

VISITOR CENTRE OF  
THE NATIONAL BANK OF SERBIA  
AS A PLACE OF SOCIAL HARMONY  
WITH A SPECIAL REVIEW OF THE “NIGHT OF  
MUSEUMS 2010”

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### Introduction

Man has a natural tendency to occasionally depart from the tedious monotony of everyday life, as well as a desire to turn, if only for a moment, to the confirmed values that tradition offers, but with a vision toward the future and the modern technologies and with the acknowledgement that we belong to today's modern world, with all the challenges and crises that the world carries with it. In that sense, the **Visitor Centre of the National Bank of Serbia** offers to the public an opportunity to reminisce on the historical values that define our social and cultural identity and, simultaneously, through interactive educational activities, offers visitors the necessary useful information for using modern banking products and services.

### Goal of the analysis

The basic idea behind this study is the analysis of visitors' satisfaction in regard to the offered content of the Visitor Centre of the National Bank of Serbia, in a desire to improve and develop the existing content, as well as implement new content in keeping in step with contemporary global tendencies and adjusting those to visitors' wishes and needs.

The National Bank, aside from its legal obligation – to maintain the stability of prices and the financial system, also has a social responsibility in implementing numerous activities on various levels of social life, while being an institution of cultural and historical significance and a pillar of rich cultural heritage. Thus the socio-psychological analysis of



the activities of the Visitor Centre has the goal of satisfying that specific segment of its work as a place of social harmony, where barriers, at least temporarily, disappear among the users of its services.

The analysis of activities that have been thus far realised by the Visitor Centre, which encompasses content that is open for public viewing in two edifices of the National Bank of Serbia in Belgrade, includes the categories of visitors, their motivation and experience at the Visitor Centre as a place of cultural exchange, the promotion of mutual understanding, cooperation and harmony among people.

### **Methodological approach**

The study covers a one-year analysis of the work of the Visitor Centre, with a review of the cultural manifestation "The Night of Museums 2010". It was made based on the analysis of questionnaires that were given to elementary and secondary school pupils and to adult visitors, the book of impressions, the electronic register of visits by categories, direct conversations with visitors, as well as direct examination and observations of the employees of the Centre.

In conclusion, we will review problems that have been uncovered, questions that those problems pose and the perspectives they offer.

### **A unique museum project in Serbia**

The **Visitor Centre of the National Bank of Serbia** is not a classic or institutional museum, but a specific educational-exhibiting centre, with a standing numismatic exhibition, theme exhibitions, temporary exhibitions and with adjoining educational and interactive content.

As part of the policy of openness toward the public that the National Bank has for all categories of the population, including those that are marginalised on any basis, the Visitor Centre represents a place for extracurricular learning in which financial and cultural-historical education are combined. This includes content available for public viewing in two locations of the National Bank of Serbia:

- In the historical edifice of the Bank in 12 Kralja Petra Street,
- In the new edifice in 17 Nemanjina Street.

The palace of the National Bank in Kralja Petra Street represents one of the most beautiful architectural creations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Belgrade,

which is why it has been incorporated into the list of landmarks that are under the protection of the state. The hall where the teller windows were formerly located has now been adapted into an educational exhibition space, in which visitors, in getting to know the exhibits displaying the work of a 126-year-old institution, feel a sense of belonging to national and European tradition.

The edifice of the National Bank in Nemanjina Street is a modern, new building constructed of glass and marble, in use since 2006, where the central hall also serves as a contemporary gallery space, in which visitors can enjoy diverse cultural, artistic and social events in a contemporary setting.

In maintaining a new role in society, the National Bank of Serbia, as a unique institution in Serbia, wishes to present its activities to the public in an interactive way and demonstrate the significance of financial education of its citizens – from the youngest to oldest, as well as our cultural heritage, through exhibitional displays, lectures, discussions, creative workshops and participation in social events.

In July 2004, the National Bank, for the first time in its 120-year long history, opened its doors and allowed the widest possible audience, local and international, to become familiar with specific aspects of our cultural heritage which includes currency and the messages portrayed through the artwork on it, but also the very edifice of the Bank.

On the jubilee of the Bank, its 120<sup>th</sup> birthday, a standing exhibition was opened, titled *Money in the Territory of Serbia*, which presented a review of money used throughout the territory of our country, from its earliest appearance until the currency currently in circulation.

To this day, the standing exhibition has been enriched with themed exhibitions. The displays that attract most attention from visitors are *The Dinar – Our Money*, dedicated to the security features of banknotes that prevent falsification, and *Coins of Serbia*, which demonstrates the manufacturing process of coinage. Both exhibitions are enriched with interactive content, which allows visitors the special opportunity to test the authenticity of banknotes on appropriate machines and to coin a small medal as a souvenir on a manual press.

Leaning on tradition, yet with a vision toward the future, the Visitor Centre offers programmes specifically designed for preschool children,



for elementary school pupils and secondary school pupils. The education of youth is conducted by and through the exhibitional displays, special interactive didactic programmes, quiz games, and workshops that were designed by experts for particular age groups. Special didactic materials were designed in an interesting, fun and approachable form that enables children to participate extensively and to be introduced, through games and mutual socialisation, to the basic concepts of money, but also to the content not covered by regular scholastic curriculum.

In promoting Belgrade and Serbia on a national and international level, the NBS and its Visitor Centre have also been active partners in numerous cultural and social events. For several years now, the "European Heritage Days" have been marked, while they participated in the cultural manifestations the "Night of Museums" and "International Day of the Francophonie" for the third time in 2009.

