

STATEMENT OF THE JURY FOR THE UNICEF ANNUAL PRIZE FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN 2008

The Jury believes that among the entries from electronic media two authors deserve special mentions – Ms. Olivera Milos Todorovic for the project entitled “The Tree of Life” co-produced by RTV Studio B and Shok Art company, and Ms. Tatjana Los for the story “Play Football and Be Happy” about boys with special needs from the Pancevo football club *Kliker* in the production of Media Link.

A decision was however unanimously made that the 2008 award should go to Ms. Jelena Marinkovic for TV story WHITE-PAINTED WALLS broadcast on TV Pirot.

As is the case in most of the entries submitted to this competition, this is a bitter story about difficult fate of children from a destroyed family - the three young Antics - Ivana, Vlada and Tanja - from the village Crvencevo near Pirot. Five years ago the mother abandoned the family. The father died two years ago. The unavoidable companion of the emotional trauma became the existential one, and so is the issue of the best interest of the child.

The elderly grandparents continued raising the children in an old house lacking basic hygienic conditions. And again the poverty is only a condensed collection of a number of factors that threaten child rights. Seemingly a stereotype of a personal misfortune and a non-existing family, this is a story about many similar fates. Luckily for the three young Antics, this time the society has been neither deaf nor rigid – the part of the system that takes care of the socially deprived, their immediate surroundings, the neighbours in Crvencevo, the local community that showed an enviable sensibility and solidarity. Although the initial decision was to place the children in a foster family, Ivana, Vlada and Tanja are going to stay with their grandparents who are the only remaining part of their biological family, their only link with the life and the setting they know well and in which they feel safe. They will stay in Crvencevo, in a new house with walls painted in white, built thanks to the solidarity of the community and local authorities.

This story has a happy end, because everything has functioned well and actions were timely, which does not happen often. Children’s natural environment has been preserved, their opinion has been respected, and they have realised their right to actively and equally participate in making decisions that related to them themselves and their lives. At the

same time, the institutions were reminded that each person's circumstances are different and that every single case must be considered separately, that there must and can be flexibility within the system, and that untypical measures must be searched for in the best interest of the child as the best interest of the child is the supreme principle in the realisation of child rights.

The story of young Antics has been professionally told by Jelena Markovic from TV Pirot.