



Informative Bulletin

May 2020

100

Bulletin No 100 of SHGPAZ and COVID-19!

Editorial by Tefta Demeti

The bulletin No 100 of SHGPAZ finds women entrepreneurship in an almost asphyxiated economic situation. SHGPAZ for about 30 years has defended the interests of this group and has been the voice and representation of women's entrepreneurship in all decision-making institutions within the country and abroad. The activities of this association are worthily presented in the monthly electronic bulletin published by SHGPAZ, the quality of which has been continuously improved and in the last 18 months it is also published in English with the support of the EU-funded project ***"Promoting Entrepreneurship & Entrepreneurial Learning among young people and women in Albania"***.

The situation of economic closure during the 2-months period of total isolation of the country has aggravated the situation of large entrepreneurs and their employees as well as the situation of artisans, family businesses and the self-employed.

First of all, we wish to all good health, patience and a sharp mind to resume economic activity, perhaps at another stage.

Given that the number of enterprises with women owners / administrators has decreased from year to year and the latest INSTAT data show that they make up only 25,7% of all active businesses for 2018, a figure that is 2 % points lower than that of 2013 by 27,7%, shows that the business climate for women's entrepreneurship has deteriorated in recent years. No matter how much we talk or the minimal support or nothing at all from the government, the heavy burden falls on the entrepreneurs themselves.

We believe in women's entrepreneurial skills, but we also suggest that the government, through donor funding or the state budget, develop concrete support packages and strongly support businesses in general, but women and artisans even more.

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Tomorrow means never!

By Flutura Xhabija

In the woman's gene, there seems to be an "urge" that never says no and rushes to finish the job well and on time, but ... it also does what can be done Tomorrow; it is understood that this "sense" has in it independence, intelligence, and unconditional love; at all times even in antiquity in papyrus and holy books, it is written that women have great values, not in vain, and not only for reproducing life. She works silently and sometimes speaks only ... when family, society, nation, and the world are threatened.

Especially in times of war and turmoil, her contribution is precious and often indisputable. Let's do a little analysis (without claiming anything, but just my opinion and experience).

Where was and is the position of women in all spheres, in this period; I'm starting from the top and then down according to the topics. **First**, women leaders in the respective countries clearly showed that they made the best choice in dealing with the virus; **Second**, in health care the primary and especially the secondary service had thousands of health workers, women who fought and are fighting to the maximum - not only for payment - but for high human commitment and sensitivity; **Third**, the educational staff where 90% of women work, who withstood the difficulty of teaching, without specific training and good digital technology, with a modest salary and other didactic difficulties. **Fourth**, in the information

and communication sector, a pillar of electronic society, women in the digital age have discovered a skill in the digital job market, preparing reliable and highly professional materials in institutional, private and public fields, they are helping people manage their lives online too, with good infrastructure and proper skills. That is why the EU and all prestigious international institutions are specifically supporting women in three areas: education, entrepreneurship, research and innovation, and are also taking measures against gender based violence. **Fifth**, women in fason are working under the nose of the mortal Covid-19, in not very favorable working conditions; **Sixth**, the role of the mass media, filled with women journalists, although endangered, did not leave a chance to help and convey the true news to the public shocked by this sudden plague. **Seventh**, women in agriculture are working and planting the land with seasonal products, to keep the urban market with all the necessary daily products, but also curative ones; **Eighth**, the last for this writing, the artisan women did not stop working at homes and in the shops, though without clients but preparing goods for **Tomorrow**; soon the opening will come, & Women are ready to face the damages, delays, challenges, and major changes in life, in the market, and human relationships. This comes from that „sense“ mentioned above.



There are many areas that I have not mentioned but the field that I also belong to, the women's business, grouped in SHGPAZ, have been pronounced, although never supported, certainly only with propaganda; the women's business, micro and small, has suffered and is suffering greatly, and has never been interrupted by them. Civil society, not the one with political support, has not stopped communicating with members, partners and collaborators; as an association we have worked maximally with our own public, with state institutions, with chambers of commerce, with foreign partners and with international organizations.

