

At the recommendation of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, in line with the Strategy of maintaining and strengthening relations between the mother country and diaspora, as well as between the mother country and the Serbs of the region, the Government of the Republic of Serbia has approved the Project "Serbia for the Serbs of the Region", providing scholarships for young people belonging to the Serbian ethnic communities in the countries of the region.

The expression "Serbs of the region", according to the Law on diaspora and the Serbs in the region, means members of the Serbian people living in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Romania, Albania and Hungary.

Within the Project, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development has announced competition for granting scholarships in the academic year 2012/2013 to all interested members of the Serbian communities from the countries in the region aged 18 to 35 years.

Requirements for a candidate to get a scholarship are as follows:

- to belong to the Serbian national minority, and have the nationality of one of the countries in the region, to be under 21 years of age for the bachelor's degree studies, to be under 25 years of age for master's studies and under 35 years of age for doctoral degree studies;
- to have an outstanding performance in a secondary school in order to enrol on the bachelor's studies and an average grade above 8.50 in order to enrol on the master's studies and a master's degree total of 300 ECTS in order to be able to attend doctoral studies;
- to have a communication level knowledge of the English or Serbian languages and to return to and live in the country he/she came from.

The bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies will be organized at the state universities in the Republic of Serbia and the scholarships will be granted for those qualifications, i.e. study programmes that are needed by the Serbian community in a certain country.

Candidates have to submit all the required documents through the diplomatic or consular mission of the Republic of Serbia in their countries of residence. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development will select and shortlist successful candidates upon recommendation of the Council for Serbs of the Region. The total amount of a scholarship is RSD 15,000.00 a month, including a free preparation for learning Serbian, free school fees, free board and lodging, free basic medical care, free residence visa, free recognition of secondary school and university diplomas.

The total of 40 scholarships in the academic year 2012/2013 have been allocated as follows: 7 for the candidates from Albania (bachelor studies), 8 for the candidates from Bosnia and Herzegovina (3 for bachelor studies, 3 for master's studies and 2 for doctoral studies), 7 for the candidates from Hungary (for bachelor studies), 5 for the candidates from Macedonia (3 for bachelor studies, 1 for master's studies and 1 for doctoral studies), 2 for the candidates from Romania (1 for bachelor studies and 1 for master's studies), 1 for the candidate from Slovenia

(for doctoral studies), 5 for the candidates from Croatia (1 for bachelor, 1 for master's and 3 for doctoral studies) and 5 for the candidates from Montenegro (for bachelor studies).

Starting from the academic year 2012/2013, scholars from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia and Montenegro will study the programmes they applied for, as their knowledge of Serbian is sufficient for the continuation of the studies. The scholars of the countries mentioned above having a sufficient knowledge of Serbian sat a test in Serbian as a foreign language at the end of August 2012 and those who passed it enrolled on the studies of their choice in the academic year 2012/2013. Scholars who do not speak Serbian will attend a course in Serbian as a foreign language in academic 2012/2013, and in case they fail to pass it will no longer have the right to further education within this Project. Three scholars, from the accepted candidates, subsequently gave up or did not fulfil the requirements (one from Romania, one from Hungary and one from Bosnia and Herzegovina) so that the total number of candidates accepted for the academic year 2012/2013 was 37.

The total number of applicants was 104 (Albania - 14, Bosnia and Herzegovina - 44, Montenegro - 8, Croatia - 11, Hungary - 12, Macedonia - 12 and Slovenia - 1).