Active cooperation is also pursued with the Children's Cultural Centre in Belgrade and the Centre for Contemporary Museum Didactics.

Entrance to all displayed content at the Visitor Centre is **free**.

The Visitor Centre has received the annual award of the National Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) for Project of the Year. The award was presented on the International Museum Day, 18 May 2007, and the explanation, among other things, mentions:

"The establishment of the NBS Visitor Centre and its activities represent a unique museological project in our surroundings that can serve as an example to other significant government institutions, which led the Committee to decide to give it the award for Project of the Year."

## **Visitation, categories of visitors, their motivation, methods of communication, a place of social harmony**

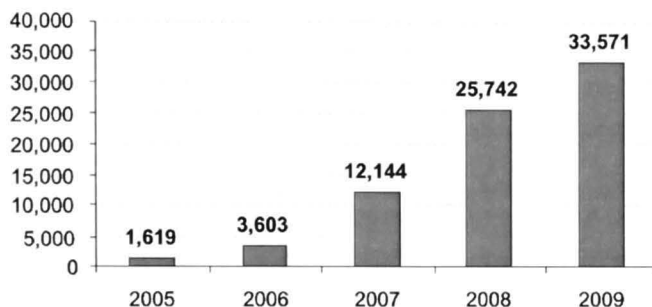
### **1. Visitation**

The displays, educational programmes and culturally educational content of the National Bank of Serbia were viewed and followed by a total of **33.571** people and of those:

- **13.620** at the edifice in Kralja Petra Street,
- **8.657** at the edifice on Slavija Square, and
- **11.294** at guest appearances.

A significant segment of the Centre's activities are guest appearances in cities across Serbia with the goal of introducing the content to

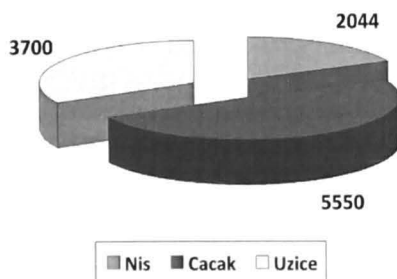
impoverished communities and citizens who are unable to travel to Belgrade, particularly the population attending schools.



*Graph 1*

**Total number of citizens introduced to the exhibitional and educational content in the edifices located in Kralja Petra Street and on Slavija Square and guest appearances**

Note: In 2009 guest appearances throughout several cities in Serbia are included



*Graph 2*

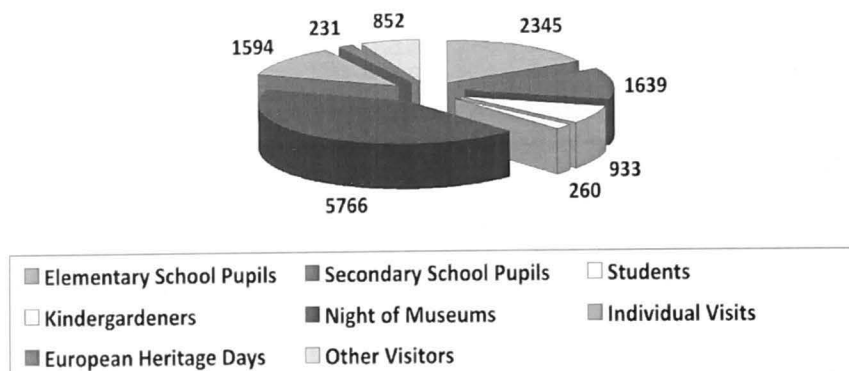
**Total number of citizens introduced to the exhibitional and educational content at guest appearances in 2009**

## 2. Who are the visitors?

The visitors are representatives of the most diverse variety of groups in a social, psychological, developmental, educational and cultural sense. As both edifices are accessible to the disabled, the wards of the Day Care Centre for Children and Youth with Impaired Development in Šekspirova Street were also among the visitors, as well as the wards of the



Home for Abandoned Children from Ustanička Street in Belgrade and the Social Welfare Centre from Novi Sad.



*Graph 3*

**Categories of visitors of the exhibition space in Kralja Petra Street in 2009**

### 3. Motivation

Generally people tend to be quite inert, of old-fashioned values, thus having apprehensions toward accepting new things, new technologies, preoccupied with current problems, which is why the content offered by the Visitor Centre is not very close to them. People are preoccupied with more important existential issues (disintegration of the state, transition, unemployment, economic issues, and a general lack of interest in culture...). A visit to a museum, even when entrance is free of charge, is not among their priorities. Especially it is difficult for people to identify the National Bank as a bidder of exhibitional activities.

The wealth of cultural heritage and current cultural events should find their ways to the public in a contemporary, interactive mode that places tradition as an invitation to uncover the forgotten, unexplored and, concurrently, challenging and intriguing. In that sense, the role of the Visitor Centre is to be a place of harmonic intercultural communication.

Taking into account the category of adult visitors, it could be said they are primarily motivated by curiosity. The National Bank of Serbia was long been considered a closed, secretive and unapproachable institution and the building was closed to the public. People were thus primarily motivated by their desire to go in where entrance was forbidden for 120 years, and then by the idea that visiting the Centre is an opportunity to learn. Encouraging curiosity is an important segment of the Centre's work with visitors. Surrounded by currency displays, gold bars,

banknotes from the hyperinflation period of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, visitors are sometimes in disagreement with the messages of the content displayed, or feel uncomfortable being exposed to the reminders of difficult economic past, yet as long as they seem interested and while they are being informed, while the staff treats them respectfully regardless of their opinions, the goal of the Visitor Centre as a place of mutual understanding is being fulfilled. Seldom do visitors come with the motivation to be simply entertained and have a nice time, or to socialise with others – except in the case of “The Night of Museums”, when this is the primary motivation. A smaller portion of visitors (mostly over the age of 45), among whom there are retirees, stated in the questionnaires that they came with the desire to do something valuable for themselves and most were in company of a friend, family member or guest from abroad.