Women are at the forefront now and I believe they will be even after Covid-19, because leaders are now looking for them at their discussion tables, in decision-making, believing in women's style and learning from them; however, in order not to make it pink, this is the beginning of the natural correction of gender balance.

Foreign media, among the most famous, with short-term and long-term intuitive, are strongly supporting this social evolution of female capacities, changing the clichés in favor of improving the administration, culture and socialization of the world.

The Development of Women's Entrepreneurship in Albania

By Tefta Demeti

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (SMEs) are the main driver of economic growth in Albania and job creation. The inclusion of women in business is a potential that should be exploited for further growth of the country's economy as well as women's self-employment and economic empowerment. Women entrepreneurs in Albania face many challenges; not only those faced by male entrepreneurs, but also factors such as social prejudice and mentality, especially in rural areas.

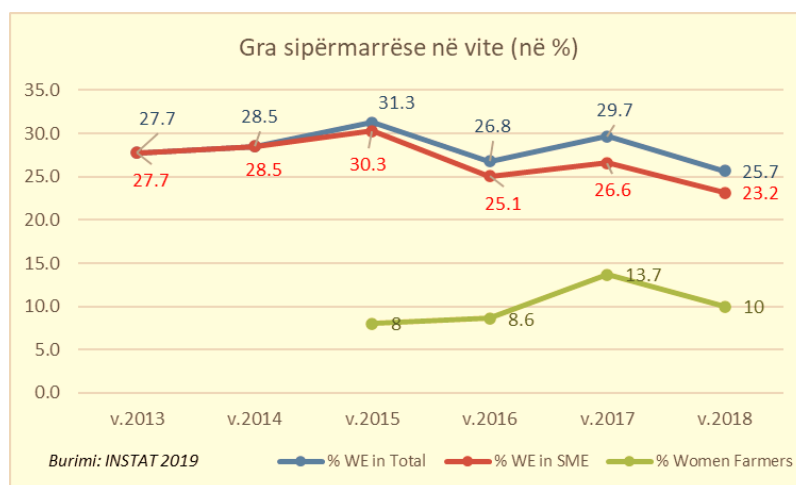
According to INSTAT 2019¹, women manage / own 25,7% of 2018 total active businesses out of 29,7% on 2017 with a drop of 4 percentage points. Tirana prefecture has the largest concentration of businesses led by women, with 41.4%. Businesses managed by women are mainly businesses with 1-4 employed and represent 91,2% of the total number of businesses led by women. However, 19,6% of businesses with 50 or more employed are managed or owned by women. Further, 84% of businesses led by women are services activities

mostly in trade and 86.7% of them have as legal form natural person.

The trend of number of businesses led by women over the years indicates an increase in their participation in business from 2005 to 2015, when reached the peak with 31.3% and after that there is a significant reduction from year to year until 25.7% in 2018. This figure is 2 percentage points lower than that of 2013 (27.8%). Also, the number of women entrepreneurs has been reduced by circa 12.3%, from 47.706 in 2015 to 41.825 in 2018.

Based on the prefectures, the largest decrease of businesses led by women is observed in the region of Berat from about 28% in 2013 to 18% in 2018, followed by Fieri from about 27% in 2013 to 19% in 2018, and Korça from 26 % in 2013 to 18% 2018.

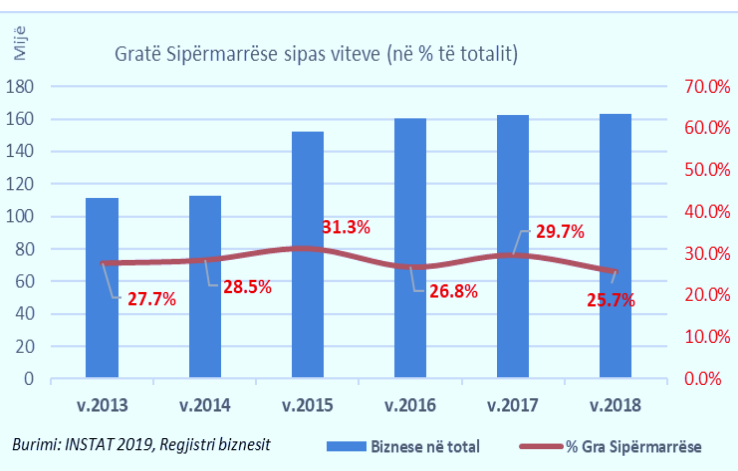
From 2015, has started the registration of farmers with NUIS and their inclusion in the Business Register of INSTAT, in the group of businesses with 1-4 employed. The number of women farmers registered in 2018



turns out to be 10% of all registered farmers with a decrease of 3,7 percentage points compared to 2017, but with an increase of 2 percentage points compared to 2015.

