

# Balkan Case Challenge for Serbia and Montenegro 2004/5

A student case-study competition

## Final Report

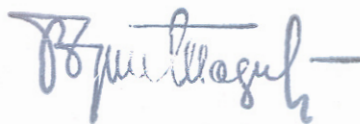
РЕПУБЛИКА СРБИЈА  
ПРЕДСЕДНИК

Поштовани пријатељи,

У протеклим годинама, док је Србија била земља у изолацији, дешавао се један, за многе потпуно необјашњив феномен. Наше су девојке и младићи, на само њима познат начин, успевали да и без икакве институционалне подршке, буду потпуно у току са најновијим достигнућима из информационе и дигиталне технологије. Тако самоуки, успевали су да парирају и буду раме уз раме са својим вршњацима из развијених земаља света.

Сигуран сам да и учесници овог студентског такмичења поседују исту меру радозналости, енергије и жеље за стицањем нових знања. Чињеница да данас постоји институционална подршка и слободан проток информација о свим актуелним новинама у свету економије, бизниса, права и информационих технологија, биће вам, убеђен сам, додатни мотив да постигнете најбоље резултате у својим областима.

Србији су потребни стручњаци, лидери у свим сферама друштва. Због тога сам и покренуо пројекат "1000 младих лидера", који, између осталог треба да омогући вама, будућим стручњацима, да пронађете своје место у нашем друштву и да помогнете Србији на њеном путу ка Европској унији.



Борис Тадић

Председник Републике Србије

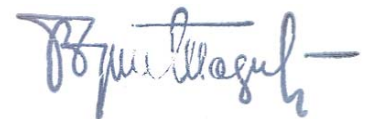
Balkan Case Challenge for Serbia and Montenegro was held under the auspices of Mr Boris Tadić, the President of the Republic of Serbia. The President's welcome speech marked the opening ceremony:

Dear friends,

During the past years, while Serbia was an isolated country, we witnessed a phenomenon that many would have described as entirely inexplicable. Our girls and boys, without institutional support of any kind and in the ways known only to themselves, managed to keep up to date with the newest achievements in the field of information and digital technologies. Self-taught as they were, they still did not fall behind but succeeded in remaining equal to their peers from the developed countries.

I stand assured that the participants of this student competition share the same amount of curiosity, energy and desire to broaden their knowledge. The fact that today **there is an institutional support** as well as a free flow of information on any of the current innovations in the world of economics, business, law and information technologies will certainly be an additional motive for you to achieve the best results in your fields.

Serbia is in great need of experts, of leaders in all the spheres of society. This is precisely the reason why I instigated the "One Thousand Young Leaders" project, which, among other things, should enable you, the future experts, to find your place in our society and help Serbia on its way to the European Union.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Boris Tadić', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Boris Tadić  
President of the Republic of Serbia

## Introduction:

It is with great pleasure that the **Belgrade Office** of the **Austrian Committee of the World University Service (WUS Austria)** wishes to mark, by means of this publication, yet another successful implementation of one of its programs in Serbia and Montenegro. The project in question, even though it was not new to the region, was entirely new to this country. It differs greatly from everything else that this organization has accomplished so far within the area of higher education in SCG - and it would be of utmost importance if its values were to be recognized by the factors that are in the position to shape and aid the further development of our society.

In accordance with well-known aspirations of WUS Austria to connect universities of Southeast Europe, to help in building their partnership and cooperation, overcome academic isolation, support initiatives in the field of higher education and promote the very right to education, academic freedom and the university reform - its Belgrade Office organized, for the first time in Serbia and Montenegro, a very special student case-study competition, called **Balkan Case Challenge (BCC)**. This competition shares the name and was in fact designed as an integral part of the largest and most successful regional project of its kind. The project, created by WUS Austria 4 years ago, is far from being just another student contest - and the purpose of the document before you is to try to describe all of its significant aspects, be they of international or local importance. At this point, we just want to emphasize that this was the first time that someone took up the responsibility of involving the academic community of Serbia and Montenegro in the project on a larger scale - not a moment too soon, because otherwise it could never benefit from the program such as BCC. Some students from our country did participate in the regional finals (which take place in Sarajevo) in the previous years, but they were just random exceptions from the vast majority of their colleagues who had never heard of the BCC, and, which is far worse, many of whom had never heard of the case-study method either. Naturally, presenting the Balkan Case Challenge advantages only to those few that who knows by which fortunate turn of events found out about the final competition and decided to apply was generally useless, and something had to be changed. Therefore, a special - local Balkan Case Challenge was organized.

Organization of Balkan Case Challenge for Serbia and Montenegro 2004/5 was one of the activities based on the **contract** regarding the financial aid to the universities in Serbia and Montenegro, the contract signed in June 2004 by the **Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Austria, World University Service - Austrian Committee (WUS Austria), the University of Belgrade, University of Montenegro, University of Arts in Belgrade, University of Novi Sad, University of Niš and University of Kragujevac**.

The event took place at the "Metropol" hotel, Belgrade, December 10-13 2004. It involved 72 students (both undergraduates and postgraduates, from state universities and private schools) who competed in teams in any of the four different fields available: Business/Economics (**Business Case Competition**), International Law (**Law Moot Court**), Information Technologies (**ICT Case**) and Politics/International Relations (**Model United Nations**). As intended, the focus of each of these sections was **the case-study method**.