*One of the e-mails received:*

Dear Vesna,

Please accept once again the deepest expression of gratitude for your extraordinary welcome and the “Fairytale Journey” that you presented us with through the history of the institution that one would least expect it from!

We are proud that you exist!

With the deepest respect,

Yours

Tatiana MILOVANOVIC

Most visitors, especially groups of school children from the vicinity of Belgrade and rural areas, came in with a particular sense of awe. Within the category of adult visitors, there was an inconsequential percentage of those who came in with a sense of belittlement, motivated, again, by memories, historical heritage, as well as everyday political issues.

When they visit, the different views of different categories of visitors are manifested through the specific reactions of individuals, recorded in the book of impressions, questionnaires or said out loud.

In interacting with visitors, a significant influence was achieved toward attaining the primary goal, i.e. their role gained new connotation and passive observers become participants who, by their presence, not only went into the past to unite with the archetypical within themselves, but also into the future. Such interactive experience cannot compare to the passive listening and traditional image of a cultural institution.



Unfortunately, throughout the period which is, hopefully, now behind us, this image had a significant place where expectations, mental notions and the associations of our citizens are concerned, in regard to museums and museum displays. We can therefore say that our goal has been achieved, yet certainly on a level that only represents awakening and a change in attitude.

An interesting piece of data from a conducted study that relates social context to socio-psychological circumstances is that there is still an extremely small response from immediate families as a unique group set, except during "The Night of Museums". The cultural-historical content of the exhibition displays, as well as various content related to current times, have bypassed the interest of this particular group of visitors.

The search for enjoyable time, curiosity and the desire to participate actively in something that the entire city participates in on that particular night are the reasons for the extraordinary turnout during the cultural manifestation "The Night of Museums", but also the recommendations by friends and the close ones who visited the NBS on the previous "The Nights of Museums". In cooperation with the Faculty of Philosophy – Department for Art History, student volunteers were engaged during this manifestation, who provided an extraordinary contribution. Interactive content – imitations of banknotes issued by the National Bank with one's own portrait in colour, small medals that visitors could coin on a manual press and a bar lift (visitors were able to lift and weigh, although the volumes are the same, bars of gold, iron and lead) represent something unique in what exhibitional educational displays of institutions have to offer, consequently all visitors had an absolute desire to get a banknote "of their own". Regardless of the sometimes an hour and a half queue to get into the Bank, people were in extremely good spirits, excited to view the unique content they would receive as gifts. The entire event was topped off by the presence of the Governor of the NBS, who talked to visitors, autographed imitation banknotes, took pictures with people, that creating a particular sense of satisfaction within citizens thus making the Bank even more open and accessible to the public. They did not expect anything like it!

#### **4. Methods of Communication**

In a time of frenetic communication, when being connected is „essential“, when people mainly communicate by mobile telephones or through internet, when there is no spontaneity, because communication is calculated, insincere, manufactured, where following motives are



immediately recognised, when one person only sees a competitor in another, and it is essentially uninterested, the direct human contact with visitors in an exhibitional space offers a sense of satisfaction, both to the public (who is searching for value) and for the employees. The employees take a genuine interest in the visitors and their needs and, encountering pleasant acceptance with the public, recognise the social value of their work, which motivates them to step up their effort. The goal of these activities is for the Visitor Centre to become a place where information is exchanged, mutual understanding promoted, differences surpassed with respect, cooperation and harmony created and, in that sense, the mission of the employees is for those who use the services to identify the Centre as a place of tolerance, good will and openness toward all.

In the display and presentation, materials from several fields have been synthesised, primarily taking into account that the stay within the exhibitional space must not be dull, but that visitors, through entertaining conversational mediation, should learn things related to various activities of the National Bank and wider. Conventional expert tours were avoided, as well as conferential *ex cathedra* presentations from a “he who is above, he who knows all” standpoint.

The method of dialogue has proven to be very successful and has allowed both employees/mediators and visitors to share and contribute particular knowledge through, although directed, yet immediate conversation. A successful display object–mediator–visitor relationship has been established. The classic, academic display of exhibits and educational displays has proven to be dull and people, children in particular, were not willing to merely listen, but sought interactive mediation.

The elementary tool, as stated previously, is the interpersonal exchange and it represents the accompanying element to the displayed objects. The comprehension of the complexity that verbal exchange and its contribution to understanding the entire content that is placed before the visitors encourages the stance that motivates further perfecting and learning certain communication skills. Thus the employees of the Centre tend to make their oral presentation short and effective, in an effort to activate imagination, awaken curiosity and probe questions that open new fields of interest.

Visitor satisfaction with this form of presenting has been recorded in the questionnaire and the visitors’ book (with a top grade of 5 in 99% of cases, only one instance of a grade 3, the rest graded 4).