The decrease in the number of business led by women has been influenced by the worsening of business climate in Albania, which is also reflected in the World Bank report "Doing Business", where Albania in 2016-2017 was ranked 58th with 68,9 scores and in 2019-2020 it dropped by 24 places and ranked 82nd with 67,7 scores. Further, only a few national schemes for costs sharing have been supporting women entrepreneurs which originate from the years 2007-2008, but their value is small and does not meet the needs of enterprises managed by women, especially start-ups.

¹ INSTAT 2019, Business Register 2018



WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DAY

Innovate for a Green Future

By Albana Laknori

Every April 26, World Intellectual Property Day is celebrated to learn about the role that intellectual property (IP) rights play in encouraging innovation and creativity.

World IP Day 2020 puts innovation – and the IP rights that support it – at the heart of efforts to create a **green future**. Why? Because the choices we make today will shape our tomorrow. The earth is our home. **We need** to care for it. The campaign also celebrates the many inspiring

inventors and creators around the world who are betting on a green future – the women, men and young people who are working on cleaner alternatives to legacy fossil-fuel-based technologies and better and more sustainable food and natural resource management systems, and who are using the IP system to support their work and its uptake and use in society.

Carving a pathway to a green future is a modern-day imperative. We all share in this challenge and each have a role in building a green future. It is a complex and multi-faceted endeavor, but as the well-known naturalist David Attenborough has noted, “as a species,

we are expert problem solvers.” We can create a green future.

We have the collective wisdom, ingenuity and creativity to come up with new, more effective ways

businesses built on principles of environmental sustainability, enabling them to offer a broader range of eco-friendly products and services.

We see how rights, such as geographical indications are encouraging more sustainable natural resource use and how plant-breeding rights are promoting the development of more resilient crops in support of global food security.

And **we observe** how creators – who

through the copyright system can earn a living from their work – can play a key role in creating a vision of a green future and its untold benefits.

As Einstein once noted, *we cannot keep doing the same thing over, and over again and expect different results*. If we want different results, we need to be innovative in our approaches, our thinking, and our business models.

<https://www.wipo.int/ip-outreach/en/ipday/>



to shape a low-carbon future. But we must act now!

We explore how a balanced and robust IP system can support the emergence of a green economy that works with and not against the earth’s life-support systems.

We look at how the patent system fosters innovation and the development and diffusion of eco-friendly technologies that enable us tackle the climate crisis and build a green future; how design rights enable designers to invest their time and talent in creating useful, attractive and eco-friendly products for consumers.

We consider how trademarks and other identifiers support the emergence and growth of

Artificial Intelligence

By Ana Zacharian¹

Have you heard of Artificial Intelligence (AI)? Of course, yes! And especially recently, during the pandemic, "Artificial Intelligence" is one of the most mentioned concepts thanks to the various technological solutions offered by it against the effects of the COVID-19 virus. According to an article published on the page of the Council of Europe - Review made by the secretariat of the Ad hoc Commission for Artificial Intelligence (CAHAI) - *"Artificial Intelligence is being used as a tool to support the fight against the viral pandemic that affected the whole world since the beginning of 2020. The press and the scientific community are echoing high hopes that data science and AI can be used to cope with coronavirus and "fill in the gaps" still left by science"*.