The competition was entirely conducted in English. The organizers of Balkan Case Challenge stand firm on the ground that the modern world simply imposes the need of proficiency in English to anyone wishing to become an expert in the said fields. If we add

that the Sarajevo finals always “encourage” forming of nationally mixed teams, welcome the involvement of Western European experts in the juries or in case-creation, and that the project was designed from the very beginning as the one that would result in awarding at least short-term scholarships for foreign universities and summer schools, as well as internships with international companies and organizations – it is clear why the good knowledge of English is not considered an advantage, but one of the obligatory qualifications of a successful applicant.

Technical details aside, the essence of the Balkan Case Challenge project, put in just a few words, is to connect excellent students of Economics, Business, Management, Information Technologies, Law, Political Sciences and other that share these interests, and their professors, with distinguished companies and organizations; to promote (by the means of a somewhat unusual presentation which takes the form of a student competition) **the case-study method** as a highly effective learning-teaching technique; to put together theory and practice, knowledge and skills, ambition and experience, individual effort and teamwork in an event that breaks the academic and every other kind of isolation and takes a step beyond the boundaries that have burdened the academic tradition in Southeast Europe for far too many years.

## The Goals of BCC:

Due to its concept, practical implications, the positiveness of its goals, and the kind of partnering organizations it has been known to attract, Balkan Case Challenge has, during the last few years, risen to become a distinguished and traditional regional event. The finals take place in Sarajevo every year, and are intended for the **best students of Southeast Europe**. The participants come from 9 countries now (Bulgaria, Albania, Romania, Moldova and all the parts of former Yugoslavia) and compete in mixed teams in any of the four fields available. From the very day it was established, the project has been developing further, gaining in significance and causing ever-increasing interest of students. Therefore, it has been decided that several local sub-competitions should also be organized, in order for this event to include more students, more experts and to achieve greater influence on the higher education area of Southeast Europe. And that's how BCC for Serbia and Montenegro came to be.

However, Balkan Case Challenge for Serbia and Montenegro is designed not only as a sub-competition from which the winners are intended to advance to the regional finals, but also as a student case-study competition of its own. Naturally, it shares the concept of the finals. The only difference is that it is intended just for the students of the universities of Serbia and Montenegro (regardless of their nationality) AND Serbian-Montenegrin citizens studying abroad. Nevertheless, as was previously stated, the official language of the event is English.

Generally speaking, the primary objective of BCC, as of any of the WUS Austria projects, is to contribute to the improvement of higher education. But, there is a rather significant difference – here, the impulse of development acts upon a range of levels simultaneously. Bringing together exceptional students, providing them with a certain amount of experience essential for starting a successful career, connecting representatives of universities with experts from companies and organizations, supporting the university reform and all the while trying to foster the relations of friendship and cooperation throughout the region are all the aspects of Balkan Case Challenge. But we should start from its main feature – the case-study method.

## The Case-Study Method

The case-study method originates from the **Harvard Business School** and the period of inter-war years. This is a student-centered and problem-based method of learning, which is widely acknowledged as a necessary, enjoyable and refreshing complement to the usual range of teaching methods at the universities worldwide. It is a highly effective tool, a guide and a technique that enables students to master the modes of practical applications of the theoretical knowledge that they had previously acquired.

The essence of the method is a simulation of a real-life situation - a **"case"**. The cases that the students work on, individually or in groups, are in fact the problems that may really exist, be somewhat changed, or even entirely fictional – but that must be *realistic* and must correspond to the actual challenges that the managers, operatives, experts in the respective fields are confronted with regularly. Naturally, this model of studying is far from easy. In order to meet successfully all the demands of this method, present appropriate solutions and discuss on their advantages and shortcomings, serious self-conducting preparations are required, as well as fully developed critical and analytical skills, quick thinking and capabilities for the kind of decision-making that would imply a high level of responsibility in

“the real world” environment. It is then obvious why this technique is considered to have an amazing potential as a learning/teaching instrument.

Therefore, the case-study method is an irreplaceable tool of advanced higher education systems, especially of those that aim at turning one passive absorbent of knowledge (which students initially tend to be) into a full scale technocrat, the kind of which all the unsuccessful economy models had been dreading for decades past. The countries that had once embraced such types of economy now have a rough ride seeing the error of their ways. Regretfully, the sad inheritance of such poor choices generally tends to undermine any effort to move forward for it is, noticeably or not, well entrenched in the very bases of society – the higher education being, of course, no exception to this rule.

Such is the case of higher education in Southeast Europe, and, accordingly, in Serbia and Montenegro. The case-study was but a rare guest there. Clearly, the changes in this matter are imminent (some faculties, their professors and teaching assistants have already begun to act in the right direction) and Balkan Case Challenge is just an attempt of WUS Austria to speed things up by promoting the method. By means of such a practical presentation, which connects the best representatives of the student population and representatives of the university teaching staff as active participants, the advantages of the case-study and the way it affects the students are made obvious. Hopefully, the professors and teaching assistants who took part in the juries would urge the wide application of this technique in the university practice in SCG. It is hard to believe that the universities that do not incorporate this method into their programs will ever become a relevant part of the European higher education community. It all comes down to one conclusion: until the essential, and not just a declarative and formal reform of the local education system, especially its university level, is set in motion, our society will remain the one in which abilities and skills are measured by the quality and quantity of personal acquaintances, and contemporaneousness by decades. It is the firm belief of WUS Austria that Balkan Case Challenge can be an impulse to some of the vital and therefore urgent changes in this area and quicken the process of attaining the Western European standards.

