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Edition number 3.

January 2008.

Visit to the United States of America - The International Visitor Leadership Program



Capitol Hill - Washington D.C.

New Project of YDP

“Lobbying and Advocacy for the future of sustainable multiethnic societies in Kosovo Province”

Raising awareness of minority groups to be more active in working on improvement of their position, motivating minorities to make a positive pressure with the aim of practicing their civic rights on all levels of governance, greater participation of youth in these processes and creating of a lobbying strategy as a way to make pressure on Kosovo institutions, are the main guidelines for realization of this project. **Project is supported by USAID and Freedom House .**

The International Visitor Leadership Program

In the organization of the American Embassy in Belgrade and with the support of the US Department of State, board members of the Youth Dialogue Programme, **Srdjan Vezmar** and **Avdyl M. Lipoveci** took part in the study visit to the United States of America during September and October 2007. On that occasion, they visited Washington D.C., Seattle, Port Angeles, New Orleans, Burlington and New York. During the visits, a number of meetings were organized with youth, governmental and nongovernmental organizations all over America.

During their stay in Washington, they visited State Department, as well as met with Ms. Rosemary Di Carlo – Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of the US. The International Visitor Program (formerly managed by the United States Informatory Agency) is coordinated and administrated by the Office of International Visitors in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US State Department. Each year more than 4400 visitors from all over the world participate in this program. Some of them come from individual programs and others come as part of single-country, regional or multi-regional group projects.

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Visit to Department of State

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The IVP was designed to increase mutual understanding through communications at the personal and professional level. Participants in the program are established or potential foreign leaders in the government, politics, media, education, economics, drug and crime, human rights, etc. These participants are selected by the American Embassy overseas to visit the United States where they meet with their profes-

sional counterparts. During their programs, which usually last two to four weeks, International visitors have an opportunity to experience the United States firsthand. During the 60 years of the program, hundreds of former participants have risen to important positions in their own countries (Mr. Tony Blair, Mr. Muhammad Yunus, Mr. Zoran Djindjic - former Serbian Prime Minister).



Visit to Department of State



Meeting with Ms. Rosemary Di Carlo - Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of the US.

Among the alumni of the program we find 186 current and former Heads of State or Government and more than 600 alumni are cabinet-level ministers. Many other former International Visitors are changing the face of their own country and of the world as journalists, government officials, educators, judges, activists, etc.

Conference „Future Status of Kosovo, European and NATO Integration“



Lecture of Mr. Oliver Ivanovic

The conference „**Future status of Kosovo, European and NATO integrations**“ which was organized by the Youth Dialogue Programme Kosovo – Serbia was held from 18-21 November 2007 in Novi Sad. The conference participants were carefully selected from a large number of qualified applicants. Thirty five participants were selected on the basis of their personal skills, qualifications and experience. The participants were young people, aged 18 to 30, from the region of Southeast Europe. Among the participants there were Serbs (from all parts of Serbia, including UNMIK/Kosovo Pro -

vince, Albanians from UNMIK/Kosovo province, Montenegrins, Albanians from Macedonia, Croats and Roma. All participants are socially engaged, students of undergraduate and postgraduate studies while some of them are members of political parties' youths, both from Serbia and Kosovo. Among the participants there were 16 Albanians from UNMIK/Kosovo province, which is a very remarkable result, because of the prejudices that exist on both sides. Three most important topics in the region of Southeast Europe were discussed, such as the final status of Kosovo province, European and NATO integrations. Having in mind that the final decision on status of Kosovo was scheduled for December 2007 and that it was going to affect the internal organization of Serbia – young people wanted to take an active part in that process. These important decisions raise our awareness



Participants of the conference

as young people, because we do not want to be passive bystanders as we used to be when the clashes were happening in this region. Therefore, the organizers wanted to give an opportunity to participants to engage in a quality dialogue with reputed and influential experts. There were three panel discussions on this topic. The first one was with **Mr. Bashkim Rrahmani**, FDI (NGO from Priština), and the topic was „**Negotiations on the Future Status of Kosovo**“. The second panel discussion was with **Prof. Dr. Darko Trifunovic**, Faculty of Security Studies, Belgrade, on „**Security**

Risks of the Current Situation in Kosovo". The third discussion was with **Mr. Oliver Ivanovic**, Serbian List for Kosovo and Metohija, who was discussing the topic **"Kosovo Serbs in the Status-Determination Process"**.