Let's refer to a country like China, the first epicenter of this disease and known for its technological advancement in this field, has tried to take advantage of this. Its uses seem to have included support for measures that limit population movement, anticipating the evolution of disease outbreaks and research into the development of a vaccine or treatment. In relation to the latter aspect, AI has been used to accelerate genome sequencing, to make faster diagnoses, to perform scan analyzes, or, more often, to treat maintenance and distribution robots. But emergency measures using technological

solutions, including AI, must also be assessed at the end of the crisis. Those who infringe on individual freedoms should not be trivialized under the pretext of better protection of the population.

This example clearly shows the importance that this subfield of technology and information is taking in current situations, but also explains the trend for the future. Possession of skills in Artificial Intelligence ranks in the most demanding skills of the last two years and also of the decade 2030.

To foster and promote the recognition of AI and its applications in various areas of life, Albanian Skills - organized a one-week seminar by the AI Center in Sweden, AI Center, for Albanian youth. During the week of April 20-24, 2020, 55 young students and professionals were introduced to its basic concepts and notions as well as applications in various fields. Participants in the seminar were assigned practical tasks, such as identifying a particular situation or problem in their areas of work or study and proposing to improve it through AI. 18 of these participants participated with their proposals by presenting them during the last day of the seminar. The Swedish AI Center, after a careful mentoring and evaluation of the works of the participants, is carrying out their certification.

AI is constantly evolving so many different industries can benefit from it and applications for AI are endless. AI is also being tested and used in the healthcare industry for the dosage of various medications and treatments in patients, and for surgical procedures in the operating room. Other examples of AI machines include computers that



play chess and self-driving cars. But artificial intelligence also has applications in the financial industry, where it is used to detect banking activity and finance such as the unusual use of debit cards and large account deposits - all of which help a bank's fraud department. AI applications are also being used to help guide and facilitate trade. AI makes it easier to evaluate the supply, demand and price of securities. All these are sufficient reasons to create some friendly conditions and environment to these promising developments in technology, as Albanian youth are very interested in these skills of the future and investing in this direction would be the right thing to prepare the human capital for the domestic labor market but not only.

¹President of AlbanianSkills,
Vocational Education and Training Expert

Supporting jobs and economies post COVID-19 through Travel & Tourism

By Kujtime Stefani

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) with the contribution of the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the private sector has prepared a document for the recovery of the tourism sector post COVID-19.

Travel and Tourism is among the sectors most affected by this unprecedented global health emergency, and urgent support is required given the millions of jobs that are at risk. Travel and tourism therefore requires urgent support and specific mitigation packages to sustain jobs and ensure capacity in the market in the immediate aftermath of the emergency.

Furthermore, COVID-19 will impact different countries in different ways and in varying degrees. The ability of countries to respond to and recover from this unprecedented crisis will also vary significantly. These recommendations aim to support governments, the private sector and the international community to mitigate the immediate impact of the crisis on travel and tourism; provide stimulus for recovery and guide the long-term development and resilience of the sector.

The following recommendations are divided into three groups:

I. Managing the crisis & mitigating the impact

Millions of livelihoods across the world are directly and indirectly

dependent upon travel and tourism. As such, these measures are of the utmost urgency and should be implemented immediately, especially those related to providing timely, targeted, and temporary relief to the most affected people and firms for as long as the emergency lasts.

1. Incentivize job retention sustains the self-employed and protect the most vulnerable groups

2. Support companies' liquidity

3. Review taxes, charges, levies and regulations impacting transport and tourism

4. Ensure consumer protection and confidence

5. Promote skills development, especially digital skills

6. Include tourism in national, regional and global economic emergency packages

7. Create crisis management mechanisms and strategies

II. Providing stimulus & accelerating recover

Due to the sudden, unprecedented fall in demand triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the travel and tourism sector will require financial stimulus to support recovery. Levels of required stimulus may vary across the whole of the tourism value chain.

8. Provide financial stimulus for tourism investment and operations

9. Review taxes, charges and regulations impacting travel and tourism

10. Advance travel facilitation

11. Promote new jobs and skills

development, particularly digital ones

12. Mainstream environmental sustainability in stimulus and recovery packages

13. Understand the market and act quickly to restore confidence and stimulate demand

14. Boost marketing, events and meetings

15. Invest in partnerships

16. Mainstream tourism in national, regional and international recovery programmes and in Development Assistance

III. Preparing for tomorrow

Tourism has the potential to recover and once again establish itself as a key part of national economies and of the wider sustainable development agenda. Furthermore, to build for the future, special attention should be placed on building resilience and on promoting sustainability at all levels.