As is fairly obvious from the university curricula, the equipment at the disposal of the university professors, the obsolete textbooks that are still very much in use, the skills of the majority of the unemployed and other data from the state employment agency, the data from social security organizations, facts on average income or the minimum wages, the course of events in the state economy during the past fifteen years – time is a luxury the citizens of Serbia and Montenegro do not have. Thousands of job-ads cry for candidates with experience, but there are tens, hundreds of thousands of unemployed who do not fit into that profile. Meanwhile, the case-study method became not only an irreplaceable teaching instrument at the Western universities but is currently winning a prominent place in the process of filling the job vacancies in some high-profile international companies (Procter and Gamble, Bertelsmann, Boston Consulting Group, McKinsey and Co, L’Oreal etc). The reason this method has stormed its way to the top is, of course, its simple and yet incredibly efficient orientation towards practice. This is the right way for any potential employee to prove his/her worth in front of experts, to present and improve his/her skills; this is the right way for all the employers to meet and recruit the finest of candidates.

But, the desired candidates will emerge only from a practice-oriented learning environment – an environment that the students of Southeast Europe so desperately need, but of which they have largely been deprived of. Balkan Case Challenge is an opportunity for some of them to be placed in such an environment. **The BCC participants are presented with specific problems – or “cases” – pertaining to the four fields we have already mentioned (Economics and Business, International Law, Information Technologies**

**and Politics/International Relations). The students' task is to play the roles of managers, business administrators, lawyers arguing a case before the International Court of Justice or delegations at the UN Security Council, and to try to deal with the cases to the best of their abilities.** The role assigned to each of the participants depends on his/her field of study or specialization. In this way these exceptional students are given the opportunity to find out if they have what it takes to succeed as managers, diplomats, IT or international law experts.

### **Connecting Universities with Companies and Organizations**

This brings us to another goal of Balkan Case Challenge – to connect companies and organizations with the advanced representatives of the academic community. The purpose of this is to provide the former with the chance to meet the very best of students and see them in action as they work in teams to find the solutions to the kind of problems that these firms actually encounter on a daily basis; and the latter with the opportunity to prove themselves in front of acclaimed experts and gain some experience by matching their skills to the kind of challenges they may be faced with while pursuing some of the more desired career paths. Unfortunately, those that lack that sort of practice stand good chances never to get such jobs. However – where exactly are they to acquire the said experience is an issue that the majority of local politicians tend to disregard. By now it should be quite obvious that the prevailing teaching model at the Serbian-Montenegrin universities is not the key to that lock. In its own way, the case-study competition tries to deal with the problem and puts its participants, even for a short period of time into a position to get a certain amount of the indispensable practical experience and prepare themselves for the future demands. That is the most direct effect of BCC – and although its general goals are more far-reaching, this one should not be neglected either. Ideally, the intention of the organizers to include in the project as many experts from local and international companies and organizations as possible, by giving them roles of case-creators, jury and selection board members and guests – should result in eventual volunteering period, internship or even full-time job offers for the winners. By engaging experts, the competition attains a higher level, and the students are presented with an additional motive: to do well before the potential employers and so improve their chances to start a career.

The other possible consequence of connecting the representatives of diverse firms with the ones of universities is that there might arise an opportunity to establish some future cooperation of these institutions, which would be beneficial for both parties, and, indirectly, for the future students as well.

### **Building the Future of the Region**

But one of the most important objectives of Balkan Case Challenge is its aspiration to bring together the students of this troubled area of Southeast Europe. Bearing in mind the recent past, the aim to stimulate academic cooperation throughout the region can hardly be dismissed as one of lesser importance. In fact, this is the aspect that grants BCC international significance. It is no small thing to gather the best students from 8-9 countries every year – who would otherwise probably never meet – and to be ever more successful at this endeavour, in spite of the kind of mutual relations that some of these states engaged in during the previous period. Furthermore, as once was maybe unexpected but is now, sadly, rather obvious, the day when the creators of the tragic political (if indeed as “political” they may be marked at all) ideas that triggered the known catastrophe will not be able to exercise even the tiniest shred of their disastrous influence on the public opinion is very far away. So, the competition that aims at connecting the future elite of Southeast Europe (which the students are, no matter how easy this fact is often “forgotten” by certain people



who tend to consider themselves the elite of today) must be taken seriously by any who pride themselves on holding nothing but the best interest and well-being of the region in mind. The Belgrade Office of WUS Austria is certain that the increased level of involvement of Serbia and Montenegro and its representatives in the Balkan Case Challenge project is a matter of great importance. Through the organization of the Belgrade semi-finals it was made possible for much more students from SCG to be included in BCC than in previous years (as a direct consequence, more will participate in the finals), but also for the admirable goals, values and aspirations of the program to be officially promoted in the country. This active involvement of Serbia and Montenegro in the most relevant regional attempt to overcome any form of isolation in the higher education area should hopefully contribute to breaking of all the forms of social isolation and its probably most devastating, yet at times frightfully popular aspect – self-isolation. What should follow is an intensive interest of the participants for the surrounding political landscape, and the development of an awareness that mere “tolerance” is not the right option, and that the relations of full mutual understanding, respect, friendship and cooperation should be established instead.