This method of presentation is based on interactivity, mutual exchange of information, collaboration, the encounter, yet everything still evolves in a different way than everyday, spontaneous conversation. Unpredictable, unique moments have often been noticed, so this method of presenting the content within the exhibitional space has injected liveliness, flexibility, curiosity, originality, sometimes even humour, in one word it has enriched all that the Visitor Centre has to offer. A few examples that testify to that (from elementary school pupils):

*Why is it called the central bank? Because it's located in the city centre. Where is money manufactured in the Republic of Serbia? In the Post Office!..*

Although groups of school children have arrived quite unprepared, often poorly motivated by teachers and professors themselves and occasionally tired as they come in directly after classes, after entering the exhibitional space they show interest and satisfaction with the offered displays. Upon returning to school, they pass this satisfaction on to schoolmates from other grades, subsequently leading to chain visits of pupils of different ages from the same school.

An effective mix of educational and accompanying interactive activities maintains children's attention, making them flexible and directing to notice the here and now. The genuine, direct observations of the children, stripped of taboo, had contributed to the sense of intimacy and equality among children who freely expressed their observations. Carried by this rhythm, a good effect was achieved in the true sense of the word, considering the unprepared state in which the children entered the museum.

The education of teachers and adaptation of the content to focus on the target group of teaching professionals may present a welcome challenge in the near future, considering that their approach to the content on display at the Centre is less cooperative than expected. This aspect is not surprising, taking into account the transitional context and socio-psychological frame to which we are exposed. Sometimes time presents an important factor in attaining a collaborative relationship based on trust and understanding of the meaning of adopting educational and cultural content during a developmental stage, like that of school age children. In forming the identity of a young individual, the respectability of adult authorities is certainly a contributing element and school teachers fall into this group. The fact that a quality collaborative relationship was formed quickly with some teachers (unfortunately in small numbers), thanks to their consciousness of the importance of the matter, is testimony to that.

A far greater motivation and preparation for visiting the Centre was recorded among children that attend international schools (International School of Belgrade, Chartwell School, École Française de Belgrade, the German School).

### 5. A Place of Social Harmony

In a social community blocked by an economic crisis, in the absence of common sense in the midst of a destroyed value system, when the words most often heard are “capital”, “profit”, “gain”, the Visitor Centre of the National Bank of Serbia is focused toward people and care for citizens through various ways and forms, on the financial education level, as well as within socially cultural promotion.

In partaking in the fulfilment of social responsibility of the NBS, the Visitor Centre has been actively involved in the campaign for promoting children's dinar savings *Win by Saving*, during which a special emphasis was placed on educational activities and for which didactic materials were designed. The goal is to bring the concept and necessity of savings closer to children and explain it to them.

A weak motivation for savings was noticed as children are still under the influence of parents who do not trust banks, despite the stability of the dinar, which again is a consequence of the negative experiences parents had in the past, during the periods of inflation when banks “ate” their long-term savings. A large amount of intensive work with youth is still necessary within the campaign of financial education and constant reminding of the necessity of savings and rational use of funds in order to change their way of thinking, especially over the current year due to the effects of the global economic crisis, which did not bypass our country.

Taking into account that the field of culture is what bonds people in the best possible way, that the knowledge of foreign languages represents one important tool for connecting people of diverse civilisations and from different continents, that it opens new horizons, the Visitor Centre is an active participant in the manifestations **European Heritage Days**, **International Day of the Francophonie** and **The Night of Museums**. During these events, a number of foreign visitors were noticed, who were surprised by the offered content and displays – from Serbia, a country in transition, this was not expected! The success was mutual, both sides were winners – the National Bank and its Visitor Centre presented themselves in a contemporary European manner, offering the content



that some central banks of European countries offer their citizens, while foreign visitors had the opportunity to be introduced to our culture and historical heritage, but above all to the National Bank as a whole, as a contemporary European institution.

Among the activities promoting the National Bank of Serbia and the Republic of Serbia, the Bank, or rather the Communication Division that the Visitor Centre is a part of, organised for the first time in its history an exhibition abroad. In honour of the Republic of Serbia's Chairmanship of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, and to mark the contribution to the MONEYVAL project of the Council of Europe in which the NBS actively participates, an exhibition titled "The National Bank of Serbia, a National and European Institution" was displayed in the central building of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg from September 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> 2007. The exhibition was opened by the Governor. According to the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the Council of Europe, *the holding of the exhibition was very valuable and contributed to the betterment of the overall reputation of Serbia.*

After organising the exhibition in Strasbourg, another positive international experience ensued. Namely, the National Bank and its Visitor Centre, in cooperation with the NBS Archive, and in honour of the International Day of the Francophonie of 2008, were invited to display as guests in March at the Cultural Centre of the Republic of Serbia in Paris, with the exhibition *Central Banks of France and Serbia during the First World War*. The success of the exhibition was irrefutable, as the headlines in the press proved: ... *The Governor of the NBS explained how the idea for this truly spectacular exhibition that left no one indifferent came about; ... The exhibition was organised on a professional level, a display this significant has almost never been seen in the Serbian Cultural Centre in Paris...*, are only some of the notes recorded by the daily "Svedok".

Special attention is dedicated to cooperation with institutions that care for individuals with special needs. Together with the Day Care Centre for Placement of Children and Youth with Impaired Development, the Visitor Centre has held humanitarian auctions of works, of artistic and applicable value, of the wards of that Centre. The funds collected went toward purchasing tools for creative workshops, which were necessary for the development of these children.



Guest event in Novi Sad, Centre for Placement of Children with Impaired Development

The Visitor Centre actively participates in the action “Small graduation, Big Heart”, in which the graduates of Belgrade elementary schools invite their peers from Kosovo and Metohija into their homes. Their visit is organised as part of a joint project of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry for Kosovo and Metohija and the Secretariat for Education of the City of Belgrade, joined by the National Bank of Serbia as a socially responsible institution.