17. Diversify markets, products and services

18. Invest in market intelligence systems and digital transformation

19. Reinforce tourism governance at all levels

20. Prepare for crisis, build resilience and ensure tourism is part of national emergency mechanism and systems

21. Invest in human capital and talent development

22. Place sustainable tourism firmly on the national agenda

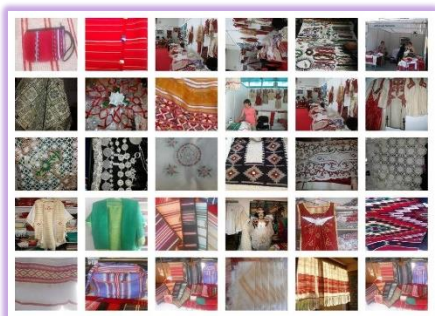
23. Transition to the circular economy and embrace the SDGs

<https://www.unwto.org/recommendations-for-recovery-covid-19>

FACTS

25.7%

The number of active businesses led /owned by women for 2018 in Albania was 25.7%, with a decrease of 4 % points compared to 2017 where they accounted for 29,7% (INSTAT, June 19)



7.5%

Credit for 2019 results in a significant increase of 7.5% compared to the previous year and accounts for 36.5% to GDP, but again lower by 1 % point compared to 2016. (Bank of Albania, February 2020)

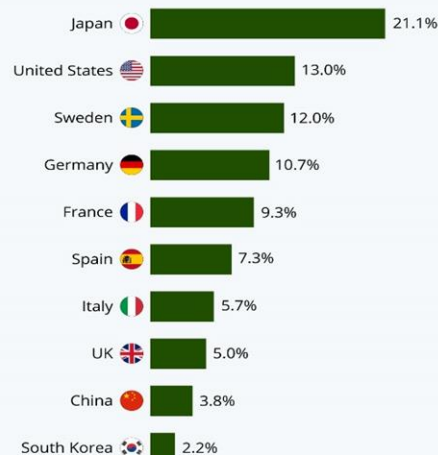


Global Coronavirus Stimulus Packages Compared

Global lockdowns have been in place for weeks and they are causing economic turmoil. The situation has sent governments into crisis mode and aggressive stimulus packages have been developed to stave off a catastrophic global economic collapse. Ceyhun Elgin, an economics professor at Columbia University, has been tracking responses in 166 different countries. Elgin's research shows that global responses are quite different compared to economic size. The U.S. measures work out at an estimated 13 percent of GDP and as large as that is, it actually trails Japan's measures which equate to just over 21 percent of GDP. In Europe where Spain and Italy have endured devastating coronavirus outbreaks, the size of stimulus packages are estimated to be 7,3 percent and 5,7 percent of GDP respectively.

Global Coronavirus Stimulus Packages Compared

Financial response to the COVID-19 pandemic as a share of GDP (selected countries)*



* As of May 10, 2020
Source: Ceyhun Elgin



statista

www.statista.com

Contributions for COVID-19

The European Commission raised \$8 billion (€7,4 billion) in pledges from countries and other donors on Monday during the Coronavirus Global Response pledging event. The initiative was co-chaired by the European Commission and nine countries (excluding, notably, the United States). President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen said in an official statement following Monday's event: the pledges will be used to address the three most pressing needs: improving diagnostics, finding effective treatments and developing a vaccine.

World Leaders Pledge \$8 Billion to Fund COVID-19 Response

Initial contributions pledged by co-chairs of the Coronavirus Global Response Initiative



All figures have been converted to U.S. dollars and rounded to the nearest \$10 million
Source: European Union



statista

www.statista.com

Green spaces and autism

By Andela Malaj, Aurora Baba, NEUAR¹

Green spaces have always had an impact in our mental and physical health. However, little it's known nowadays on the impact those spaces have on people with autism, ranked globally as one of the most frequent neurological disorders to affect children. What is autism? Autism is a complex developmental disorder that typically occurs in the first three years of life and is considered a neurological disorder that affects brain functions. Based on the statistical manual of the American Psychological Organization, autism disorders include many areas of development: the ability to interact, the ability to communicate, and the creation of behavioural stereotypes, interests, and activities.