This ambitiously designed event, then, is an effort to provide these students with a certain amount of practical experience and better chances to start a career, to support the university reform by introducing the acclaimed case-study method, and generally aid in gradual building of relations of trust for the future. It is just another way for the Belgrade Office of WUS Austria to prove its dedication to actively promote the Bologna Process and to support the admittance of Serbia and Montenegro into European Higher Education Area.

## The Organizing Committee and Pre-Event Tasks:

So, the staff of the Belgrade Office of WUS Austria, with valuable assistance from the Podgorica Office, took it upon themselves to organize one part of Balkan Case Challenge in Serbia and Montenegro for the first time, notwithstanding all the complexities that had to be taken into account. Great efforts had to be put into this accomplishment in order to secure the fulfillment of high expectations that such a project imposes. The task was then to organize a student case-study competition in a matter of some 6 months in a country where neither such events nor the case-study method have yet taken root; the competition that would admit a total of 72 promising students from all over Serbia and Montenegro, that would be fully conducted in English, and involve the representatives of the university, international organizations, local companies; that would last for 3 days (with all the expenses of the participants covered and all the necessary equipment provided by the organizer); that would be appropriately promoted and documented, and that would leave a positive impact within the higher education in SCG; and, most importantly, win the favours of the students. The competition was to cover four fields, each admitting the participants and jury members according to their area of study or expertise. The four parts that constitute every Balkan Case Challenge are: **Business Case Competition, Law Moot Court Competition, Information Communication Technologies Competition** and **Model United Nations Simulation**.

**The organizing committee** that met this challenge consisted of the following WUS Austria officers: **Goran Ostojić** – Regional Manager of WUS Austria for Serbia and Montenegro, **Dušan Bugarski** – Deputy Head of the Belgrade Office, **Igor Đorđević** – Program Assistant and BCC SCG 2004/5 Coordinator. During the whole period of the preparations, and at the time of the event, the organizing committee enjoyed the precious assistance of Miss **Dragica Kresanović** - Information and Counselling Officer and Mr **Goran Drakul** – Deputy Head of the Podgorica Office.

After reviewing the given timeframe and bearing in mind the necessity of synchronizing with other local competitions and the regional finals scheduled for the spring of 2005, as well as with the regular examination periods at the faculties - it was decided that the best date to hold BCC for Serbia and Montenegro would be December 10-13. As the largest university center in the country, the capital, and the seat of one of WUS Austria offices and the organizing committee itself - Belgrade was, if not very original, then certainly a logical choice for the scene of the event.

**The project was initially backed by significant financial resources of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA)**. These resources were donated through the *Austrian Cooperation Programme*. However, in order to ensure the successful implementation of Balkan Case Challenge for SCG, additional funds had to be obtained. In general, the preparations for the realization of the project consisted of the following activities:

1. **Fundraising** – The list of expenses of this enterprise is far from short. Among other things, it includes: the transportation of the participants, their accommodation (full board) for 3 days, renting of the premises where the competition would take place, hiring of the assistant coordinators and other auxiliary staff, provision of the necessary IT equipment and placing of an entire internet center at the students' disposal, printed matter (promotion material, preparation material for the contestants, certificates etc.), office supplies, awards, the expenses of the opening and closing ceremonies...

For the purpose of fundraising, numerous international and local companies and organizations were contacted. The organizational committee of BCC for Serbia and Montenegro was supported in this matter by the Head Office of WUS Austria in Graz. Together, the offices of WUS Austria completed the task successfully and managed to secure the funds necessary for the realization of the project. Furthermore, they obtained such list of partners that can, and most certainly will contribute to the current and future reputation of the event.

The final list of partners of the BCC project for Serbia and Montenegro: **Austrian Development Agency** (ADA) through the *Austrian Cooperation Eastern Europe Programme*, **Fund for an Open Society Serbia**, **Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst** (DAAD, the German Academic Exchange Service) in cooperation with Stability Pact for SEE, **Southeast Europe Enterprise Development** (SEED) and **EUnet College Belgrade**.

2. **Hiring the additional staff** – In order to overcome any practical problems that might arise, to face the tight timeframe in the most efficient way and to ensure the best possible contact with the student population, four case coordinators were hired (part-time): **Ana Nedeljković** (Model United Nations Coordinator), **Milana Vojinović** (Law Moot Court Coordinator), **Jelena Mrkaja** (ICT Case Coordinator) and **Nenad Dimitrijević** (Business Case Coordinator). Additionally, the organizing committee had to hire 17 facilitators to enable the smooth course of the event: Bojana Marjanović, Lidija Isović, Nina Zečević, Milica Čičovački, Mirjana Simić, Jelena Keserović, Marica Blečić, Milica Hranjec, Aleksandar Stanković, Boris Nerandžić, Ivan Ćurčija, Dušan Petrović, Mladen Stojanović, Zoran Maksimović, Nebojša Radojičić, Goran Panić and Miodrag Arandelović.
3. **Promotion** – This was one of the most important activities, whose total effects are yet to be seen in the future, especially if another BCC for SCG is to be organized. It was the duty of the organizing committee and its associates (the aforementioned case coordinators) to promote the idea of Balkan Case Challenge not only among the international organizations and the business community, but – even more importantly – among the students, who were generally unfamiliar with the concept. And among their professors and teaching assistants, for whom it was essential to be involved in the project (as members of the juries), so they could personally make sure of the advantages of the case-study method, and subsequently embrace and promote this teaching technique further, thus giving a new impulse to the university reform. The importance of the presence of experts at an event such as BCC simply cannot be emphasized enough - regardless of whether they be the representatives of universities, who would contribute to the seriousness of BCC by the authority arising from their vast knowledge and who would afterwards share their impressions with their colleagues and use the case-study method in their class; or those delegated by companies, who would be very welcome at the competition because of their immense practical experience and a possibility to become interested in recruiting some of the participants.

