



PRESS RELEASE

The Annual VIRTUS Corporate Philanthropy Excellence Awards in Serbia for the Most Responsible Companies

December 10th, 2008. – On Wednesday, December 10th, *The Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Mladjan Dinkić, His Excellency Cameron Munter the Ambassador of the United States of America*, distinguished sportsman *Vlade Divac* and the *Balkan Community Initiatives Fund* have officially presented the second annual VIRTUS awards in the House of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia.

These awards are given to companies and business entities which have distinguished themselves by supporting non-profit organizations working for the public good over the past year.

During the competition which lasted from September 1st to October 15th 2008, there were a total of 77 nominations submitted in all six categories. It is especially significant to notice a great number of new companies and media that applied this year.

The Selection Committee responsible for reviewing and ranking nominations consisted of known representatives from different sectors: Ivan Vejvoda, Executive Director of the Balkan Trust for Democracy, Dragan Bisenić, Editor-in-Chief of Ekonomist magazine, Ana Firtel Vlajić, Executive Director of the Foreign Investors Council, Aleksandar Djukić, Marketing Director of „PriceWaterHouseCoopers“, Srba Jovanović, representative of the PR Society of Serbia, and Vlade Divac, celebrity sportsman, President of the Humanitarian Organization Divac.

Like the last year, the awards were given in six categories, four main and two special, with the introduction of the special recognition for state institutions that contributes to the development of philanthropy and CSR :

- ***Main Award for Contribution at the National Level*** goes to company **Telenor d.o.o.** – As a company which strategically and wisely gives support to young talents through partnership with Petnica Science Center, projects such “Move your city” where nineteen cities in Serbia are decorated with wall paintings, the first in the region University center for students with disabilities, project “Social Club”.
- ***Award for Contribution to the Local Community Where the Company Operates*** goes to **U.S. Steel Serbia** which stood up with continuous and committed work, improving quality of schools, buying computers and teaching equipment, improving quality of healthcare, assistance to children and most vulnerable members of society, giving scholarships, initiating cultural events in Smedrevo, Šabac and Kučevo.

- **Award for Small and Medium-size Enterprise** goes to **Sto posto** - A small enterprise which provides support at the local level in Velika Plana municipality and Belgrade. The areas in which they act are social and health care, education, religion and cultural affairs, and support to non profit organizations. Also, they have helped many times local amateur sport associations and individuals in need.
- **Award for Support for the Most Innovative Project of the Year** goes, for the second consecutive time to **Erste Bank a.d. Novi Sad** for “EU Office” project. Through its EU Office, bank contributes to the promotion of European integration process and at the same time supports projects
- Also, two special recognition awards were given: **Award for Long-term Partnership Between Business and Non-profit Sector**, which goes to company **Eurobank EFG Štedionica a.d. Beograd** for successful cooperation with the Center for Development of Inclusive Society (CRID), building the first park in the region for children with disabilities, and redesigned branch offices according to “Design for All” concept ; and,
- **Special Award for Media Contribution** which goes again to **RDP B92 a.d.** for its coverage and broadcasting adds of various B92 campaigns such as fighting against domestic violence, prevention of breast cancer, safety in traffic, promotion of voluntary blood donations, etc.

This year, **Special recognition for institutional contribution to the philanthropy and CSR** is introduced. The first of its kind goes to the **National Bank of Serbia** for committed and inspiring work in this field, numerous socially responsible actions, school for savings, initiation of UN Global Compact in our country, and excellent example which gives to other banks on the market, making local banking sector one of the leaders in social responsibility and community giving.

These VIRTUS award, which aim to further promote and stimulate philanthropy development in Serbia, are organized by the Balkan Community Initiatives Fund in cooperation and under the auspices of USAID, Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, VIA Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF), C.S. Mott Foundation, Economist Media Group (EMG), Consulting Agency Executive Group, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, “e-Kapija”, the PR Society of Serbia, the City of Belgrade and National Assembly of Serbia.

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