

## Press release

Belgrade, November 20<sup>th</sup> 2017

### Seven best „Ideas for better tomorrow“ awarded with EUR 40,000

Today, UniCredit Foundation, UniCredit Bank, Foundation Ana and Vlade Divac and Smart Kolektiv presented the winners of third edition of competition “Idea for better tomorrow” which aims to contribute to development of social entrepreneurship, as well as finding ideas for products and services which can improve image of Serbia in the region and abroad. In period from June 6th till July 18th 2017, over 130 ideas were registered. During the second phase the commission selected 15 finalists which suggested best ideas and with who the experts worked on development of business plans. After the creation and evaluation of business plans, expert commission, based on innovation of ideas and sustainability of projects, selected the winning ones. Seven best finalists were chosen for grants in overall amount of EUR 40,000.



The Commission unanimously decided to allocate the grants totally worth EUR 35,000 to the following finalists: Initiative for social empowerment, Citizens' Association for the fight against human trafficking and all



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forms of violence against women Atina, Citizen association Vunena, Association for Support of People with Developmental Disabilities Naša kuća, Association for Support of Persons with Psychophysical Disorders ZaJedno, Social agricultural cooperation Nova perspektiva and Citizen association Liceulice. In addition, employees of UniCredit Bank were also involved in the voting process and they have selected two winners who are granted with additional EUR 2,500 each, Naša kuća and Atina.

*Maurizio Carrara, President of UniCredit Foundation*, stated: "The success of this initiative, which offers concrete tools to support projects devoted to job integration and community empowerment, is primarily due to the collaboration of experienced partners such as UniCredit Bank, Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation and Smart Kolektiv. "Idea for better tomorrow", with its three editions, has contributed to strengthen the ecosystem of the social economy in Serbia, sustaining the development of a new generation of innovative and socially-oriented organizations and businesses for a more robust social economy within the country".

*Csilla Ihasz, Chairwoman of the Management Board of UniCredit Bank Serbia* on this occasion added: "So far we have come a long way and choosing the best seven among over 130 applications was not an easy task. But today we are not concluding our project. Today we are opening a new chapter, within which we will share with the beneficiaries the extensive knowledge and expertise, not only of our partners, but from very employees of our bank. Thanks to their support, these social enterprises will be ready to continue their path of growth and success on both local and international market."

*Ana Koeshall, Head of Foundation Ana and Vlade Divac*, regarding the proclamation of the winners said: "It is my great pleasure that we have successfully completed "Idea for Better Tomorrow" competition for the third time, and once again we can be proud of very innovative ideas of our winners. I would also like to emphasise that our work does not end today, because we continue to support the winning projects in order to ensure the successful implementation of the ideas and encourage the placement of products. What makes this project special is that it helps businesses with a social component to improve their business and enter the market."

Finally, *Neven Marinkovic, Head of Smart Kolektiv*, stated: „Despite the fact that the social economy and social enterprises' importance is increasing in the European Union, this topic in Serbia is still not sufficiently recognized, nor enjoys sufficient support despite the great positive impact it can have on society and the economy. Accordingly the significance of this project is greater, but also thanks to the fact that it is the result of extensive partnership between the leaders in the private sector, namely UniCredit Bank, and in the non-



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profit sector, such as the Divac Foundation and Smart kolektiv. We are particularly proud that this project, in addition to the financial support provided by the UniCredit Foundation, includes long-term work with selected companies, because this type of support, in addition to the lack of available funds, is mapped as a priority by the social enterprises. Namely, over 80% of the companies that we interviewed say that the key problems they face in their work is the lack of resources, but also lack of professional support, knowledge and mentorship, so this project tries to answer both of the key challenges. “

In the follow-up phase, the finalists will be brought together with experts from Smart kolektiv and employees from UniCredit Bank in a mentoring program that will last until mid-June 2018. The program aims to provide them with valuable support in developing successful and sustainable businesses by providing market knowledge and experience from the financial sector. The mentoring program will also be supported by the Development Facility of the European Fund for Southeast Europe (EFSE DF).

#### **About UniCredit Foundation**

UniCredit Foundation is a corporate foundation that was established in 2003 in order to contribute to the development of solidarity and philanthropy in the communities and territories, primarily where UniCredit is present (14 countries including Europe and Central Asia). Through the transfer of financial resources and the typical management skills of a company, UniCredit Foundation supports projects of significant social impact and innovation, implemented by local non-profit organizations. For more information please visit [www.unicreditfoundation.org](http://www.unicreditfoundation.org)

#### **About UniCredit Bank**

UniCredit Bank Serbia JSC is part of UniCredit Group, a simple successful Pan European Commercial Bank, with a fully plugged in CIB, delivering a unique Western, Central and Eastern European network to our extensive client franchise: 25 million clients. UniCredit offers local expertise as well as an international one reaching and supporting its clients globally, providing them with unparalleled access to leading banks in its 14 core markets as well as in other 18 countries worldwide. UniCredit European banking network includes Italy, Germany, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. For more information please visit [www.unicreditbank.rs](http://www.unicreditbank.rs)



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### **About Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation**

The Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation was founded in 2007, as a continuation of twenty years long humanitarian work of Ana and Vlade Divac, which began in the United States through the operations of Humanitarian Organization Divac (HOD). For the past 10 years, the foundation has been primarily interested in supporting refugees and internally displaced persons (with focus on their housing and economic problems), improving conditions for quality upbringing of children and youth, developing philanthropy and social entrepreneurship. For more information please visit [www.divac.com](http://www.divac.com)

### **About Smart kolektiv**

Smart kolektiv is a leading organization in Serbia engaged in development of economy with a positive social impact. Smart kolektiv helps social innovators, allowing them access to financial resources and a better market position, the connection with the business sector and the transfer of business knowledge and skills. Smart kolektiv finds the ways in order that experiences and business logic is applied in solving social challenges, helps companies to strategically cooperate with the community, and social innovators to interest the business world for their solutions and initiatives. The organization has been a pioneer in promoting the concept of corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship development in the country and the region. For more information please visit [www.smartkolektiv.org](http://www.smartkolektiv.org)



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