Through the course of this promotion campaign 1500 posters, 5000 leaflets and 5000 flyers were printed and distributed in the university centers of Serbia and Montenegro. The associates of the organizing committee made sure to visit the faculties of ALL the universities in the country. The project was presented on the web site of the Belgrade Office of WUS Austria and the case coordinators held

presentations of the competition. Student organizations were contacted. It was very important for the organizers to include the students from all over the country, in which they succeeded. The project enjoyed the support of the Rector of the University of Belgrade, **Mrs Marija Bogdanović**.

**However, the true highlight of the promotion campaign was the obtainment of the support of the President of the Republic of Serbia, Mr Boris Tadić, under whose auspices the event was held. The Belgrade Office is both proud and honoured by the fact that its project gained the institutional support from the highest level at the very first step. We stand assured that such a good sign indicates a promising future for the goals that BCC SCG 2004/5 was aimed to promote.**

4. **Application procedure, selection and case-study preparation** - The application procedure started in July and lasted till November 5. The application forms were available at the web site of the Belgrade Office of WUS Austria as well as in the office itself. Applications in both electronic form and hard copy were accepted. Over 200 students showed interest, and 147 applied. The best 72 candidates were selected and contacted. The selection criteria were based on the data from the applications and any additional document that a student could provide if he/she considered it favourable to his cause. The data in the application forms generally dealt with the candidates' academic performance, extracurricular activities and working experience, interests, the languages they spoke. Since the application form was to be completed in English, it was a good ground for the selection board to judge the candidate's proficiency in this language (which was one of the main conditions for admittance).

Parallel to the application and selection process, the organizing committee contacted experts that were interested to take part in the juries of BCC, and those willing to create the "cases" for the competition. The cases were then thought out and appropriate preparation material was given to the students selected for participation. The material was, of course, different for each case, and it was distributed in various forms – packed on CDs or photocopied and bound in book-form. Certain documents were sent attached to e-mails, and in one case the future contestants were recommended a few internet sites. Through the preparation process, the organizers made sure that the students were not left without additional information regarding the procedures or, where it was allowed, even the subject matter of the case itself.

5. **Technical details** - in order to realize such an ambitious project, considerable efforts and resources had to be put into the technical aspect of the preparations for the event: hotel arrangements (accommodation, opening and closing ceremony, additional food and drink for the guests, jury members and facilitators, help desk), transport arrangements, agenda, provision of the equipment (including the internet access for the participants), communication between the students and the case-creators (concerning the contestants' way of preparing for the event and any questions they had), dealing with some last-minute changes in the list of competitors (because of several cancellations due to illness and other reasons), welcome packages for the participants and jury members (which included not only the printed material that they required, but also their ID cards, BCC folders, T-shirts, pencils and notebooks specially designed for the occasion), design and printing of the special certificates of participation, diplomas for the winners and those who would eventually take the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places in each of the 4 sub-competitions, specially designed letters of gratitude for the project partners, hiring of a minibus for the contestants (to facilitate their transport between the hotel and the internet center at the EUnet

college), photo and video documentation of the event, creation of the evaluation forms, and modification of the score sheets.

The hotel that had offered the best terms, and was therefore chosen for the event by the organizational committee) was the „Metropol“ hotel (Bulevar kralja Aleksandra 69, Belgrade). The participants were accommodated in double and single rooms. The offer of this hotel also included the appropriate premises where the competition could be held.

As for the equipment, the organizer was able to provide the participating students with the opportunity to conduct their on-line research using some 20 computers at the EUnet College. Apart from this, a dozen more computers were set up at the hotel (both desktops and laptops, without the access to the internet, but some connected to LCD projectors, all equipped with CD-writers) and the students used these to create their presentations. They were also provided with printers (laser and inkjet), scanners, CD-R media and floppy disks. Three sets of sound systems (a microphone with a speaker and an amplifier) were placed at their disposal. An IT lecture concerning the use of Power Point was organized for those interested.

## **The Realization of the Project:**

Notwithstanding a relatively tight timeframe (tight when the ambitious concept of such an event, the fact that it has never been organized in SCG, and involvement of the organization board members in other highly significant programs of WUS Austria are taken into account) all the preparations were conducted on time and the scene was set for the implementation of the project. Here follows the short report on each of the four “disciplines” of the competition.

### **Business Case Competition**

This part of Balkan Case Challenge for Serbia and Montenegro was intended for the top Business/Economics/Management students. A total of 18 students were selected among those who had applied, and they were divided into teams of 3. The case was created by the experts from the Faculty of Economics in Belgrade and it dealt with organizational and structural problems as well as development issues of a milling and baking corporation. The case was based on actual experience of such companies in the local business environment. Special preparation material was chosen and distributed to the contestants prior to the event. According to the BCC rules for the Business Case they did not get to see the task until the competition itself - where, after finally reviewing the problem, they had the timeframe of just 24 hrs to prepare their solutions. At the event, a Q&A session with the case creator was also organized (Saturday, December 11, in the afternoon, after they had studied their case), in order for any uncertainties they may have had to be resolved before the preliminary round.

