



PRESS RELEASE

13 October 2021

"The Smile of the Child" presented the results of the Intersyc II project

"The Smile of the Child" implemented the final Conference to present the goals and the results of the project "Integrated Territorial Synergies for Children Health & Protection II - INTERSYC II", in Komotini on Wednesday 13 October 2021. In collaboration with the project partners, the Organization implemented actions aimed at developing means to protect children at risk and improving the level of Health and Social Care Services for children in cross-border areas.

During the conference the project partners, the Foundation "Center Nadja" - Sandanski Branch-Bulgaria, the Regional Department of Education-Blagoevgrad-Bulgaria, Organization for Local Development "K. Karatheodori S.A.", as well as the lead partner, "the Smile of the Child", presented the implemented actions of the project, which consists of a comprehensive set of activities aimed at improving the quality of life of children in cross-border areas, with the intention to develop means to protect children at risk and improve the level of Health and Social Care Services for children.

The conference was attended, among others, by the Executive Secretary of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Ms. Kosmidou Zoe, the Mayor of Komotini, Mr. Garanis Ioannis, the Mayor of Iasmos, Mr. Oder Moumin, the Director of the Padiatric Clinic of the General Hospital of Komotini, Ms. Karanikolaou Eleni, the Director of Secondary Education Rodopi, Ms. Kosmidou Marigoula, representatives of the Holy Diocese of Maronia and Komotini, Security Corps, Institutions, Associations and Organizations.

The Director of the Regional Department of Education - Blagoevgrad Bulgaria, **Mr. Ivaylo Zlatanov**, referred to the usefulness of the project actions and especially those implemented in order to address the problems that arose due to the pandemic. He stated *"We, as partners, are particularly pleased with our participation in such a meaningful project, which includes activities that have a positive effect on the level of children's health care, while also addressing a number of critical issues related to children at risk."*

The Director of the Nadja Centre Foundation - Sandanski Branch, **Ms. Rossanka Venelinova**, focused on the successful and efficient cooperation between partners, stating: *"I would like to thank our colleagues from the partner organizations of the INTERSYC II project and especially The Smile of the Child. We are very happy to have participated in the implementation of such extremely useful actions for the prevention and protection of children in the cross-border region of Greece and Bulgaria. Our work and the results of the project actions prove that we are based on the common principle to improve the future and the safety of our children"*.

The President of the Organization for Local Development "K. Karatheodori S.A.", **Mr. Athanasios Lapatas**, congratulated all involved in the project and stated: *"A project that started in September 2017 is successfully completed today. Due to the pandemic, we faced great difficulties that led*

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us to adapt to new conditions, and reflecting on the outcome, it is a success. We hope to be given the opportunity with the new program period to collaborate again in actions with the same purpose, because what we all expect to achieve through our combined efforts, is a smile for each and every child".

The Head of Managing Authority of European Territorial Cooperation Programs, **Ms. Angeliki Bouziani**, said: *"Territorial cooperation programs constitute a structured tool that offers opportunities for cooperation at a cross-border, transnational and pan-European level. The Intersyc II project represents an excellent example of the projects we are funding. The high operational level, the social sensitivity and the deep specialization in the issues you were called to manage, contributed not only to the achievement of the objectives of our program, but also to the creation of an important legacy and the continuation of support to the supreme issue, the protection of minors".*

The President of the Board of Directors of "The Smile of the Child", **Mr. Costas Yannopoulos**, referred to the successful implementation of the Intersyc I and Intersyc II projects, as well as their contribution to identifying and addressing the problems faced by vulnerable groups of children in Greece and Bulgaria. Specifically, he stressed: *"Through the Intersyc II project and our joined efforts, we implemented important actions and actions for the support, protection and care of children in Greece and Bulgaria. When a program is finished, we do not stop there; we further continue to use the tools we have acquired through the project, to meet future challenges and support local communities".*

In particular, during the INTERSYC II project, which started on 5 September 2017 and was completed on 4 October 4 2021, the project partners accomplished the following:

- **Awareness raising initiatives** for the promotion, training and operation of the European Hotline for Missing Children **116000**, the **Amber Alert Hellas** and the European Child Alert Automated System (**ECAAS**) in the areas of: Komotini, Maronia-Sapes, Simitli, Petrich, Bansko, Sandanski, Gotse Deltev, Belitsa, Razlog and Blagoevgrad. More than 200 public officials and teachers of Primary and Secondary Education from Greece and Bulgaria, participated in the informative actions on issues related to the disappearances of minors and adults and the presentation of good practices.

- **Preventive Medicine** actions with the mobile Polyclinic for children "Hippocrates" and the mobile medical units (ambulances) of the Organization "The Smile of the Child". In total, 7.471 children were examined by a medical team comprised of a pediatrician, an ophthalmologist, a dentist, an otolaryngologist and an orthopedist.

- 3.546 children were examined in Bulgaria. (Sandanski, Blagoevgrad)

- 3.925 children were examined in Greece (prefectures of Rodopi, Komotini, Iasmos and Maronia – Sapon).

- **Training Seminars** - officially recognized by the European Resuscitation Council - in the field of rescue and first aid - BSL / AED (Basic Life Support / Automated External Defibrillation), attended by 460 people.

- **"Search & Rescue" workshops on the good practices of managing cases of missing minors** by the Search and Rescue Team "Thanasis Makris" of the Organization "The Smile of the Child", which were held online during the pandemic, while a round table discussion was organized between the Search and Rescue Teams of Greece and Bulgaria.

- **Voluntary Blood Donation actions**, in close cooperation of all partners with the competent actors, the municipalities and the public hospitals in the cross-border areas of Greece and Bulgaria. In Greece, the Voluntary Blood Donation days took place in Orestiada, Drama, Kavala, Alexandroupolis, Komotini and Thessaloniki, collecting a total of 240 blood bags.

- **Provision of psychosocial support to children and families during the Covid-19 pandemic**, through the operation of the European Helpline for Children & Adolescents 116111 and the National Helpline for

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Children SOS 1056, which “The Smile of the Child” operates with specialized psychologists free of charge on a 24/7. In Bulgaria psychosocial support is provided to children and families in need online, making use of a digital platform.

- **Educational seminars conducted by the “Smile Academy of Education & Training”** by “The Smile of the Child” in which teachers of Primary and Secondary Education from the regions of Central Macedonia and Eastern Macedonia & Thrace participated, to support students, parents and professionals of the school community dealing with problems related to the pandemic.
- **Large-scale Study on the effects of distant learning during the Covid-19 pandemic**, with proposals for more effective online learning in future similar conditions, by the partner of Regional Department of Education-Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.
- **Information, Awareness and Education campaign on the coronavirus disease-Covid-19** in Greece and Bulgaria, implemented through digital media, to disseminate useful information, protect citizens from misinformation and promote good prevention & management practices.
- **Provision of essential medical equipment to strengthen national health systems across borders.** The **new Mobile Medical Unit of Neonatal & Children Intensive Care** which was acquired through the project, as well as the existing mobile medical units of the Organization "The Smile of the Child" are set at the disposal of the competent authorities for the urgent transport of patients who, either belong to vulnerable groups, or reside in cross-border areas and face health problems.

The project " INTERSYC II " was co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and by national resources of Greece and Bulgaria.

More information about the project "INTERSYC II" [here](#).

For press inquiries and more information please refer to:

"The Smile of the Child"

Tel. +30 2310-250160

thesspress@hamogelo.gr