The year 2007 was very important for Serbia due to the renewal of negotiations with the European Union and the initialing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement. The organizer's goal was to discuss the association with the EU, with emphasis on the influence of the future status of Kosovo province on Serbian association with the EU. One panel discussion was organized with **Mr. Vladimir Pavicevic** from the Faculty of Political Science, Belgrade, on the topic **"European Integration of Serbia in the context of the Decision on Future Status of Kosovo"**.

As the association with NATO is a burning issue in the Western Balkans, the organizer wanted to open discussions on advantages and disadvantages of this treaty. The panel discussion on **"Serbia in Euro – Atlantic integration"** was discussed with **Mr. Daniel Sunter**, from Euro – Atlantic initiative, Belgrade.

If we turn back to history, we can see that the status of Kosovo and Vojvodina were very much alike in the constitutional organization of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, later SR Yugoslavia. That is why we, as organizers, considered that it would be of great help for all the participants to visit political parties in the Parliament of Vojvodina. The political parties that we visited were the **League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (LSV)** and the **Democratic Party (DS)**.

Host in LSV was Ms. Aleksandra Jerkov, member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. In Democratic Party our hosts were Mr. Milos Gagic, President of Executive Board, and Mr. Vladimir Vukovic, member of the Provincial Assembly of Vojvodina. There was a short discussion with them.

Strengthening of democratic ideas among youth in Kosovo and Serbia is of great importance for the stability of the whole region. It is very important that young people take a more significant part in the current processes during which some of the most important decisions on the future of this region are expected.

The conference was realized with the support of the **German Embassy in Belgrade**, **German Ministry of Foreign Affairs** and **Stability Pact for South East Europe**.

EUROPEAN POLICY SUMMIT "BALKANS CROSSROADS" – Brussels



On 4th December a representative of YDP **Mr. Davor Jancic – Director for International Relations of the YDP** attended the high-level European Policy Summit on Western Balkans which was organized by the Friends of Europe in Brussels. Some of the speakers were Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia Mr. Bozidar Djelic, President of Croatia Mr. Stjepan Mesic, Deputy Prime Minister of Montenegro Ms. Gordana Djurovic, former Prime Minister of Republika Srpska Mr. Mladen Ivanic, Prime Minister of Kosovo (under UN SC Resolution 1244) Mr. Agim Ceku, Chief Prosecutor of ICTY Ms. Carla del

Ponte, Director General for Enlargement of the European Commission Mr. Michael Leigh, MEP Ms. Doris Pack, MEP Mr. Jelko Kacin and Ambassador of Russian Federation to the EU Mr. Vladimir Chizhov. The discussion included the issues of the final status of Kosovo, EU enlargement and economic cooperation in the Western Balkans region. Mr. Djelic stressed that Serbia is undergoing strong economic growth and that Serbia is doing all to provide Kosovo with the widest possible autonomy within Serbia and that both sides shall not in any event resort to violence. Similarly, Mr. Chizhov reaffirmed that adherence to the principles of international law is imperative to the solution of the Kosovo situation. Ms. del Ponte confirmed Serbia's improved performance in the cooperation with the Hague Tribunal but urged the necessity to step up efforts in extra -



Mr. Bozidar Djelic (Vice president of Serbian Government) and Mr. Davor Jancic (Board member of YDP)

cluding Mr. Ratko Mladic. The representative of YDP Mr. Davor Jancic, made an appeal to all the panelists to realize that the process of EU integration and resolution of Kosovo status should not jeopardize the opportunities for youth to cooperate internationally and that these should not create further discrepancies between the youth in Western Europe and the youth in Western Balkans. Photos from the conference can be downloaded from our www.ydprogramme.org

Public discussion – “Position of human and minority rights in Kosovo”



Lecture of Mr. Veljko Odalovic

Decembar 14th 2007.