Within its socially responsible attitude, care for the oldest citizens represents a significant part of these activities. Led by the wish to ensure that the oldest members of our society do not feel isolated, left to fend for themselves and that they feel an active part of the community, the Visitor Centre launched a programme in 2008 titled the *Nights of Pensioners in the NBS*, held once a month. This programme for socialising with the oldest members of our society includes expert guidance through the display space in the edifice, projections of films about the history of the Bank, hyperinflation, and the film *The Dinar – Our Money*. The positive reception of this programme among our oldest is best demonstrated by the *Certificate of Appreciation for Cooperation and Contribution to the Protection of the Elderly* that the Visitor Centre received from the Gerontology Centre of Belgrade.



## The Night of Museums 2010

A total of 6,100 visitors came to the Visitor Centre on the Night of Museums 2010. Upon completing their visit, the visitors filled out a questionnaire on the current museum displays and social harmony. By careful and tendentious selection of questions in creating the questionnaire, a psychological effect on the visitors was achieved with the goal of widening perspectives in the direction of social harmony and equality.

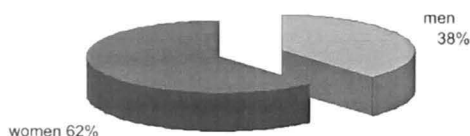
By analysing the completed questionnaires, a study was performed with two main goals:

1. Exploring visitors' attitudes;
2. Promoting the Visitor Centre as a place that fosters cultural exchange, promotion of mutual understanding, collaboration and equality among people.

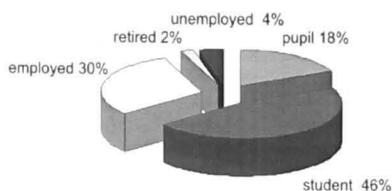
The promotion of a humane approach in the sense of openness toward all categories of the population, including socially challenged individuals and those with disabilities, has a positive influence on the development of consciousness among people, breaking of taboos and prejudices, as well as on readiness to accept differences.

### Graphic display of research results:

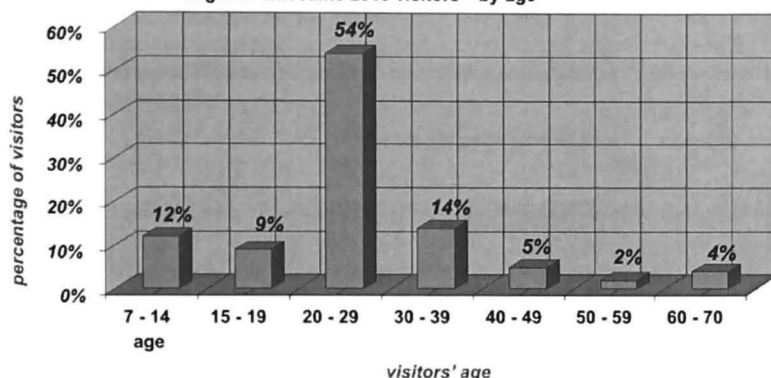
*Graph 1*  
Night of Museum 2010 visitors – gender



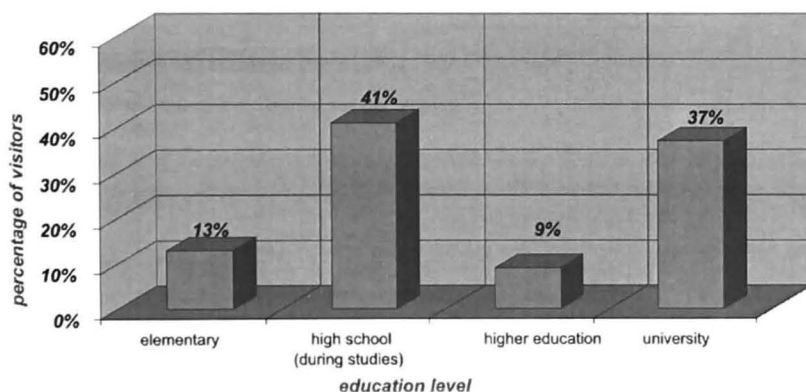
*Graph 2*  
Night of Museums visitors – profession



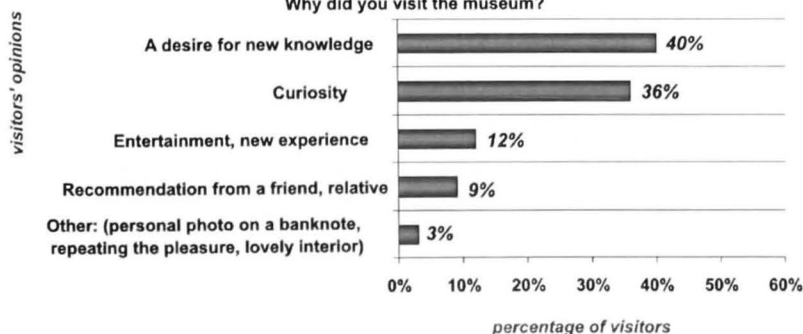
**Graph 3**  
Night of Museums 2010 visitors – by age



