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PRESS RELEASE

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CEEweb for Biodiversity

Empower the powerless - looking for opportunities to support small-scale farmers in Serbia

Small scale farming is an important segment of the agricultural sector in Serbia. 76% of all Serbian farms have under 5 hectares and there are some 650,000 family farm holdings registered across the country. However, while constituting an important segment of the Serbian society, small-scale farmers face numerous problems, from lack of access to markets and modern infrastructure to difficulties in accessing loans and other sources of financing. The upcoming conference organised on 10-11 March in Belgrade in Guarnerius Art Centre by CEEweb for Biodiversity together with its partners from Serbia, namely Young Researchers of Serbia and Eko-Centar, seeks to reflect on this and highlight the financial and cooperation opportunities available to Serbian small-scale farmers through lessons learnt from the European Union and donors contribution.

The conference and workshop event will take place on the 10-11th of March at Guarnerius Art Centre in Belgrade, Serbia. The event comes as the three partners are finalising their project „Empower the powerless – looking for opportunities to support small-scale farmers in Serbia“, financed by the **International Visegrad Fund (IVF), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea and the European Commission.**

The conference will be held on the 10th of March and will consist of four blocks. First, **Mr. Zeljko Radosevic**, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection in Serbia, will address a keynote speech on the importance and future of small-scale family farmers in the country. **Mr. Nenad Budimovic** of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce will follow Mr. Radosevic with a speech on the cooperation of different sectors to support small-scale family farming. Next, the project team will present the outcomes of the project, highlighting the lessons learnt during the activities and the overall conclusions of the project. The joint initiative focused to a great extent on training small-scale farmers on how to keep their activity viable, to access more funds and to leverage their market position through cooperation. The second block of the conference will be dedicated to successful case studies from neighbouring European Union and Visegrad countries, where small-scale farming has provided for a sustainable livelihood. Thus, there will be a presentation on viability of small-scale farming in Romanian High Nature Value areas, a case study on Community Supported Agriculture from Hungary, an overview of the organic farming benefits and what lessons can be learnt from the Czech Republic and a review of successful ecotourism practices from Bulgaria.

In the third block, donor representatives will explain the expectations of financing bodies with regard to the expected outcomes and impacts of small-scale farming projects. **Mrs. Sun Ju Yearn**, secretary in the Republic of Korea Embassy of Belgrade, will also be present at the event. The last part of the conference will be reserved for a panel discussion with experts and stakeholders on what the Serbian small-scale farming sector needs. The panel speakers will be comprised not only of experts but also of state, industry and NGO representative. This will ensure a meaningful discussion on what the Serbian small-scale farming sector needs and will constitute a basis for the workshops of the next day.

The two workshops on the 11th of March will allow Serbian stakeholders to reflect on their overall experience from the project and the information provided during the conference. Thus, the first workshop will be dedicated to assessing the challenges and opportunities for keeping the small-scale farming sector viable in the country. Based on this the second workshop will see Serbian stakeholders working on a step-by-step approach to sustaining and developing small-scale farming at a local level.

The event is generously funded by the [International Visegrad Fund](#), the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea](#), and the [European Commission](#). The donors are not responsible for the views expressed in the project.



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