Within The Youth Dialogue Programme, a panel discussion was held on 14th of December 2007, at Mt. Kopaonik in Hotel Zeus on the following topic: **“Position of human and minority rights in Kosovo”**. The speakers at the panel discussion were **Mr. Veljko Odalovic**

- Chief of Governmental Office for Missing Persons **Mr. Srdjan Vezmar** - Executive Director of the YDP, and **Ms. Jelena Jankovic** - President of ELSA Kosovska Mitrovica. 25 participants from Serbia and abroad have participated in this panel discussion. Several participants were also members of the International Board of ELSA from Brussels.



Participants of the Public Discussion



After the discussion on 15th December, a group of participants visited both North and South Kosovska Mitrovica.

The realization of the Panel discussion was supported by **Friedrich Ebert Foundation, office in Belgrade**

“Towards final defining status of Kosovo, youth and uprising nationalism in Serbia”



Lecture of Mr. Teofil Pancic

December 19th 2007.

Within Youth Dialogue Programme, in Novi Sad in Hotel Park, Panel discussion **“Towards final defining status of Kosovo, youth and uprising nationalism in Serbia”** took place.

The speakers were **Teofil Pancic** -journalist and publicist, **Tatjana Tucic** - Coordinator of Program Civil Dialogue Kosovo-Serbia, **Biljana Simonovic** - Activist of Council of Europe

campaign “All different-all equal” and **Srdjan Vezmar** -Executive Director of YDP. 25 participants, representatives of NGOs and youth representatives of different political parties, joined the discussion.

Realization of Panel discussion was supported by **Friedrich Ebert Foundation office in Belgrade.**



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Survey at the University of Novi Sad

The Youth Dialogue Programme launches a survey at the University of Novi Sad. The survey is going to be conducted during December 2007. Questions that are going to be included in this survey are going to refer to the status of Kosovo and cooperation between young Serbs and Albanians. Results of the survey are going to be published in January 2008.

The realization of the survey is being supported by **Friedrich Ebert Foundation, office in Belgrade.**



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FACT'S ABOUT THE YOUTH DIALOGUE PROGRAMME

The Youth Dialogue Programme Serbia – Kosovo, has emerged from the initiative of young people from Serbia and Kosovo at the beginning of 2005, with the aim of revival of interrupted cooperation between young Serbs and Albanians after conflicts in 1999.

First significant steps towards establishment of this initiative were realised in February 2005, during the encounter of students from University in Pristina on one side and students from the University in Novi Sad. On that occasion, first steps towards normalisation of relations, restoration of trust and reconciliation of youth from Serbia and Kosovo were agreed upon. Youth organisations that were implementing this process have been [ELSA Novi Sad \(The European Law Students Association\)](#) and [BIRD \(The Balkan Institute for Research and Development\)](#) from Pristina. This cooperation was successfully initiated with the support from the Centre for Regionalism from Novi Sad and programme Civil Dialogue Kosovo-Serbia.

This is the process that is going to be happening in the many years to come and for that particular reason our programme is aimed first of all at young people. Given the fact that it has been founded by the young people themselves, it can identify in the best possible way the needs and problems that youth from Serbia and Kosovo are facing when it comes to mutual cooperation.

Starting from the year 2005 until today, over five hundred young people from Serbia and Kosovo have participated in our cooperation programme. ELSA and BIRD have organised several international conferences together.

Working towards strengthening this programme, an agreement has been reached on founding [The Youth Dialogue Programme Serbia – Kosovo](#), aimed at creating an institutional framework for realisation of the programme of dialogue among young people of Serbia and Kosovo. For more information's please visit www.ydprogramme.org

Sincerely

*Srdjan Vezmar
Executive director*

Our partners and donors