According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, individuals develop in interaction with the environment to which they belong. Special attention has been paid by many researchers to environmental risk as a factor that can cause autism. Data from research studies show that the percentage of babies born with autism is 8-10% higher in regions contaminated with toxins than in those living in cleaner areas (Kurti, 2013)², also an interesting study is that conducted in 2010 in the United States entitled "Mutual Relationship between Green Spaces and Autism in Children of Primary Schools in California"³ whose purpose was to prove whether these two environmental factors, environment and autism are related to each other. Does the lack of green spaces cause autism? Is this one of the factors that can lead to the development of this disease? Is there a higher prevalence of autistic

children in areas where green spaces are smaller?

To answer these questions, researchers expanded their research to 560 public schools in California. They calculated the green area in all schools, including the percentage of forests, small trees and large trees on the side of the road, as well as the area covered by grass.

The results of this research shows that an increase of 10% in green spaces directly affects a decrease of 10% of the total number of autistic children and a decrease of 19% in this number if the amount of trees on the side of the road will increase by 10%. This relation between autism-green spaces is confirmed once again in schools which were close to the main roads. Urban areas with heavy traffic were directly linked to an increase in the number of autistic children. The hypothesis / solutions that these researchers thought to implement after this study was to increase the number of trees near the main roads thinking as a 'Prevention Form'. Many more studies and evidence will be needed to fully confirm this link between this pathology and green spaces, not forgetting that acoustic pollution as a result of heavy traffic can be another influential factor in autistic children.

In Albania we see an increase in the number of children with autism from year to year and today according to the Institute of Public Health in Albania, 1 in 68 children is affected by autism "*We are talking about 300 cases in each generation of children, for 30,000 new births. This means that we have 3 thousand, if we consider the age 2-11 and if we go from 2 to 22 years old it means that the number will increase to 6 thousand. It is quite a large number compared to what happens today in our services, in terms*

of diagnosis. From 2010 until today, the number of new diagnosed cases, goes up by 30-40% every year" - cites, the head of the Psychiatry Service, prof. Dr. Ariel Çomo⁴.

A very alarming figure considering that it is a pathology that we have not many years we are familiar and confronted with. In September 2008, the first Albanian National Conference on Autism was held, and this is the only data we have today since the diagnosis and confirmation of the first patient is unknown. Although the real causes that lead a child to autism are still unknown, we can say that the debate extends in two directions, heritage and environment. If by inheritance we mean that particular part of the chromosomes that combine at the moment of fertilization, it means that everything else that happens next is the environment.

The green spaces in our country through the years have been diminishing and disappearing. We cannot claim without a detailed study whether this is an influential factor in the alarming increased number of autistic children in our country but we can leave it as an hypothesis and a big question mark hoping to give an answer.

¹ **Cofounder of Neuroscience for Urban Spaces and Architecture**

² <https://atunispoetry.com/2013/11/24/autizmin-e-mesova-nga-ju-libri-me-i-fundit-i-autores-vera-kurti-publikuar-nga-shtepia-botuese-ada/?fbclid=IwAR1cL1PFhEqCtPu4nDBm3MKqLyDf9qFNwv4FtrpCtllMjxGo73CriucC8>

³ https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6104398/?fbclid=IwARoob-cuijpm87DjPxc_FKvimj6cHRJofGiL_FFstdSfhptnqxtvubE_Vvw

⁴ <http://www.qsh.al/2018/04/04/alarmi-1-ne-68-femije-prekur-nga-autizmi/?fbclid=IwAR1MwJMbFaENJ6VNW03Z26Dq1Pq4YHX5SGwHYUzC4AuT8l3DPolxLJsQjO4>

World Multiple Sclerosis Day

By Ina Pasho, Arlinda Demeti

World Multiple Sclerosis Day is the Multiple Sclerosis' (MS) annual campaign to raise awareness of the condition, and to support and connect the 2.3 million people living with it worldwide. It is a day to celebrate global solidarity and hope for the future.

