young from the two regions and to create sustainable channels of communication, programmes and cooperation. The objective is to make the "Declaration of Novi Sad" after which, the European and African capitals could cooperate more closely in the future, in which one of the key partners is the European Youth Forum as the most representative youth body on the territory of Europe.

Moreover, in November, also in Novi Sad, we are gathering the mayors of all previous European Youth Capitals as a progress of recent cooperation, and further, as an improvement of the network via its formalization, clearly defined status and signing of the protocol of cooperation. And, most prominently, decision-makers have recognized that the youth and youth organisations play an important role in the society. It has been recognized that young people need to be asked about what they need. Moreover, a system and mechanisms at the city level that will be permanently implemented, and more importantly, sustainable, need to be built. And not only locally, but also throughout Serbia, after having initiated the National Capital project. If Novi Sad was an example of best practice in terms of youth policy in Serbia before winning the title, today it is a leader in the region.

## *OPEN NOW*

In the year when Novi Sad is the European Youth Capital, when it is no longer important to talk about the programmes themselves and the changed image of the city. Now is the time to talk about heritage.

## *YOUTH CENTRE AND YOUTH FACILITIES*

Novi Sad has 1304 civil society organisations, 10% of which are youth organisations and organizations for the youth, and most of them participate in the OPENS2019 programme. The City of Novi Sad has a good youth structure that is defined and in accordance with the Law on Youth, National Youth Strategy, Provincial Youth Action Plan and Local Action Plan. These structures and mechanisms ensure youth participation, the implementation and development of youth policies and the quality of youth service delivery. However, Novi Sad does not have enough room for the youth and youth organisations, and after 2019 we will have the first Youth Centre covering a surface of 2000 m2 in the future Youth Creative Polis. A centre that will be run by young people.

A fund for the personal development of the young. One of the needs arising from the overall implementation of the OPENS programme is the Fund for Young People whose objective would be to ensure funds or scholarships for the young to receive different formal and non-formal education, to improve their skills or knowledge. The idea is for the scholarships or grants to return by applying the received knowledge in the local community afterwards.

The programme for building the capacities of youth organisations and youth workers. The programmes of support for youth organisations and youth workers, which are being implemented, are becoming "tailor-made" next year. Each organization will receive support exactly in that area that they lack on the basis of a previous analysis of their needs.

Perhaps you would not say if led only by first impressions, history or architecture that Novi Sad is a city of young people. As a perfect blend of modern and traditional, openness and tolerance, this city has inspired more than 400,000 people to express themselves through different activities. Each month, Novi Sad puts on a new colour and becomes over and over again the host of a number of festivals, fairs and celebrations, aimed, first of all, at young people. In September, Novi Sad became

the OPENS district which fully directed the young towards the local community and inspired interaction through attractive programmes (from extreme sports stunts, over a youth camp, to mural painting).

On 23rd September, young people tried to break the Guinness world record together, and several hundreds of young people from the whole country listened to the first LinkedIn lecture in Serbia within the framework of the fundraising congress. Until the end of the year, we will have started campaigns focusing on girls and women. And the year of the capital is to be closed by the young, on the trail of new stories. And now, at every corner, you can find the traces of history and blend of cultures. The city whose rhythm you must hear to be able to feel it. The city which celebrates the diversity, energy and activism of young people! This is the city led by young people, students, artists. The city for curious, dynamic and motivating people. This is the city you wish to experience! And, this is the European Youth Capital.



Photo by Vladimir Veličković, OPENS



Photo by Vladimir Veličković, OPENS



F R A I H R B  
R N S B O W R  
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M R E A R T S

## Novi Sad – European Capital of Culture that revives culture and makes it a lifestyle

*Changes in the cultural ecosystem of Novi Sad are already visible, although there is still a year and a half until 2021, when it will hold the European Capital of Culture title. By using this important title as a trigger to put the programme narrative 'For New Bridges' into practice, it is certain that the ECoC project leaves to the future Novi Sad solid legacies that improve the cultural image of the city: new programmes, new processes, engaged people (citizens, cultural institutions, associations, organisations, artists) and lastly new places for culture.*

Four new platforms, out of eight that are planned, have been initiated through the ECoC project so far. They are the programme base of the 'Novi Sad 2021 – European Capital of Culture' project, within which more than 500 events have been organised so far. The 'Fortress of Peace' platform in June brought truly exceptional artistic contents: exhibitions of Andy Warhol, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and new tourist destination – sculpture that was created by the famous artist Yoko Ono. Just as this June explored the topic of peace, May was dedicated to young people from all over Europe within the programme platform 'Future of Europe'.



