

YDP Newsletter

The Youth Dialogue Programme Serbia - Kosovo

Common Initiative for Dialogue of Youth from Serbia and Kosovo

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First official gathering of Youth from Serbia and Kosovo, after the unilateral Declaration of Independence of Kosovo.



„Meeting of youth from Serbia and Kosovo – dialogue, cooperation, trust“ 25.-28. May 2008.

From 25-28 May 2008, in cooperation with the foundations Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Fund for an open society Serbia and organization Ligo Lex Legis from the Faculty of Law in Pristina, The Youth Dialogue Programme from Novi Sad held the first official gathering of youth from Serbia and Kosovo, after the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo. The theme of the conference was „Meeting of youth from Serbia and Kosovo – dialogue, cooperation, trust“. The conference gathered some 30 participants, young people from Serbian, Albanian, Roma, Goran and

Bosniak Communities. This conference was organized only two months after the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo and represents a clear signal that young people have sent out to both, domestic and international actors and the representatives who participate actively in the processes regarding Serbia and Kosovo.

This message, addressed at the social community, means that young people are ready to continue the dialogue immediately and resume the work on the shaping of a common European perspective for the citizens of Serbia and Kosovo without delay. During the organization of this meeting, two particularly important issues arose that will determine future relations, and these are the question of the position

“New Born Statue in Pristina”

of minority communities in Kosovo and how to motivate these communities, through a joint effort, to address the institutions in Pristina as the forum for the protection of their rights.

The second issue that appeared to us as a very important one is the issuance of Kosovo passports, which is expected to start soon after the transfer of a part of the UNMIK competences to the Kosovo institutions. We should emphasize that, during our cooperation hitherto, we have come across a great deal of understanding on the part of the Ministry of internal affairs of Serbia

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“Agreement of cooperation between the organizations The Youth Dialogue Programme and Ligo Lex Legis”

During Lobby visit to Law Faculty in Pristina, The Youth Dialogue Programme and Ligo Lex Legis signed Agreement of Cooperation. This Agreement enables an easier and more intensive cooperation among students of Law faculties in Serbia and Kosovo, because these two organizations would be working together on this initiative in the period to come. This initiative would also be used as an alternative channel of communication between students, due to the absence of official cooperation between the managements of law faculties in Kosovo and Serbia.



Participants of the Youth Meeting

Continued from Page 1 which has been allowing the arrival of participants who possess only UNMIK travel documents. The same was the situation with this conference, since all the Albanian participants were in possession only of UNMIK documents. As organizers, we consider that further improvements will be made in respect of UNMIK documents. It is important to note that the Serbian Government now openly recognizes the institutions of UNMIK in Kosovo, from which it might follow as a logical consequence that the travel of persons with UNMIK documents will be further liberalized. As an organization, we

intend to lobby domestic institutions to that effect. However, it is quite likely that there will be an interruption of cooperation i.e. in the movement of persons and goods once the Kosovo passports are used. It is difficult to envisage the situation in which the Serbian authorities would recognize such travel documents. We consider that there will be an interruption of cooperation in the direction Serbia-Kosovo, but not vice versa, that to the extent that it has so far been. Besides these two issues, a lot has been said about the influence of Serbian and Albanian media on the processes of reconciliation between the two communities, intercultural dialogue and the transformation of societies of the Western Balkans into developed civic societies.

The lecturers on this conference were **Ms Jelena Milic** (Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies), **Mr. Eldin Asceric** (Secretary of Islamic community of Serbia), **Ms. Svetlana**



Mr Aldin Asceric - Islamic Community of Serbia

Lukic (editor of Radio Broadcast “Pescanik” on Radio B92), **Ms. Claudia Nolte** (Director of Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Serbia), **Mr. Nenad Canak** (President of LSV - League of Vojvodinian Social democrats). List of present media : BETA News Agency, Radio Deutsche Welle, UNMIK TV, Vojvodinian Radio Television.

This project was realized in cooperation and with the financial support of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Fund for an open society Serbia.

Lobby visits to Kosovo and European institutions in Pristina.



In the organization of The Youth Dialogue Programme, a group of 12 participants (representatives of all national communities) from Kosovo and Serbia visited Kosovo and EU institutions in Pristina. The purpose of these visits was to familiarize the representatives of the institutions with the biggest problems that young people from minority communities are facing throughout Kosovo, and to initiate common projects and activities in

order to tackle these problems. The participants of the lobby visits had the chance to visit and speak with the representatives of the Assembly of Kosovo, Radio Television of Kosovo, EULEX Mission, Faculty of Law and students from the organization Ligo Lex Legis.

