**Accept a challenge, plant a tree, assemble a crew**

***Eko Ćićevac is an informal group of five young people: Milena Blagojević, Aleksandar Simić, Ivana Petrović, Nikola Blagojević and Stefan Maksimović. It was created to raise the awareness of young people about ecology and preservation of nature.***

**Stefan Maksimović**, conceptual creator of the project, has told us more about the idea behind the project:

“The idea of planting seedlings has existed for a long time. For an extended period of time, my colleagues and I have been thinking of the ways to incite people in Ćićevac to expand their awareness and preserve their environment. On all public green surfaces different kinds of seedlings are planted, but they are not cared for and in time they wither. I’ve been a witness when on more than a few occasions young people spill drinks on the seedlings or throw different kinds of junk, break branches, and this is when the idea that something must be changed emerged. This project was a sort of a green light for that. Conceptualizing the project didn’t take too much time, since we already had the idea and knew what we wanted to do and which activities we wanted to carry out. When you have a good idea, a great team, you want to change something, and you also get the support you need, it all becomes pleasurable, and the time is not a significant factor.”

The ecological awareness of people in Ćićevac is not very high, and this is the main reason for launching this project. One of the activities in the project is putting up ecological messages near the places where a lot of people gather. In this way they want to motivate the citizens and make the messages echo in people’s minds before they make mistakes, and before it is too late. The project will have a positive influence on people. Young people and kids as well as all citizens must be aware of the environment and its importance for us all. A man is as healthy as his environment is clean and healthy.

Since 2000. untill today, The European Union has donated more than 3.6 billion euros to Serbia.

The funds were used as a support for the development, the quality of life and the reforms in the following spheres: civil protection, defense against floods and help for the flooded regions, education, cooperation, protection of the environment, health protection, consumers protection, culture, the rule of the law, local development, jobs and the economy growth, public administration, migration, management of public funds, civil society and the media, social inclusion, youth and sport. The EU support is implemented through the cooperation with the Serbian Government. The EU has donated more developmental funds than all of the other international donators together.

I have accepted the challenge, how about you?

*We would like our message to be heard, people motivated and the awareness of people raised even outside of the boundaries of Ćićevac. The main goal is for us all to create a clean and healthy place for life, to follow these ideas and learn together.*

So **Accept the challenge, Plant a tree, Assemble a crew**

You can also follow them on social media:

Instagram: @ekocicevac  
Facebook: @Eko Ćićevac   
**Journalist: Sanja Ivanović**

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