Throughout the year, the capital of Vojvodina through different projects and programmes gathers artists from the region. Within the Doček 2019 and 7527 (two New Year's Eves according to two different calendars, Julian and Gregorian), the future ECoC demonstrated its authenticity through more than 50 events, hosting more than 300 performers from Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Montenegro, Poland, Germany, Romania, Italy, Russia, USA, China and France, among whom were violinist of the London Philharmonic Orchestra Mr Roman Simović, ensemble of Roby Lakatos from Hungary, famous DJ duo Filatov & Karas from Russia, as well as many Balkan artists.

*Another proof that Novi Sad is on track to becoming an exceptional Capital of Culture comes from independent experts from European institutions – European Parliament, European Commission, Council of Europe and Committee of the Regions. After the second monitoring report that the European Capital of Culture submitted in May this year, the assessment of experts is overwhelmingly positive: 'The progress made since the first monitoring and the monitoring visit are promising', is one of the comments that the 'Novi Sad 2021' project got in the Report of the ECoC monitoring panel.*

### ■ New places for Novi Sad

Last year, Novi Sad also got new places for culture. The old factory for silk dying was restored and repurposed into the 'Svilara' Cultural Station, which continues to foster cultural heritage through its programmes. Last September, the space of former shooting ranges became the 'Egység' Cultural Station. With the goal to decentralise cultural content, as well as to include citizens and local communities, three additional Cultural Stations are planned in parts of the city that are further from the city centre. Another great destination is currently under construction – Creative Polis, which is being built in the place of the 'Petar Drapšin' industrial complex, the so called 'Kineska' Quarter, and will host cultural and creative industries. Culture is also on the move within the European Capital of Culture project, so culture on wheels arrives to all parts of the city thanks to the 'Caravan' Mobile Cultural Station.

### ■ Kaleidoscope of Culture is in focus among city's events

The entire Novi Sad became a stage in August and September, during Kaleidoscope of Culture. Following the trend set up last year, this year's edition of Kaleidoscope gathered more than 1000 artists, who expressed the culture of unity in an authentic way through more than 400 programmes and showed that Novi Sad revived culture and made it a lifestyle through various artistic expressions. All of this is done to reach the vision of the 'Novi Sad 2021 – European Capital of Culture', which is: 'The beginning of new. Now!'





European Affairs Fund  
of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina

## European Affairs Fund of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina

**Vidosava Enderić**

*Director of the European Affairs Fund of  
Autonomous Province of Vojvodina*

The European Affairs Fund of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (EAF APV) is an umbrella institution for EU affairs in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina that has been contributing to Vojvodina's institutional capacity building for a number of years, developing and implementing joint projects with regional and other European partners, promoting common European values in Vojvodina, conducting educational activities in the field of European integrations, and through the Vojvodina European Office in Brussels, presenting, promoting and increasing the economic, scientific, cultural, educational and tourist capacities of the AP Vojvodina.