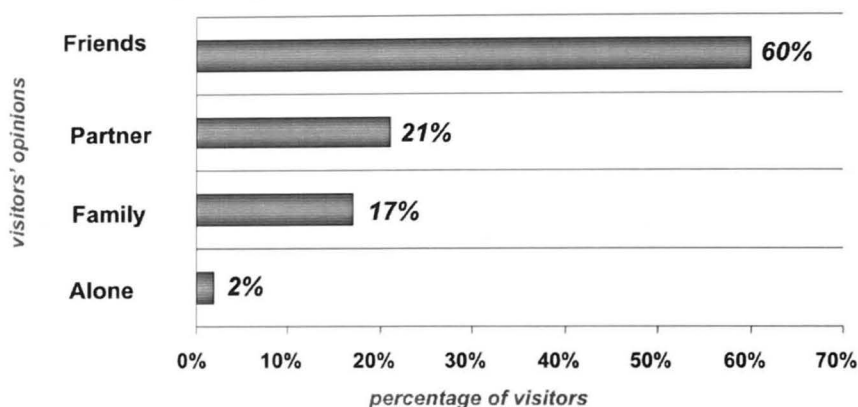
**Graph 4**  
Night of Museums 2010 visitors – by education



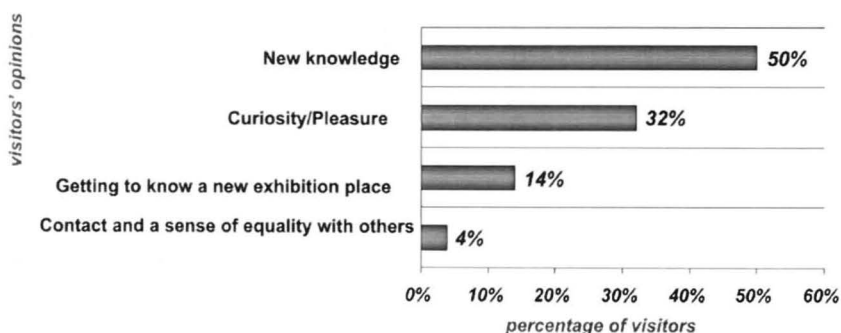
**Graph 5**  
Why did you visit the museum?



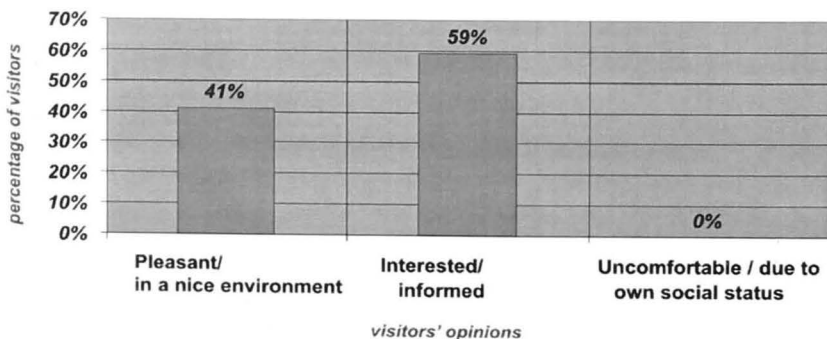
**Graph 6**  
Who did you visit the museum with?



**Graph 7**  
In your opinion, what did you primarily gain from this visit?



**Graph 8**  
How did you feel as you observed the displayed content?





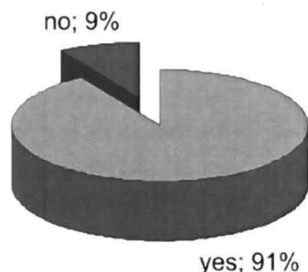
**Graph 9**

Did you experience the Night of Museums as an occasion for cultural exchange, improvement of mutual understanding, cooperation and harmony among people?



**Graph 10**

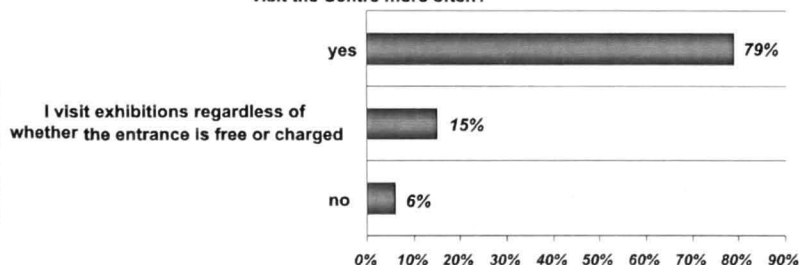
Do you feel that the openness of the Visitor Centre of the NBS fosters the feeling of harmony and equality among visitors?



**Graph 11**

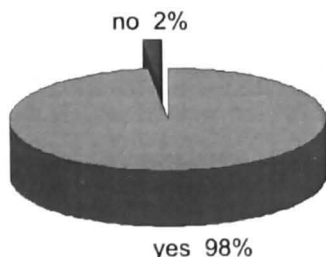
Did the free content of the Visitor Centre influence you positively to visit the Centre more often?

visitors' opinions



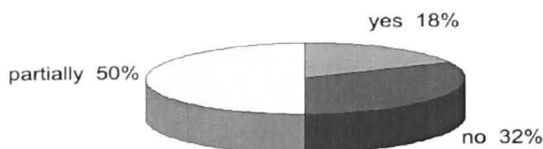
**Graph 12**

Is there understanding, tolerance, good will and openness of the employees toward the visitors in the Visitor Centre of the NBS?



