



2026 EU PRO Plus Calendar Competition

"Create, Play, Connect the World!"

Background

The European Union for Local Development Programme—EU PRO Plus, as its predecessor Programmes—PRO 1 and 2, EU PROGRES and European PROGRES and EU PRO, organises an annual art competition for high school students in 99 cities and municipalities of Šumadija, Western, Southern and Eastern Serbia. The competition intends to encourage students to learn about, consider and promote different aspects of longstanding relationships between Serbia and the European Union and explore their common goals and values.

The competition is also an opportunity to recognise, encourage and award artistic talent of socially engaged high school students, as well as schools in the Programme's area which most prominently and systematically supports creative growth of its students.

This year, the competition highlights sports and art not only as forms of play and creativity, but also as essential spaces where young people can grow, connect, and strengthen their sense of togetherness.

Objectives

1. To motivate the youth in the 99 cities and municipalities to cultivate and uphold social awareness, engagement, and proactiveness concerning their rights and needs.
2. To inspire high school students to take action on the issues that matter to them and actively work on developing and/or contributing to initiatives that positively impact their lives and lives of their community as a whole.
3. To inspire secondary school students to nurture and pursue their sports and artistic talents as pathways for their personal growth, creativity, and well-being.
4. To improve the learning environment in the school awarded for its outstanding engagement.

Competition Theme

The annual EU PRO Plus Art Competition for 2026 Calendar invites high school students to explore the theme **"Create, Play, Connect the World!" that focuses on sports and art.**

Sports and art have a lot in common—they move us, teach us team spirit and inspire us to do our best. They are places where ideas, friendships and a sense of community are born.

Aligned with this vision, the competition encourages students to reflect on how sports and art intertwine in their lives and how the support of the European Union to Serbia—through investments in sports halls, playgrounds, cultural centres, or through EU youth exchange, mobility and other programmes—creates spaces for inclusion, equality, and creativity.

This year, we want to see how the students see a world where sports and the arts come together—how they, with joint forces, can build communities, inspire people, and make life better.

Participants are encouraged to explore and through visual art express:

- **Sports and Art as Connectors:** How shared experiences on the field, stage, or canvas bring young people together and strengthen social ties.
- **Inclusion and Equality:** How access to sports and cultural facilities supported by the EU enables everyone, including vulnerable groups, to participate fully in community life.
- **Youth Empowerment:** How engaging in sports and art fosters confidence, leadership, and resilience among young people.
- **Community Development:** How local EU-supported projects in sports and culture improve the quality of life in cities and municipalities across Serbia.
- **Creativity, Expression, Innovation:** How sports and artistic expression when met can generate innovative ideas, including digital forms such as online teamwork, e-sports, virtual performances that connect and inspire youth; how they break barriers, and promote mutual understanding.
- **European Values:** How sports and art reflect and encourage equality, solidarity, cooperation, and tolerance, the values shared by Serbia and the European Union.

Talking points for discussion with students

This year's theme encourages students to showcase how sports and art bring young people together, inspire creativity, and build stronger, more inclusive communities. Here's how to approach it:

Sports and Art as Connecting Force

Sports and art are universal languages. They don't need translation—everyone can play, draw, dance, or perform. Both help us understand each other better, work as a team, and feel part of something bigger.

Think about your own experiences—playing football or basketball with friends, painting, performing in a school play, singing in a choir, or dancing. How did it make you feel? Did it help you meet new

friends, feel included, or express yourself in new ways? Now, imagine how sports and art could connect even more young people in your school, town, or across Serbia. And now—**draw it!**

How Can Sports and Art Shape a Better Future?

Imagine a future where every child has access to a sports hall, playground, or cultural centre—places where they can create, play, and learn together.

Think about how the EU supported your town to build or renovate sports halls, football fields, cultural centres, and playgrounds. How do such spaces change your town or community? Could they bring young people together, strengthen inclusion, and inspire creativity?

How could sports and art help people of different backgrounds understand each other better? Could a theatre play, mural, or sports tournament unite a whole community?





How do you see sports and art shaping a more connected, equal, and creative future? Now, **draw your vision!**

Students can also reflect on how digital creativity and new forms of expression—from e-sports to digital murals or graphic design—can connect them with peers and communities across Serbia and beyond. Exchange programmes and youth mobility supported by the EU can further enrich these connections, bridging cultures and creating shared experiences.

Some examples to discuss with students

Here are some ideas to help students start thinking about their drawings:

Imagine:

-  school mural celebrating friendship,
-  field where everyone plays together,
-  cultural centre full of young ideas and energy,
-  or some new digital space that connects art and sports.

Now draw how sports and art create a better, more connected world using your colors, your imagination.

As young people, your creativity can show how sports and art, supported by the EU, transform communities. You might even imagine something that still does not exist, but can be developed as the future initiative.