**The jury** consisted of 9 experts from the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Organizational Sciences: **Biljana Bogičević-Milikić, Ph.D.** and **Ana Aleksić** (Faculty of Economics, Belgrade – case creators), **Mirjana Petković Ph.D,** **Mirjana Gligorijević, Ph.D,** **Galjina Ognjanov Ph.D,** **Dragan Stojković M.A.** **Dragan Lončar M.A.** (Faculty of Economics Belgrade), **Milica Kostić Ph.D.** and **Tamara Vlastelica** (Faculty of Organizational Sciences Belgrade).

Both the preliminary round and the finals took place on Sunday, December 12, after the 24 hrs period set for case studying, preparation of a solution and its presentation had expired. The preliminary round was held in 3 rooms simultaneously – in each of them there were 2 teams competing one against the other (before 3 representatives of the jury) for a place in the finals. All teams used Power Point for their presentations. The presentations lasted for 20 minutes each, and were followed by the questions of the jury.

So, in the end, 3 teams met in the finals – before the complete jury of 9 – and here are the final standings:

**1<sup>st</sup> place:** Irena Janković, Vladimir Topličić, Marko Ljubičić – they were awarded 150 EUR each, along with certificates confirming their success. They qualified for the regional finals.

**2<sup>nd</sup> place:** Miroslav Radulović, Nenad Mrđa, Slavko Prekajski – they were awarded 100 EUR each, along with certificates confirming their success.

**3<sup>rd</sup> place:** Sanja Stošić, Zoran Robulj, Nikola Zivlak – they were awarded 50 EUR each, along with certificates confirming their success.

## **Law Moot Court (LMC)**

This part of Balkan Case Challenge for Serbia and Montenegro was intended for the top Law students – as it was, in fact, **a simulation of the International Court of Justice**. A total of 16 students were selected among those who had applied, and they were divided into teams of 4. The case was created by Prof. Thomas Skouteris from the Leiden University in the Netherlands, and it dealt primarily with the issues of territorial sovereignty and military conflict between states. The imaginary countries in dispute were, of course, “represented” before the “court” by the students. The participants received the case and the preparation material prior to the event. The preparation material consisted of some 60 documents dealing with issues of international law packed on a CD. **This case was shared by all the BCC local competitions.**

On Friday, December 10, the first day of the event, the students had the chance to discuss the details of the procedure with their case coordinator.

The LMC jury consisted of 6 experts in the field of International Law: **Ivana Krstić, Bojan Milisavljević** and **Aleksandar Gajić** (all from the Law School of the Belgrade University), **Ivan Jovanović, Dragan Veljović** and **Milan Bajić** (legal advisors to the OSCE Mission).

Each team consisted of 2 applicants and 2 respondents. The applicants of one team competed against the respondents of the opposing team and *vice versa*. The score of all members (applicants and respondents) of one team taken together decided its standings. The applicants of one team had 40 minutes for their proceedings (20+20 minutes, or 30+10), same as the respondents. They all had to answer the questions of the jury concerning their points of argument.

The preliminary round took place on Saturday, December 11. Two teams qualified for the finals, and the grades of the jury decided which of the other two teams would take the 3rd place. The finals were held the next day, and here are the final standings:

**1<sup>st</sup> place:** Ivana Čeranić, Jelena Adamović, Nikša Miljanić, Dušan Jovanović - they were awarded 150 EUR each, along with certificates confirming their success. These students qualified for the regional finals.

**Best Orator:** Jelena Adamović – Miss Adamović was awarded additional 150 EUR and a special certificate for this achievement.

**2<sup>nd</sup> place:** Jasna Džudželija, Goran Tomašević, Nikola Dragojlović, Mirjana Kučević - they were awarded 100 EUR each, along with certificates confirming their success.

**3<sup>rd</sup> place:** Ivana Miletić, Nataša Gligorić, Mateja Đurović, Vera Popov - they were awarded 50 EUR each, along with certificates confirming their success.

## **Information Communication Technologies Case (ICT)**

The Information Communication Technologies Case was intended for the students of technical faculties, primarily those specializing in the IT area. A total of 18 students were selected for participation among those who had applied, and they were divided into teams of 3. The case was created by the representatives of the BCC partner – EUnet College

Belgrade and it dealt with the development issues of one of the largest internet providing companies, its decision to invest in new HW and SW platform – and the solutions that would guarantee further increase in the quality of services along with the increase in the number of users. The participants were given directions how to conduct an on-line research that would eventually lead to the successful accomplishment of their task. These directions and the case they had received before the event. They also had the opportunity to ask the case creators for additional explanations (which was done through the contact with their case coordinator).

On the first day of the event – Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup> – the participants had a Q&A session with the representatives of the EUnet company, and on the next day they had a “rehearsal” of the finals – during which each team presented some of its ideas and was given additional instructions by the jury. Finally, the teams gave their presentations on Sunday, December 12. The presentations lasted for 20 minutes each and were followed by the questions of the jury.

**The jury** consisted of 9 experts: **Darko Dunjić** and **Lazar Obradović** (both from EUnet College), **Boško Nikolić, M.Sc**, **Nemanja Jovanović**, **Miloš Milovanović**, and **Miloš Cvetanović** (School of Electric Engineering, University of Belgrade), **Vladan Devedžić, Ph.D**, **Bojan Jovanović** and **Slađan Babarogić M.Sc.** (Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Belgrade).

