

YDP Newsletter

The Youth Dialogue Programme Serbia - Kosovo
Promoting partnership among Serbs and Albanians

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THE MEMBERS OF THE YOUTH DIALOGUE PROGRAMME PAID AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO ISRAEL



(Jerusalem, State of Israel)

The board members of the Youth Dialogue Program - Srđan Vezmar, Snežana Bačlija and Dejan Borić, together with the A.R.T. Fusion activist, Andreea Loredana Tudorache - paid an official visit to Israel between 22nd and 29th January 2010. The visit was initiated by the partner organization Sadaka-Reut, within the "Qualify for Quality" training, which will be held in Kovačica – Serbia in March 2010. During their stay in Israel, the members had the opportunity to meet many young activists from the NGO

sector. One of the most significant encounters was with the hosts from the Sadaka-Reut organization: Fado Shbeita and Genevieve Nadeau. The goal of the visit to Israel was to exchange ideas and experience gained from the work of both YDP and Sadaka-Reut. Sadaka-Reut works for social and political change in Israel through the promotion of a bi-national, multicultural and egalitarian society based on social justice and solidarity. The goals that both organizations have in common are the elimination of prejudices and the promotion of tolerance, enabling mutual life

among different religious and national groups. These very values, therefore, represent a motive for further and deeper cooperation between the two organizations and the importance of continuing with visits between the Western Balkans and the Middle East. Another important aspect of the visit was the encounter with the respective cultures and ways of life of Israel and Palestine. The implementation of the project is supported by [The European Commission – Youth in Action Program](#).

UPCOMING EVENT - Training Session "Qualify for Quality"



The Youth Dialogue Programme from Novi Sad will organize training course "Qualify for Quality" from 18th to 26th of March in Kovacica/Serbia. The main goal of the course is to increase the quality of the youth

work in general and in educational settings in particular. The target audience are youth workers (aged 18 and above) that are active in educational settings with young people and they must be from following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Latvia, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey. More specific objects of the training course are improving skills in using various

non-formal education methods, increasing the awareness of non-violent approach in conflict, transformation, improving the communication skill, etc.

Training course "Qualify for Quality" will be held in Kovačica/Serbia, from 18th to 26th March, 2010.

Implementation of this project is supported by [European Commission – Youth in Action Programme](#).

The Youth Dialogue Program in Berlin at the Trilateral Meeting between French and German Youth Organizations and Organizations from the Western Balkans



Berlin, 2.-5. december 2010
The international meeting between the organizations from Germany, France and countries of the Western Balkans dealing with youth activities was organized in Berlin, Germany, between the 2nd and the 5th December 2009. The organizer and host of the whole event was the **Franco-German Youth Office, FGYO**



(Office franco-allemand pour la jeunesse, OFAJ). The executive director of the Youth Dialogue Program, **Mr. Srđan Vezmar**, was invited by the organizer to participate in the meeting.

During the same period, a Fair was organized, presenting different projects the participating organizations are involved in. The Youth Dialogue Program presented its projects and shared its experiences from the field of interethnic cooperation and reconciliation



between [youth from Serbia and Kosovo](#).

Future cooperation between the Franco-German Youth Office and the Youth Dialogue Program has been concurred.

The Youth Dialogue Program, in cooperation with the organizations from Serbia that participated at the Berlin meeting (the Volunteer Center of Vojvodina, the Youth Office of the Municipality of Loznica, the NGO ONO), will organize a working meeting with the representatives of FGYO in Serbia.

The meeting will be held during the month of April 2010.



The Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO)

The Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) is an international organisation serving to foster German-French collaborative efforts. The foundation for the development of the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO) was laid by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and the French President Charles de Gaulle with the signing of the German-French friendship contract, the so-called "Elysée Contract", on January 22, 1963.

An intergovernmental agreement then led to the founding of an „Organisation to foster relationships between German and French youth" on July 5th of the same year .

www.ofaj.org

EULEX Workshop on “The Programmatic Approach: an outline of MMA Action Fiches to civil society”



Pristina, 15th December, 2010.

Representative of The Youth Dialogue Programme, [Mr. Vanja Milanović](#), has been invited by EULEX Programme Office to take participation in Workshop organized with an aim to more precisely and concretely present the work of the EULEX mission and its MMA (Monitoring – Mentoring – Advising) method of work. The necessity of this work

-shop derived from a fact that representatives of civil society working in Kosovo do not have correct perception of EULEX mission goals and especially their authorities and methods of work. As this mission came after the UNMIK mission, expectations are extremely high and unrealistic for a technical mission. The workshop was organized as a two session event. In the first session were presented Action Fiches - EULEX MMA Priorities – in general, by [Mr. Alessio Zuccarini](#), Chief of EULEX Programme Office and [Mr. Alessandro Tedesco](#), EULEX Programme Manager (NGOs and civil society). Second session was imagined as



a work in tree groups (Police, Justice and Customs) with Action Fiches Team Leaders and Kosovo institutions representatives. As this was two ways conversation with persons actively involved in working by Action Fiches, representatives of civil society had a unique opportunity to discuss concrete cases and situations with persons working in Kosovo Police Service, Kosovo Customs and Kosovo Judiciary institutions.