Format of Expression

Artworks submitted for the calendar competition should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Format: A3 (42 x 29.7 cm).
- Acceptable mediums: Illustrations, drawings, paintings, or collages.
- **On the reverse side of the artwork**, please provide the following information:
 - A concise paragraph (approximately 30 words / 100 characters) describing the artwork
 - Full name of the student with their contact phone number and email address
 - Year and class of the student
 - Full name of the supervising teacher with their contact phone number and email address
 - Name and address of the school.

Please note that submissions lacking a textual explanation will not be considered. The explanations should effectively convey the essence of the artwork.

Example of the explanation to be written or glued at the back of the work for one of the artworks submitted for the previous competition

	<p>Example of the paragraph (around 30 words) that explains the work: Engaging the youth in defining their own future through initiating the actions to solve the current issues in the community is crucial for the future of all the citizens in Niš. (This sample paragraph has 31 words.)</p> <p>Name, surname, contact phone and email address of the student: Anđela Bučić, 060 000 000, email@email.com</p> <p>Grade and year the student is attending: III-2</p> <p>Name, surname, contact phone and email address of the teacher: Danijela Davidović, 060 000 000, email@email.com</p> <p>Name and address of the school: Niš Art School, Prvomajska 6, Niš</p>
--	---

Responsibilities of the Participating Schools

Participating secondary schools in the calendar competition must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Organise an internal contest open to all pupils and select up to ten (10) of the best artworks for submission to the competition.
- Encourage teachers to initiate discussions and engage with students on the competition's designated topic.
- Each pupil is allowed to submit only one artwork for the EU PRO Plus Calendar Competition.
- **The submission deadline for artworks is November 14, 2025, by 17:00.**

- Artworks selected for entry must be sent by mail to the EU PRO Plus Belgrade office at the following address:

UNOPS/EU PRO Plus
Attn: Art Competition
Skerlićeva 4
11000 Beograd

Additionally, apart from the individual artwork competition, schools can earn recognition and awards based on the quality of their organisation of internal school competitions. To qualify for this award, the internal school competition should be documented and submitted in the form of photographs and/or videos, accompanied by a brief written description. These materials should be sent alongside the artworks.

Selection Process

- Only submitted artworks that fully adhere to the competition rules will qualify for the initial round of evaluation.
- The top 20 artworks from this round will be showcased on the official EU PRO Plus website and become eligible for online voting.
- Online voting will be open for five days and accessible to all citizens of Serbia.
- After the conclusion of the online voting period, all votes will be tallied. The artwork with the highest number of likes will receive one vote from the audience, equivalent to one vote from other members of the jury.
- The EU PRO Plus' Selection Committee, comprising at least four members, with at least one member possessing an artistic background, will oversee the next phase.
- From the 12 shortlisted works, the Selection Committee will declare the third best, the second best, and the best artwork.
- **It is important to note that only one artwork per school can be selected among the top 12, irrespective of its ranking after the online vote.**

General Competition Rules

- EU PRO Plus will not cover the costs associated with creating and submitting artworks.
- Participation in the competition is free of charge, and applications can be submitted by individual pupils or as part of a group (school) submission.
- Entries that do not align with the theme or meet the technical and authorship requirements will be disqualified.
- Only unpublished artworks are eligible for submission.
- Artworks with inappropriate titles or messages will be disqualified.
- It is imperative to avoid stereotypes, mockery, offensive or inappropriate depictions of vulnerable groups, their societal positions, lifestyles, and cultures. Artworks containing such content will be automatically disqualified.

- Authors and schools must ensure that all elements of the submitted artworks are original and not copied from other sources.
- All images used in artworks must comply with the existing Law on Copyright and Related Rights of the Republic of Serbia.
- By participating in the competition, authors and schools grant EU PRO Plus and the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia the right to use the artworks for promotional, publicity, news, educational workshops, information campaigns, and campaigns related to the competition's theme without requiring prior permission from the author.
- Authors of the top artworks will receive credit on the EU PRO Plus 2026 calendar.
- Previous holders of the first three places are not eligible for top ranking. However, they can still participate and compete for any of the remaining nine places.

Prizes for Pupils and Teachers

The following awards will be presented for 12 best works:

- The first prize—laptop computer
- The second and the third prize—tablet computers
- Nine consolation prizes—mobile phones
- Tablets will be awarded to the mentors of the three first-prized participants (one per school).

Prize for the Winning School

The Selection Committee will also evaluate the school's dedication to organising the internal school competition. One secondary school that demonstrates exceptional commitment, both in terms of the quantity and quality of submitted works, will receive a special prize.

This winning school will be granted a valuable package, including a laptop computer, a projector, and associated equipment. These resources are intended to enhance the learning environment and educational opportunities for their students.

Prize Awards Ceremony

EU PRO Plus will host an awards ceremony in December 2025. Participants will receive timely notifications regarding the event's specifics.

Who is eligible?

Students from all secondary schools, irrespective of their grade level, across the 99 cities and municipalities covered by EU PRO Plus are eligible to participate in the competition. For more details, you can visit: <https://euproplus.org.rs/en/gderadimo>.