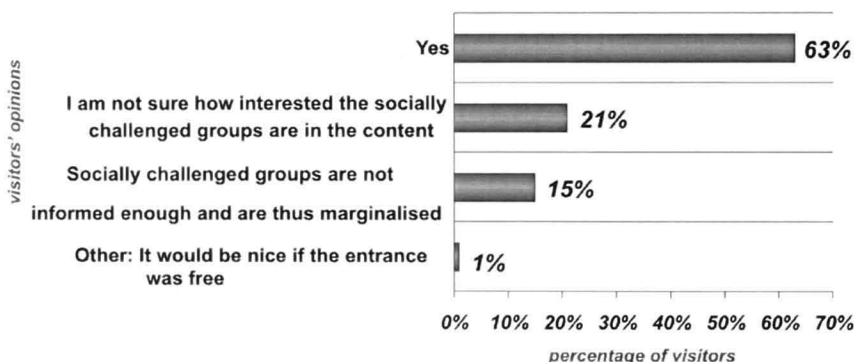
Graph 13

**Do you believe we live in a society that supports social, religious, minority and political differences?**



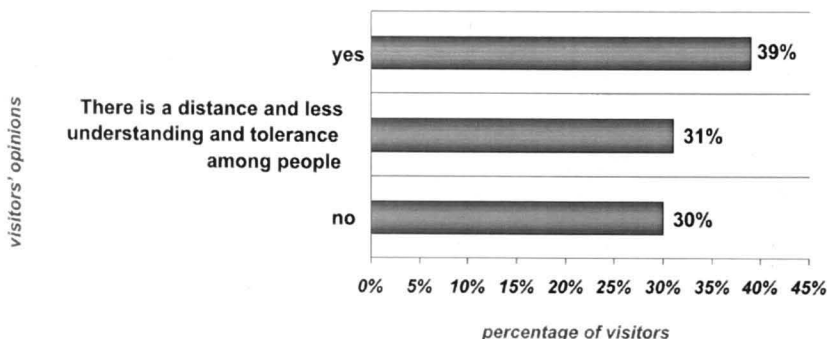
Graph 14

**Did you feel that the exhibited content of the NBS is available to all categories of the population including those socially challenged (marginalised categories)?**



Graph 15

**In your opinion, is there a humane relation present in our society today toward people with disabilities?**



### **“Night of Museums 2010” Review:**

- The Visitor Centre of the NBS was in the majority of percentage visited by students (46%) and employed citizens (30%);
- The most numerous represented age category was from 20 to 30 years (54%)
- Visitors mainly have a higher education, i.e. university degree (37%) or are currently attending university (41%);
- The most represented reason for visiting is attaining new knowledge (40%) or curiosity (36%); visitors in their early twenties and younger connect their visit most to entertainment and new experiences, which is a reflection of their developmental stage. (promoting cultural and educational content in this way positively channels the desire for new experiences among youth);
- The largest percentage of visitors to the Visitor Centre was accompanied by friends (60%); family visits included a total of 17% which implies that this target group, as a unit of society, could be encouraged and activated in the coming period;
- The majority of visitors declare that the basic gain from this visit was attaining new knowledge as expected, but this attitude is also present among individuals who did not have such expectations in the beginning, e.g. they related to the visit more as entertainment;
- The displayed exhibits created a sensation of interest, being informed (59%) and pleasantness in a nice environment (41%) among visitors;
- In 95% of cases, visitors viewed the Centre as a place of cultural exchange, promotion of mutual understanding, collaboration and harmony among people;
- 91% of visitors think that the openness of the Visitor Centre of the NBS to the public promotes a sense of equality and harmony among the visitors;
- The free content available at the Visitor Centre of the NBS in 79% of cases positively influences more frequent visits;
- 98% of visitors believe that the employees of the Visitor Centre are tolerant, well meaning and open to all visitors;
- Half of the visitors (50%) stated that the society in which we live only partially respects social, religious, minority and political differences, while 32% of visitors believe this respect does not exist at all; 18% of visitors have a positive attitude toward this issue, i.e. they believe respect for these differences is present in society.
- 63% of visitors have the impression that the content of the exhibitions of the NBS is open to all categories of the population, while 21% of visitors believe that socially challenged categories are not interested in the content, which could be a sign of the existence of prejudices in our



society; 15% of visitors believe that socially challenged categories are not adequately informed and are thus marginalised;

- 39% of visitors believe that there is a humane relation present in our society toward people with disabilities, 30% of visitors do not agree with that statement, while 31% of visitors consider that there is a general distance, less understanding and tolerance among people.

### **Cohesiveness as an important defining point of groups in which the participants are mutually in a harmonic relationship**

The Visitor Centre of the NBS, with its exhibitional displays and interaction with visitors has a desire to attain greater cohesion among the members of visitor groups. Considering the fact that there is interaction on part of the employees of the Visitor Centre with the visitors, as well as among the visitors themselves, during their participation in the displayed content, it could be said that this represents an active group. Cohesiveness is considered a significant characteristic of the group due to the great influence that cohesiveness has on the functionality of a group.

The very word cohesiveness signifies connection, harmony. The cohesiveness of a group is the attraction of the group to its members or connection to the group. That connection to the group is, first and foremost, a connection to its members and positive interaction with them. The connection to the group grows as the expectations that members have of the group are fulfilled. If activism against prejudice is an important value to the group and the group supports this value, the cohesiveness and interaction within the group will be greater. The approach of the Visitor Centre is based on these humane aspects.

### **Sources of cohesiveness in a group:**

The sources of cohesiveness lie in the mutual attraction of the members of a group. Where there are more positive mutual personal attitudes among group members, greater mutual affection, the attraction and cohesiveness within that group will be greater.

Similarities between group members, above all in their attitudes and values, contribute to the cohesiveness of the group primarily because it leads to mutual attraction. Findings (Gross, 1956) show that sometimes the differences within a group are more important to the group. They can also contribute to cohesiveness. These are groups in which the differences

among their members are important because they contribute to better functionality. This is the very concept that social harmony is based on.