The final standings:

**1<sup>st</sup> place:** Aleksandar Lazić, Vladimir Radunović, Mladen Krstić - they were awarded 150 EUR each, along with certificates confirming their success. These students qualified for the regional finals.

**2<sup>nd</sup> place:** Danilo Đorđević, Nemanja Grujić, Stevica Cvetković - they were awarded 100 EUR each, along with certificates confirming their success.

**3<sup>rd</sup> place:** Nemanja Marković, Miloš Pavlović, Pavle Gudurić - they were awarded 50 EUR each, along with certificates confirming their success.

### **Model United Nations Simulation (MUN)**

Model United Nations was intended for the students of Political Sciences, and all other students taking interest in international relations and diplomacy, high politics and peaceful resolutions of international conflicts. A total of 20 students were selected among those who had applied. In this **simulation of the UN Security Council** the students were assigned with the roles of the Security Council delegates – the representatives of both its 5 permanent and its 10 non-permanent members. This “session” of the Security Council was conducted by 2 experts in the field of international relations: **Tanja Mišćević, Ph.D**, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade and **Saša M. Mart, M.A.** (of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro). They also prepared the case, which dealt with the crisis in Cote D’Ivoire. The participants received the case, as well as their roles in the Model (the countries they would be representing, that is), prior to the competition. Their task was to prepare themselves to act as true representatives of these states would in the given situation - and not to be guided by their



own political views and standings. This required that they conduct a research on the politics of the assigned country. Apart from that, they had a training session before the competition and were directed through the entire preparation process by the case coordinator. On the first day of the event, the students had a Q&A session in order to finally resolve any uncertainties regarding the Rules of Procedure. Saturday and Sunday were reserved for the simulation itself, which resulted in the end in passing of a "Security Council" resolution as an attempt to resolve the crisis in a peaceful way and by means of diplomacy.

Finally, a voting process was conducted, which decided the winners in the following categories:

**The Best Delegate** - Miloš Brčkalo

**The Best Prepared Delegate** - Olga Mitrović

**The Best Speaker** - Jasmina Popin

**The Most Diplomatic Delegate** - Miloš Brčkalo - seeing that Mr Brčkalo had already won *the Best Delegate* title as well, it was decided that a second best *Most Diplomatic Delegate* should also be selected – and that was Snežana Vuković

**The Most Authentic Delegate** - Dejan Tonic

The winners in each of these categories were awarded 150 EUR each, along with certificates confirming their success. All of these students qualified for the regional finals.

## Services and Events:

Apart from the competition itself (the term being used here in the strictest sense of the word and regarding only the cases, students' work on the possible solutions, their presentations and decisions of the jury), Balkan Case Challenge included some services that largely facilitated the course of the event and contributed to the successful finalization of the project.

**Internet and IT equipment** – During the competition, an internet center of some 20 computers at the EUnet College was placed at the participants' disposal. Furthermore, the students were provided with 6 more computers at the hotel, 3 printers and 2 scanners. In addition, there were also 4 laptop-LCD projector sets, which were used by the students during their presentations. A lecture at the EUnet College was organized for those who wanted their presentations in PowerPoint to be as effective as possible.

**Transportation** – As was previously mentioned, the travel costs of the students coming to Belgrade for the occasion were covered by the organizer. But, in addition to this, a minibus was also hired in order to serve as a transport connection between the hotel and the internet center established at the EUnet College.

**Help Desk** – A help desk was set up at the lobby of the hotel. The facilitators operating there gave all the necessary information to anyone interested, distributed promotional material and welcome packages. Through the staff at the help desk, the students and guests could reach anyone from the organizing committee at all times.

**Photo and Video Documentation** – Balkan Case Challenge for Serbia and Montenegro was properly documented with photographs and video clips. Some of the photographs are included in this report, but there are a lot more. The participants are welcome to come to the Belgrade Office of WUS Austria and get a CD with the pictures of their choosing or contact Goran Drakul from the Podgorica Office if they wish some photos sent to them by an e-mail. The complete video material is approx. 100 minutes long, but a clip lasting some 18 minutes will be packed on DVD-R media and follow this report.

**YAHOO Discussion Group** – An internet discussion group has been established so that the participants could stay in touch after the event. The Belgrade Office of WUS Austria wishes to acknowledge the effort and valuable contribution of Miss Ana Nedeljković (MUN case coordinator) and Mr Aleksandar Lazić (member of the ICT winning team) in this matter.

**Presentations** – All the partners of WUS Austria in the Balkan Case Challenge for Serbia and Montenegro project were offered an opportunity to present their organization at this event. This opportunity was best used by the Fund for an Open Society Serbia. The EUnet College Belgrade also presented itself quite well at this competition, even if did not choose the formal approach that was offered. Apart from these partners, the representatives of WUS Austria held a presentation of the activities of the Belgrade and Podgorica offices, mainly focusing on the counselling and information service.

Balkan Case Challenge for Serbia and Montenegro commenced and ended with a ceremony. The opening ceremony, which took place on Friday, December 10, was marked by the welcome speech of the President of the Republic of Serbia, **Mr Boris Tadić**. The participants and guests were then addressed by **Mr Hans Joerg Hummer** (on behalf of the Austrian

Coordination Office in Belgrade), **Mr Adnan Harmandić** (representative of WUS Austria Head Office in Graz), **Mrs Radmila Maslovarić** (Fund for an Open Society Serbia), **Mr Ralf Hermann** (on behalf of Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst/the German Academic Exchange Service), **Mr Darko Dunjić** (EUnet College Belgrade) and **Mr Goran Ostojić** (Regional Manager of WUS Austria for Serbia and Montenegro).