The first institution that the participants visited was the **Assembly of Kosovo**. They had a meeting with the representative of the Serbian group in the Assembly of Kosovo Mr Bojan Stojanovic (Serbian Liberal Party). The main topic of this conversation was the status and protection of minority communities in Kosovo. In addition, Mr Stojanovic presented the Assembly to the group, the principles of division of seats in Assembly to minority represen-



tatives, and process of adoption of laws. Through the dialogue, the participants and Mr Stojanovic touched upon some of the core problems that minority communities in Kosovo are dealing with. It was stated that one of the biggest problems is non-implementation of laws, namely, non-existence of mechanisms for the protection in implementation of laws. Furthermore, the conversation was conducted in order to find co -

Common ground for cooperation and support for activities of young representatives of minority communities which would strengthen the position of minority communities in Kosovo. There were also talks about concrete problems, such as obstacles for the restitution of usurped real state, unemployment, economic instability, position of youth, and removal of main barriers among young Serbs and Albanians, so that the situation in these areas could be improved. At the end, a project about concrete cooperation was suggested by one of the participants, which would be supported by the Assembly of Kosovo. The project is about forming the team of lawyers from the Serbian community, who would give occasional legal help to representatives of minority communities, because of their very weak legal position.



Visit to Radio Television of Kosovo

The second institution which was visited is [Radio Television of Kosovo](#). The purpose of this visit was to directly discuss the means of reporting when it comes to members of minority communities. The conversation was conducted with Mr Mentor Sala – Editor in chief, Lule Pagarush – Coordinator for production, representatives of Serbian and Turkish redaction, and journalists of RTK information redaction. During this meeting the talks were held on the methods of reporting about minority communities, plans for realization and activation of second channel, RTK2, which would be in Serbian and other languages of minority communities, and which would have national frequency throughout the territory of Kosovo.



During these visits the participants had the chance to discuss and share information and experiences of other televisions in the region, specifically about Radio Television of Vojvodina, which also has a television program in the languages of minority communities that live in Vojvodina. During these talks, an initiative was put forward to organize a meeting of journalists from RTK and RTV, redactions that edit programs in minorities' languages with the aim to exchange the experiences in this area. It was also agreed with the editorial staff of RTK to actively pursue initiatives in the following period, which would be realized by young people, and which would have as an aim to revive multiethnic cooperation in the territory of Kosovo and Serbia, so that a broader civil community be informed about positive initiatives among youth. After the discussion, the editorial staff and journalist took the participants of the lobby group for a tour of their television premises.



Visit to EULEX Mission in Pristina

The third visit was to [EULEX mission](#) in Pristina. The purpose of this visit was to get acquainted with the functions of EULEX mission in Kosovo. The conversation was conducted with the representatives of EULEX, Mr Dominique Orsini -

Chief Policy Advisor of European Union Planning Team for Kosovo (EUPT), Mr Victor Reuter, Head of Press and Public Information Office, and Mrs Tanja Viikki. Along with the acknowledgment that EULEX mission started very recently, the main topic of conversation was about their program, and the purpose of their mission in Kosovo. The EULEX representatives explained the main objectives of their work in Kosovo. In the beginning, most of the questions of the participants were directed at the legal ground of the mission. The representatives of EULEX were informed about concrete problems that minority communities are facing with on a daily basis. During the conversation, the participants of the lobby visit and the representatives of EULEX also agreed to cooperate towards the common goals of improving the overall situation in Kosovo.



At the end, the conclusion was that, in order to normalize and improve the situation in Kosovo, one of the most important things is to establish and implement the principle of rule of law, and making legislative institutions neutral and fair towards all communities living in Kosovo.

The fourth visit was to the [Law Faculty of University of Pristina](#). On that occasion, the law students met with the NGO Ligo Lex Legis. During this visit, the talks included the means and modalities of common activities in order to promote multiethnic cooperation. At the end of this visit, the "Agreement of cooperation between the organizations The Youth Dialogue Programme and Ligo Lex Legis" was signed.

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



During March 2008, The Youth Dialogue Programme organized four panel discussions across Kosovo: in Orahovac (7 March), Prizren (8 March), Kosovska Mitrovica (15 March), and Gračanica (29 March). The aim of these discussions was to analyze and identify the biggest problems which young people are dealing with in Kosovo and in the enclaves where members of ethnic-minority communities live. In the second phase of this project, two training sessions were held at Mt. Brezovica in order to provide young people with certain skills in the field of lobbying and representation of interests of minority communities in Kosovo, which they will apply during the lobby visits to the institutions in Pristina. The first training session [“Mechanisms for the protection of human and minority rights in Kosovo”](#)

was held at Mt. Brezovica from 4-6 April 2008. It was attended by young Serbs, Albanians and Bosniaks from Kosovo and Serbia. It gathered 22 young participants: 13 Serbs, 3 Bosniaks, 3 Albanians, 3 Gorans. Participants came from Orahovac, Prizren, Pristina, Gračanica, Kosovska Mitrovica, Nis, Novi Pazar, Novi Sad.