In 2009, Multiple Sclerosis International Federation (MSIF) initiated the first World MS Day. This day brings together hundreds of thousands of people around the world, with a campaign that focuses on a different theme each year.

World MS Day is officially marked on 30 May. It brings the global MS community together to share stories, raise awareness and campaigns with and for everyone affected by multiple sclerosis.

The 2020-2022 World MS Day theme is **'Connections'**. MS Connections is all about building community connection, self-connection and connections to quality care, challenging social barriers that leave people affected by MS feeling lonely and socially isolated.

This date has been associated with disease awareness activities, for several years in Albania, supported by the pharmaceutical company *Novartis*.

But what is Multiple Sclerosis?

Multiple sclerosis is a disease that affects the Central Nervous System characterized by inflammation demyelination, and degenerative changes, disrupting the transmission of information and nerve signals between the brain and other functions.

Multiple sclerosis is characterized

by a high unmet therapeutic need, associated with progression and is expressed by increased disability, lack of effective treatments and increased physical and psychosocial needs. Patients with MS have severe loss of mobility, severe cognitive impairment, and memory problems, fatigue, and pain. A high percentage of patients with MS also experience depression and sexual dysfunction, bowel and bladder dysfunction. All these symptoms have a profound impact on patients' lives, reducing their independence and ability to perform daily tasks and causing emotional disorders. As a result, patients with MS have significant deteriorations in quality of life.

- ✓ 86% of patients no longer go to school or work
- ✓ 68% of patients do not participate in social and family activities
- ✓ 71% need care
- ✓ 50% of patients present with cognitive impairment
- ✓ High costs directly and indirectly related to treatment
- ✓ High costs for society and family

Unfortunately, there is still a small number of drugs approved for the treatment of SM, and most of them are not effective in treating patients or in delaying the progression. This shows a great unmet need for the effective treatment of patients.



In our country, there is only one possibility of treatment only in a **Multiple Sclerosis treatment center**, and also the fact that doctors who deal with the diagnosis, treatment and management of patients are very limited in number as well as distance, makes it more difficult to manage the disease. Therefore, creating new opportunities for MS management and treatment makes it possible to facilitate this journey by easing the burden on the patient, family members and doctors. Patients who follow routine checkups 2-5 years from initial diagnosis lose confidence that they are receiving the proper treatment for their illness.

Each patient is unique, and his or her journey is unique. Focusing and targeting inflammatory and neuro-degenerative processes, selectivity, safety profile are the required criteria for effective therapies.

New products on the market or the ones in the study phase, are showing some hope for the future, aiming to alleviate the symptoms of the disease, curb its progress and enable these patients to regain independence.

Multiple Sclerosis International Federation
Multiple Sclerosis: Just the facts. National Multiple Sclerosis Society; 2018

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E-Platform

By Erjona Rebi, PhD

SHGPAZ in the framework of the implementation of the project **"Promoting Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurship Learning among Youth and Women in Albania"**, funded by the EU through CFCU (Central Financing and Coordination Unit) at the Ministry of Finance and Economy, prepared the **E-platform for Women Entrepreneurship and for Entrepreneurial Learning**. In this platform, one pillar is dedicated to **"Women Entrepreneurship"**, where can be found the latest information on the progress of women's entrepreneurship in Albania over the years, information about programs / grants dedicated to women entrepreneurs and loan opportunities.

Further, policymakers will find the best regional and European experiences with programs and grants to promote the development of women entrepreneurs.

Another important pillar on this platform is the **"Entrepreneurial Learning"** containing high quality learning programs and best regional experiences, especially those of Croatia, which will serve teachers and professors as well as policymakers at the Ministry of Education to design curricula and train teachers as **"entrepreneurial teachers"**, and schools as **"entrepreneurial schools"**.

You can find this platform at:
www.shgpaz.al/eplatform

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Note: The opinions presented in the bulletin are those of the experts themselves and do not represent the opinion of EU

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