Group goals and group atmosphere are also one of the elements of cohesiveness. In our case, the goals are intercultural exchange and unity, a harmony of all differences among people without prejudice with a humane approach. The relation of collaboration and cooperation is particularly important, which is something that the Visitor Centre insists on.

### **Limitations of this study, problems that were uncovered, questions that these problems raise and the perspectives they offer**

A limitation, but also a problem that is open for conducting a more precise and high quality analysis, are the demonstrated commendations, positive impressions and, in general, visitors' satisfaction. There were an extremely small number of suggestions and criticism was very rare, limited only to the Centre's work hours. The reason for this, we assume, is the offered content that is unique in the country, followed by the possibility of entering the edifice of the Bank, the openness of the Bank toward the public, in one word people are thrilled, satisfied and grateful that they are afforded the opportunity to see something like this. They have gotten to know the National Bank in an entirely different light than what they were expecting!

Also, the interpretation and explanation of the possible reason why the data received during the qualitative analysis of the Visitor Centre do not show negative criticism in relation to the work and content of the Centre and direction for further investment in order to improve the quality of the content could be the following:

The basic goal set in the activities plan of the Visitor Centre was primarily an open invitation, breaking of taboos, change of attitude, awakening from cultural apathy (one of the significant psychological phenomena conditioned by the transitional context of this region). Activities directed toward attaining this goal were primarily to represent rich cultural heritage and cultural and educational content in a contemporary interactive way. Judging by the mentioned reactions of visitors, this goal has been attained regardless of the circumstances of cultural alienation and the presence of existential problems that most citizens have.



The current starting point that has been attained allows for and opens the door to presenting higher goals and plans in relation to further research, analysis and retrospective comparison over a longer period of time, which would allow for the development of the museum content and a view into the significant changes in support of improving current activities and directing the content of the museum programme toward the desires and needs of visitors in the finest sense.

We hope that, when the first wave of thrill by the offered content and programme passes, people will begin to be more critical, having larger and more precise demands.

The criticism most often received was during the first contact with visitors and is related to advertising and media promotion of the activities of the Visitor Centre. People believe that these activities are not advertised enough and that the public is not well enough informed about the content we offer and the possibility for well-spent time in the Centre. It has been proven that the most efficient, but also the least costly way to promote the activities of the Visitor Centre is precisely “mouth-to-mouth” marketing.

Today, when the media are no longer the “seventh” but the “first” power, it is essential to turn to marketing, to which the success of the radio advertisement in July and August can attest. The activities organised by the Visitor Centre are not exactly material for the media, who are overburdened by sensationalism, excesses and profit. In search of content that will sell more or raise the ratings, readership or number of issues, the media enter the sphere of privacy, sensationalism, scandal, political affairs are created, while information that speaks of something positive, successful, of a promotional event of an institution as renowned as the NBS, is almost entirely disregarded. In that sense, the media coverage of the activities of the Visitor Centre is inconsequential and this is the plane that requires work and development in the future. As one of the first proposed activities, a regular gathering of journalists from cultural and educational desks should be organised.

The criticism referring to crowds is, in part, understandable. However, in individual cases exceptions had to be made – when class trips from rural schools were the case, because the children had limited time, or in the case of children with special needs when, due to the more complicated organisation of their transportation, especially disabled children in wheelchairs, or situations in which an entire school visited at once.

A problem that appeared occasionally, but in this case for the employees of the museum, was the matter of discipline/lack of discipline during children's group visits. The behaviour of teachers was, in particular cases, disappointing and unacceptable. Other than not preparing the children properly for the visit, or for their behaviour in a museum, they were completely uninterested and did not keep the children in order, but were passive observers and left it to the employees to tend to that, which was tedious at times.

A need that also arose was the division of horizontal and vertical functional relations for better work efficiency with the goal of achieving visitors' experience of the Visitor Centre as a place of social harmony.

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis of visitors' impressions, the vast majority (99%) expressed satisfaction with the visit as a whole, with the quality of reception as well as with the offered content. The general consensus was that, regardless of the categories of visitors and the motive that brought them, everyone left pleased, with the comment they *learned something new* and that they *had a nice time* and with the recognition that, where individual visits are concerned, a part of their free time was usefully consumed (which is proven by numerous observations in the book of impressions).

The role of the presented interactive content is a great one, as it has in a significant measure, contributed to the large number of visitors. The other activities involved have also made their own significant contribution.

What is emphasised by the conducted analysis is the fascination of visitors upon their arrival to the Visitor Centre, but this is in no way the higher goal. Continuity in visits and two-way communication with visitors, from their involvement to their very creation of content is the goal that the Centre wishes to attain. Constant two-way communication, the building of a mental image for visitors that associates to the possibility of continuous work on oneself and attaining new knowledge are the tasks of the Visitor Centre, as well as the tendency to become a mandatory partner to schools, despite the fact that educational and cultural events are the heirs to a long and difficult past.



Mass unemployment and economic instability weaken the significance of formal education because such education is no longer a secure investment in the future when the widest social masses are concerned. In a modern time, conditions are becoming less predictable, which forces individuals and communities to become more flexible, to become more adaptable to new forms of learning, so that they can adapt to the changing conditions and new life situations. This is why the place of a museum and institutions outside the museum can be tied to the education of citizens and provision of education in an interesting, inspirational and attractive manner. In this regard, the Visitor Centre of the National Bank of Serbia makes effort to respond to the demands that a new time places upon us.