Training session was run by Mohamed Sagdati from CSO Zenit (Prizren) and Snezana Baclija from The Youth Dialogue Programme (Novi Sad). The training session managed to fulfil all its aims, and was based on interactive presentation,



exchange of experience among participants, practical work in small groups and plenary discussions. All participants showed a very high level of participation and gave their maximum input



and engagement, which is very important since this group of young people will be in charge of developing and implementing a strategy of lobbying and advocacy with the Institutions in Kosovo. The second training session [“Developing strategies for lobbying and representation of interests of minority communities in Kosovo”](#) was held from 3-6 May 2008 at Mt. Brezovica. During this session, the participants set out to develop a strategy for the protection of interests of minority communities, which will be implemented in the following period by the Youth Dialogue Program and partner organizations at this project.

The project was supported by Freedom House, with funds provided by USAID.

Joint Parliamentary Meeting on Western Balkans, Brussels 26-27 May 2008



Joint Parliamentary Meeting on Western Balkans, which was held from 26-27 May 2008 in Brussels, was the first gathering of this kind ever organized and had as its main topic the achieving of the European perspective for South

East Europe. Mr. Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament and Mr. France Cukjati, President of the National Assembly of Slovenia, co-chaired the two-day meeting attended by the members of the European Parliament, members of almost all the national parliaments of the EU Member States as well as those of the Western Balkans countries, but also the representatives of several other EU institutions. The delegation of Kosovo/UNMIK was also present at the meeting.

This important gathering was a unique opportunity for all delegations to meet personally, voice their opinions about the EU policy towards Western Balkans, present their progress on the path towards the EU, as well as to share experiences and problems that they have encountered in this process. Our representative, Davor Jancic, Director of the international relations of The Youth Dialogue Programme, had an honor to attend this inter-parliamentary conference and find



out directly what the most significant issues are with regard to Western Balkans and EU integration, with a special emphasis on

youth and the possibilities of easier travel to the EU Member States. In this respect, Mr. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, stressed that, besides climate change and energy, one of the priorities of the EU is the regulation of migration and intensifying people-to-people contacts. He mentioned especially the example of Serbia and emphasized that some 70% of Serbian youth have never been abroad and that this alarming fact needs to be addressed as soon

as possible through the relaxation of the visa regime and, consequently, its abolition when the conditions are met. The Head of the Serbian delegation, Mr. Oliver Dulic, Speaker of the National Assembly of Serbia, pointed out the strong political will of the Serbian people to join the EU and expressed his firm belief that a pro-European Serbian government will be formed shortly.

J.D.

The Congress of Europe in The Hague



On 23-24 May 2008, the European Movement International organized the Congress of Europe in The Hague to celebrate the 60th anniversary of one of the most important European events, which resulted in the establishment of the Council of Europe and, later, the European Union. Our representative, Davor Jancic, Director for International Relations of the Youth Dialogue Programme, attended this gathering as an author of one of the 60 ideas for the future of Europe. The idea of enhancing

European democracy through a reformed involvement of national parliaments in EU decision making was selected as one of the 20 best ideas of the "Political Europe" workshop. In their addresses, Mr Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament, Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, and Mr Janez Jansa, President of the European Council, emphasized the significance of cooperation among the EU Member States in tackling contemporary challenges, such as energy policy, climate change, environment protection, but also the improvement of communication between the EU and its citizens. In the field of economic and social policy, the accelerated process of globalization, in which the EU needs to remain the world leader, as well as the regulation



of immigration, were stressed as top priorities. In the field of education, the special emphasis was put on the need to further develop educational programs such as Erasmus. During the last part of the Congress, the representatives of the European political parties underlined the necessity to further democratize the relations between the European Commission and the European Parliament, which was heartily supported by the audience.

J.D.

"I see future – I choose Europe" (May 12, 2008)



As a partner in the implementation of project activities, The Youth Dialogue Program has participated in the campaign of the European Movement in Serbia "I see future – I choose Europe", whose aim was to promote the European values and motivate fellow citizens of

Novi Sad and Vojvodina to vote in the state and provincial elections held on 11 May 2008. The activities within this campaign were realized at the territory of the city of Novi Sad together with the European Movement in Serbia, ELSA Novi Sad and student organizations.



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ELSA Mitrovica
Media Pulse, Leposavic
Center for Regionalism
Zenit, Prizren
Ligo Lex Legis, Pristina
Konak, Strpce
Communication for Social
Development, Gračanica
Civic Dialogue Initiative

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

The Youth Dialogue Programme

Our partners and donors

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