The closing ceremony took place in the evening on Sunday, December 12. That was the first time the names of the winners and those who took the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places were announced – even the students themselves did not know who had actually won until that moment. Each student received a signed certificate of participation, and the winners received the awards and additional diplomas confirming their success. Finally, **the Regional Manager of WUS Austria for SCG, Mr Goran Ostojić** closed Balkan Case Challenge for Serbia and Montenegro announcing the regional finals, in which the best from BCC SCG would participate along with their colleagues from the neighbouring countries.

**If you wish to enquire further about the details of BCC project for Serbia and Montenegro, you may contact us:**

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**or visit our web site:**

<http://www.wus-austria.org/belgrade>

For further information regarding the BCC project **in general**, the finals, its background and history, you may turn to:

<http://www.ainsee.info/bcc>

## **Student Evaluation Samples:**

- Everything was great!
- Very well organized and very thoughtful.
- Case-study method is a great way of learning and it should be widely applied within the higher education in SCG.
- New experience; mixed teams; great accommodation; totally different case from those I used to resolve. I'd always recommend BCC to my colleagues. Great experience; practical knowledge; improving language skills. All the best!
- The quality and organization of the competition were great!
- It was a great opportunity to learn many things, meet great people, and improve my skills. Fantastic! Finally practice! I learned more during these few days than for a year at my faculty. Thanks for two great days. I will recommend BCC to all my colleagues.
- You start to establish something exquisite. Good luck!
- The BCC was too short!
- I would not recommend this Challenge to my colleagues – I want to participate again and I don't want competition:) It was a great experience, a good idea with good realization; students benefit most from this.
- Applauses and lot of good vibes!
- Organization was without objections.
- The whole project was spectacular!

## Conclusion:

Through the efforts of the Belgrade and Podgorica offices of WUS Austria, the students of Serbia and Montenegro finally got a serious opportunity to meet Balkan Case Challenge. This was the first time the project was officially promoted, and promoted nation wide, covering all the centers of higher education; the first time our academic community could comprehend its benefits. Furthermore, the competition enjoyed the precious support of some prestigious organizations. It can now be safely stated that the event was a storming success. The participants came from all over the country, and the competition itself was held under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Serbia, Mr Boris Tadić. This gives us hope that the main objectives of this program – the promotion (which would eventually result in the wider application) of the case-study method as an effective learning/teaching technique through the process of university reform, and joint effort to overcome any kind of academic isolation – can count on winning all the necessary favours in the near future.

But the greatest delight for the organizing committee by far came with the closing ceremony, after which the officers of WUS Austria received such words of praise from the students that even the greatest optimists among us could hardly have expected. The participants were fascinated with the very concept of the event, its idea, as well as the organizational aspects of the Belgrade semi-finals. The universal remark was that BCC for Serbia and Montenegro came second to none as far as the student competitions in this country go. The winners asked about the finals, while the others proclaimed their determination to try again next year. And that is BCC at its best: awakening within the once insecure applicants striking self-confidence and eagerness to take the next challenge in line.

As we read their evaluation forms, we cannot help thinking of the thousands whose future has been modeled by the elusive magic of struggling theories, by piles of books overshadowed only by the piles of years that have gone by since they were last published, by minds to which practice is a word game and reform a dreaded onslaught. Constantly nourished by dust, they may be asleep now. But eventually, some of them will wake up. And then, they will leave.

If Balkan Case Challenge for Serbia and Montenegro is to remain just a competition organized once for the benefits of some 72 participants, then their impressions will not matter in the long run. If a new approach at the universities is not established, if new equipment is not provided, if the students are not assisted in their pursuit of experience and knowledge based on the latest achievements, if they are not encouraged to make friends with their colleagues from the region and initiate future cooperations, then all the effort put into this project has been but a waste of time. At the moment, the hopes are high – *the President himself proclaimed his dedication to the goals that BCC is designed to promote, the organizers of other student competitions have contacted WUS Austria to ask about our project and take our experience into consideration when reforming their own events, the case-study method has already taken its place in the curricula of few faculties and some professors and assistants who had taken part in the juries actually decided to organize models similar to those seen at Balkan Case Challenge and incorporate them into their Course Development Projects (course development is another area in which the higher education institutions can apply for the support of WUS Austria).* But, in an environment such as this, there are always other factors at work... There is a constant danger that those who keep pondering over which of the centuries gone by is the most desirable to be recreated for the glory of the nation will gain the upper hand.

If this country persists in searching for the shapes of the future in the flight of birds and in coffee grounds rather than in the ideas and needs of its children – then it will remain entrapped at the turn of the ages that had elsewhere ended long ago, agreeing to a position of a state misplaced - both in space and in time. And following the traditions of the region that has been known for trampling over too many opportunities (and often with a bloody trail), it can proudly continue with sacrificing its young to the maelstrom of lost causes.

But on a day not as distant as our fears would lead us to believe, *they* will be the ones trying to organize a late-hour transport out of the past we have been dwelling in.

We might as well be on it.

The trip should be worth taking.

Written by:

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