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**Project:**

**Electronic Network of Environmental NGOs in Croatia**

**Under the REC project:**

**Electronic Network of Environmental NGOs in SEE (2004)**

*This project is funded by the Italian Ministry for the Environment and Territory.*



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## **Background**

Osječki zeleni (Osijek Greens) is implementing the project titled “Electronic Network of Environmental NGOs in Croatia” with support from the REC project titled “Electronic network of Environmental NGOs in SEE”. The implementation period runs from October 2004 to October 2005.

The main aim of the project is the establishment of an environmental electronic network of NGOs to improve organisation and coordination of activities among the NGOs in Croatia, and to connect them with existing networks in the SEE region.

The project addresses the NGO needs for better cooperation and organisation of joint actions, projects and campaigns. The project team focuses its efforts especially on smaller and newly founded NGOs that require initial support for development.

## **Implementation**

The project involves:

- establishing a network website with useful news on NGO activities, projects and campaigns, and building an NGO database and forum; and
- creating an educational workshop for building NGO capacity by using the website.

The project began with a collection of contacts with Croatian environmental NGOs. Assistant Coordinator Kruno Kartus identified more than 280 e-mail addresses and got the word out about participating in project.

During January 2005, Project Coordinator Vjenceslav Svoboda established the network’s visual identity. The project team, in agreement with the REC Office in Croatia, proposed a network name – Grincajg – which was accepted.

Starting in 2005, the project team registered its web domain name [www.grincajg.net](http://www.grincajg.net) and rented web hosting. At the behest of the project coordinator, website designer and Osijek Greens member Davor Budimcic customised Cute News CMS for website needs. The first website proposal was launched in February 2005, and contains data from NGOs who responded to the call at the project’s start.

The project team started preparing an educational workshop and called ecological NGOs via e-mail. A workshop was organised for February 26-27 in the city of Osijek. The main aims of the workshop were capacity building for using website services and authorised news publishing. There was also a discussion-based forum on future activities.

The Osijek Greens received confirmation from 13 NGOs, and eight of them participated in the workshop: Dolphin Dream, Velebit Society Kuterevo, Society for Nature Protection Fluvius, EKOMP 21, Eko Zadar, Independent Croatian Farmers, Environmental Press Centre, as well as Osijek Greens. Five more NGOs joined the network and will participate in future activities.



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### **Workshop (Feb. 26)**

Ljiljanka Mitos-Svoboda, Osijek Greens leader, opened the workshop and briefly explained the role of the project and past activities of the NGO. Zeljka Medven from the REC Office in Croatia explained project aims. After a presentation of NGOs, project coordinator Vjenceslav Svoboda presented the content and services of the [www.grincajg.net](http://www.grincajg.net) website.

The workshop atmosphere was very interactive – using the website with support from the project team. Participants learned how to publish news, photos, create NGO data, publish leaflets and generate links. Kruno Kartus from Osijek Greens explained the main news elements and suggested some tips for titles, subtitles, news leads and useful links. Also he explained the main text forms for those interested in reporting on NGO activities.

Atlantida Vranjes from EkoMrezaBiH (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Mihajlo Maricic from EkoForum (Serbia and Montenegro) presented their experiences from national networks.

Local radio stations covered the workshop, and Slavonian television issued a broadcast statement from Zeljka Medven. The Croatian Information Agency published a big story that was distributed to all mass media outlets and websites in Croatia.

The first day of the workshop concluded with dinner at which participants discussed the future of the network in an informal setting.

### **Workshop (Feb. 27)**

Participants learned more about photo editing on day two. Most of the time was reserved for discussion about registering the network as a legal entity, organising activities and opportunities for joint projects, activities and campaigns. All participants found the project useful for their work and believe many other NGOs will join the network. Each NGO network members has the opportunity to suggest the accepting of a new member, and the network will accept an NGO's application for membership upon majority agreement.

Participants discussed fundraising opportunities and agreed to exchange all information that could be useful for the network and other members.

All participants received a handbook with relevant information on the project, directions for website use, tips on writing, editing and publishing news, in addition to an overview of other networks in the SEE region.

The handbook has a special CD annex with open source programmes:

- browsers (Mozilla Firefox, Opera);
- scripts (Cute News, PubBB forum, PHP My Admin);
- security programmes (Zone Alarm, Firewall, Ad-Aware, Spybot, Search & Destroy, AVG);
- presentations (Volvox and EkoMrezaBiH) and
- others (Thunderbird, IrfanView, MiRC, Skype, WinZip and Open Office).

Most of these programmes will be useful to NGOs when working on network and outside NGO activities.



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When the workshop concluded, a final proposal was made to launch the [www.grincajg.net](http://www.grincajg.net) website, which was accepted.

### **Future plans**

The Grincajg network programme has submitted a call for NGO proposals of the Croatian Ministry of Environmental Protection.

The first public activity of the Grincajg network is to organise public awareness events for Earth Day on April 22. All NGOs will take part in local theme-related (Water for Life) efforts and work to expose local ecological problems related to water. Osijek Greens will coordinate these activities.

March 29, 2005, Osijek

Kruno Kartus,  
Assistant Coordinator