

Green talks - "Young and Green"

The Institute for Development and Innovation organized the event Green talks „Young and Green“ on the 28 September, 2021 in Belgrade, Serbia. The event aimed to present the upPE-T project in Serbia, but also to gather the young experts and discuss the topics such as green economy, environmental protection, sustainable development and the importance of activism in the local communities and social impact of the recycling and waste management.

The opening remarks were given by the Mr. Antoan Avignon, Program Manager for Environment and Climate Change from the EU Delegation in Serbia, and Nenad Jevtović, director of the Institute for Development and Innovation. Mr. Avignon highlighted the importance of a green transition for young people and noted that young people really want a better quality of life and a future that does not carry the risk of climate change. Avignon reminded the audience of a young activist from Sweden, Greta, who is a good example of how young people can move millions of people from all over the world, and emphasized that more such movements and people like her are needed.

Mr. Avignon emphasized the importance of joint cooperation at all levels when it comes to the field of environmental protection, because this challenge cannot be solved unilaterally. Avignon reminded the audience of the support provided by the EU through the financing of projects and initiatives such as the upPE-T project.

Nenad Jevtović, director of the Institute for Development and Innovation - IDI, presented the IDI in detail and upPE-T project, as well. Nenad highlighted three programs that Institute implements: Youth and migration; Public finance and economic development; and program Green economy where is the upPE-T the most important project.

The introductory speeches were followed by panel discussion. Nina Cvetanović, Belgrade open school, explained the difference between the terms such as ecology, environmental protection and sustainable development. Nina also spoke about environmental policy and how much the environment is actually a political issue.

Green talks - "Young and Green"

As an example of good practice, Cvetanović mention the project "Sustainable Development Goals for All", where one of the partners is the Belgrade Open School, which in cooperation with the BFPE Foundation for Responsible Society provided support to local governments (Sremski Karlovci and Priboj) during the adoption of the Plan development in the field of environment.

On behalf of the BFPE Foundation for Responsible Society, Lidija Radulović, explained in more detail the mechanisms for advocating the goals of sustainable development and highlighted that citizen must be more informed. Lidija also spoke about the best ways to involve citizens, and as one of the most effective examples, she mentioned the round tables that bring together both decision-makers and citizens. Ms. Radulović referred to the process of European integration, and especially Chapter 27, where she mentioned that Serbia is stagnant on that issue, but also that there are various reasons why this is happening.

Milica Mišković, Forum for Responsible Business, explained to the audience what corporate social responsibility is and explained the relationship between socially responsible business and sustainable development, as well as the role of companies in achieving the goals of sustainable development.

Ms. Mišković also said that the question of whether companies will decide to be socially responsible is influenced by two things, primarily consumer attitudes, (example given, whether they will buy more certain products if they are recyclable) but also state laws and regulations (example given, whether there are certain facilities for environmentally responsible companies). As examples of good practice, Milica mentioned two products, which are degradable styrofoam based on mushrooms and crayons made of recycled paper.

Green talks - "Young and Green"

Researcher from Institute for Development and Innovation, Aleksandra Branković spoke about the impact of all measures in the field of environmental protection on the everyday life of citizens. Aleksandra emphasized that inequality in the world is growing, and that the Sustainable Development Goals are very important for solving this challenge, having in mind that their basis is the motto Leave no one behind.

She talked about how much the socio-economic status of citizens influences the decision whether to recycle or not. Branković pointed out that it is mostly women who make the decision to buy groceries within their families, which later affects their recycling. In the end, Aleksandra pointed out that in addition to the awareness of the citizens, the key to success lies in the involvement of the state and the adoption of laws and regulations.

Finally, Nenad Jevtović, director of the Institute for Development and Innovation, shared with the panelists and participants of the first Green Talk the attitude that the Institute advocates that the issue of the Green Agenda and the green economy should be further brought closer to citizens through concrete analyzes and indicators, and all in order to take an additional interest in green issues and thus influence economic policy makers.

The event was moderated by Emilija Dolovački, Green economy programme manager, Institute for Development and Innovation.