### Project activities

Vojvodina is a leader in withdrawing funds under the Cross-border Cooperation Programmes (CBC) programmes available to the Republic of Serbia thanks to its good geographical position and the fact that it borders three EU Member States. In the previous two years, only within the framework of the CBC programmes, 170 projects (total value of ca. EUR 127.7 million) have been approved EU co-financing, whereas 129 projects have been from Vojvodina (total value of ca. EUR 115 million). Thus, out of the total value of projects approved under the CBC programmes, almost 90% of the funds have been allocated to beneficiaries from Vojvodina. In that respect, in cooperation with the provincial administration, local authorities, regional and other European partners and relevant entities, the EAF APV creates and submits project applications under the open EU calls for proposals and other donors, and implements the approved projects. So far, the EAF APV has submitted applications for the EU financial assistance provided for the Republic of Serbia, and thus to the AP Vojvodina, via the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), including the Cross-border Cooperation Programmes with Croatia, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Romania and the transnational programmes: the Adriatic-Ionian Transnational Programme and Danube Transnational Programme, as well as the EU programmes available to the Republic of Serbia, such as Europe for Citizens, the Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection - ECHO, etc. In the past two years, the EAF APV has implemented 17 EU projects, whose value exceeds EUR 19 million, in the area of socio-economic development, agriculture, sustainable energy resources, environmental protection, water management, public health, tourism, innovation, entrepreneurship, sports and culture.

### Training courses

The European Affairs Fund of AP Vojvodina organises training courses in the field of project cycle management, participation in EU calls for proposals, as well as other development programmes offered by Europe. The training courses are of different types, such as the Specialised Programme "Management of Regional Development through EU Funds" implemented in cooperation with universities, the tailor-made training course "EU Funding Opportunities" lasting 3 or 5 days, visits to municipalities "FEP Tours". The training courses are aimed at employees of the provincial government, provincial administration, local authorities, development agencies, chambers of commerce, public utility enterprises, faculties, research institutes, civil society organisations and other institutions that may be beneficiaries of EU funds.

### Specialised Programme "Management of Regional Development through EU Funds"

The European Affairs Fund of AP Vojvodina has implemented five cycles of the Specialised Programme "Management of Regional Development through EU Funds" and the sixth cycle is ongoing. The main objective of the Programme is information dissemination on EU processes and regional policies, as well as on the importance and opportunities for accessing EU funds. So far, ca. 200 participants have completed the Programme and they are now contributing to the development and EU integration processes in their surroundings.

### Antenna of Creative Europe Culture Desk Serbia



Based on the signed agreement between the European Affairs Fund of Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the Antenna of Creative Europe Culture Desk Serbia was established in the premises of the Fund. This created the conditions for information dissemination about the programme and calls for proposals, provision of training courses at interested institutions, consulting and technical support to potential applicants, as well as the overall promotion of the Creative Europe programme - Culture sub-programme. Our goal is to be ready for receiving funds which will significantly be increased following Serbia's accession into the EU and the opening of EU structural and investment funds. At the beginning, our results will have a significant impact on the allocation of funds for Serbia in the future period. We must be ready to stand side by side with our European partners and be either as successful or even more successful in withdrawing available funds.



## The Vojvodina European Office in Brussels Bringing Europe to Vojvodina and Vojvodina to Europe

Already for eight years, since 2011, the Vojvodina European Office in Brussels has been presenting, promoting and increasing the cooperation of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina with various European regions, EU institutions, and other institutional and non-institutional actors in different fields such as economy, science, culture, education and tourism. Thus, our activities in the recent period have been of various kind. In order to bring your attention and our Brussels office closer to you, we would like to emphasise the most important ones.

In the first place, in 2019 particularly, the City of Novi Sad is holding the European Youth Capital title which we have proudly promoted, together with OPENS19 Foundation, DG EAC of the European Commission, and with our partners from Oslo Region (Norway), City of Maribor (Slovenia) and Veneto Region (Italy). Furthermore, the results of youth and social policies implemented and realised in the AP of Vojvodina on the occasion of holding the respective title will be proudly presented during the 2019 European Week of Regions and Cities (EWRC) contributing to a more socially integrated Europe. Promoting youth is very often related to promoting culture, in that respect the "2020 Troubadours" project financed under the Creative Europe programme was launched in Brussels at the beginning of 2019, and Vojvodina was proudly represented by „Etnofest“ from Subotica and the City of Novi Sad, which will hold another title in 2021 – the European Capital of Culture.

