

## **Innovation – the Answer to the Economic Crisis**

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The Western Balkan countries are in agreement about one thing: they all want to become members of the European Union (EU). Accession to the EU has become a national priority for Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H). The first decade of the EU accession of some EU countries meant progress. Years of economic growth and prosperity are behind us. In 2013, EU is over-indebted, with millions unemployed and unable to address the present economic crisis. It is losing its share of global market for goods and services and aging population threatens to collapse the "welfare state." The inability of the EU to resolve the accumulated economic problems undermined the credibility of the European integration, opening the hazardous speculations on the nature and necessity of the union. Certain states, such as Great Britain, are openly announcing a referendum to remain in the EU. Some countries are partially affected by the economic crisis and achieved outstanding economic results. Along with some Asian countries, Turkey is an example of how, even without EU membership, a country can efficiently solve present economic problems. Small and underdeveloped countries, such as B&H, can learn a lot from Turkey. The essence of success is the open competition, simplified registration procedures and operations, the attraction of investors, innovations and management of innovations. The introduction of innovations is important in all aspects of the B&H society, but it is particularly interesting in health care. B&H annually allocates 11.0% of its GDP to health care. The study, which we had conducted, showed that there are different views regarding the quality of health care services, between service recipients (citizens and patients - clients) and service providers (nurses and doctors). Nurses and doctors believe that the current quality of health care is good, while patients and citizens argue the opposite. If we put the patients at the center of our attention, then we have to respect their opinions and all our measures and actions must be subordinated to their satisfaction. Innovative approaches and innovation management do not need

additional funding. The use of the best techniques and practices, which already exist at our hospitals and clinics raise quality of health care while reducing costs. It should be kept in mind that the process of quality improvement must be continuous. A survey that we carried out on 313 patients in the Federation of B&H shows that the managers of health institutions are not satisfied with the quality of health care and believe that this situation needs to be improved. For innovation in health care it is necessary to create a critical mass of qualified managers - innovators who will be supported by the key decision makers. To this end it is necessary for health care institutions, as in all other areas of B&H society, to create a climate conducive to innovation as the part of national policy.

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