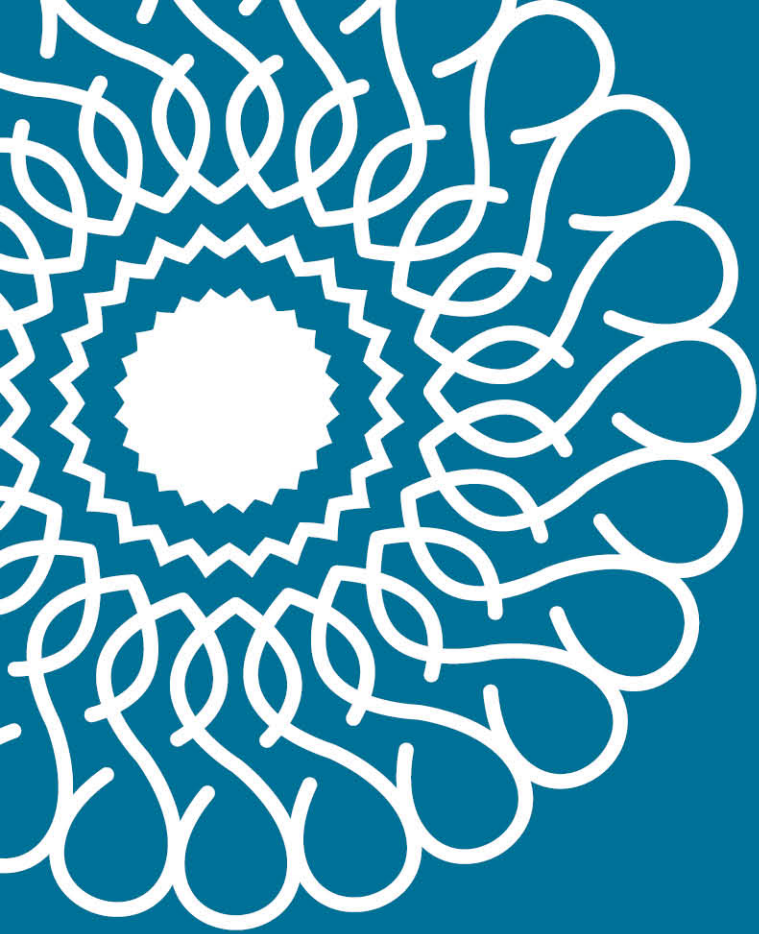
During the year, twelve out of 45 mayors of local municipalities from Vojvodina visited Brussels in various capacities. They used the opportunity to meet with different EU officials and other representatives, particularly those who are in charge of regional and local development, accession funds, enlargement issues and similar. Our Brussels representatives orderly meet the EU officials in charge of regional policies, among them representatives of the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions, delegated rapporteurs for Serbia etc. Such activities provided us the opportunity to represent Vojvodina's interest as well as to make our responsive contribution in various official documents, such as reports and declarations directly related to our European integration path. Active participation in that regard was also carried out by provincial

representatives during the meetings of Joint Consultative Committee of the Republic of Serbia and the Committee of the Regions regularly held in Brussels.

At the same time, our activities could be described as a two-way road. By bringing Vojvodina to Europe, the Vojvodina European Office also brought Europe to Vojvodina. Interregional initiatives from Brussels resulted in signing several Memorandums of Cooperation with European regions or relevant institutions during the year. High delegations from the Italian region of Lombardy and German State of Baden-Württemberg have recently been in Novi Sad and the Vojvodina European Office is looking forward to connecting the province with several regions with whom Vojvodina is not a traditional partner. Peculiarly, some of those have a great potential of being partners in the main sectors, which are common, such as agriculture and digitalisation. Endeavours in that regard have also led to the increased interest of investors from the Benelux, Italy, and Germany in Vojvodina in the recent period.

The Vojvodina European Office is continually bringing Vojvodina and Europe closer to each other and we are very honoured to welcome you again during the 2019 EWRC in Brussels. Nevertheless, we hope you will entrust your confidence in the programme we prepared presenting our youth, our culture, and our institutional endeavours in contributing towards our common European future.





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