Successfully Completed Project Implementation - “Cross Regional Exchange Program”



The Youth Dialogue Program, in cooperation with the partner organization Ligo Lex Legis from Pristina, implemented a year-long project entitled: **“Cross-Regional Exchange Program between Serbia and Kosovo”**.

The project was implemented between January and December 2009 on the territory of Serbia and Kosovo. The number of direct beneficiaries included sixty-three participants (34 participants from Serbia and 29 participants from Kosovo), while the indirect number of participants goes up to around one hundred. Project participants were selected through public announcement on the web page of our organization,

informative flyers posted at universities throughout Serbia and Kosovo, as well as through several mailing lists covering both Kosovo and Serbia. The study visits to Novi Sad and Pristina were organized during the months of June, July, October and November 2009. Throughout the project, the selected participants had a unique opportunity to discuss different issues and exchange view points on the most important topics that have an influence on their everyday lives, within the context of relations between Serbian and Albanian communities following the proclamation of Kosovo independence. Some of the topics elaborated in this project were related to prejudices members of both societies have about each other, the history of the Albanian - Serbian conflict, the issue of travel documents for Kosovo inhabitants, strengthening and encouraging inter-ethnic cooperation and collaboration between the two communities. The Exchange Program success -



fully fulfilled the project expectations and achieved noticeable results. Many new challenges in the field of inter-ethnic cooperation and capacity building between youth in Serbia and Kosovo have been identified throughout the implementation of this project. These challenges have often been recognized as obstacles, creating additional difficulties and making an already fragile situation in the field of youth cooperation, only partially normalized nowadays, even more delicate. The need to implement such a project has arisen as a result of the evident lack of knowledge the two societies, Serbian and Albanian, have about each other, serious



lack of familiarity between them, and a huge number of persistent prejudices shaping the lives of the two communities. During the last twenty years and more, the political elites of both communities have sought to maintain as bad a picture as possible about members of the “other” society within their respective communities. New generations of young people, who have not had any opportunity for direct contact or cooperation with the other community, have grown up with an inbuilt hate, intolerance and prejudices due to the continued influence of media and negative messages directed towards members of the other community. The Cross-Regional Exchange Program, structured as an exchange of students’ visits, has been motivated by a strong need to influence the young people of both Serbia and Kosovo and defined by the objective of eliminating at least some of the mutual prejudices about Serbian and Albanian

societies. The experience gained by the Youth Dialogue Program to date in the field of inter-ethnic cooperation and the elimination of prejudices, leads to the conclusion that without a direct visit and frank, straightforward, and open dialogue, there can be no sustainable or positive changes. A huge number of young people express strong prejudices about members of the ‘other’ nation, primarily due to a lack of any other available information on the respective societies in Serbia and Kosovo, except what is presented through electronic and print media. Based on our up-to-date experience, including the results from the “Cross-Regional Exchange Program”, most of the prejudices that young people from Serbia and Kosovo have about each other were eliminated after the mutual visits. Participants from both communities, Serbian and Albanian, have provided valuable input on how successfully structured this exchange program has been and its importance to both communities. The most effective way to influence the erosion of the prejudices that persist between these communities is through such informal encounters and through developing familiarity with the

culture and social interaction of the other community. Having in mind the influence the media have on both societies, in Serbia and in Kosovo, the Youth Dialogue Program decided to make a documentary film about the Project in coproduction with the Novi Sad-based production company Altertise. Although the documentary was not originally planned to be a part of the project, we came to the conclusion that the preparation of such a documentary would represent a valuable testimony on the youth efforts in Serbia and Kosovo aimed at achieving substantial progress in the process of reconciliation in the region. The documentary will be offered free of charge to all television stations in Serbia and Kosovo for public broadcasting, once the montage has been completed. In an ocean of negative news, we believe that our half hour documentary can send a small, but positive signal to Serbian and Albanian communities to move forward.

The implementation of the **Cross Regional Exchange Program** was supported by the [Fund for an Open Society, Serbia and the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society](#).

VISIT TO HQ OF EULEX MISSION IN KOSOVO



Pristina, November 9, 2009.

On November 9, 2009, fifteen young people from Kosovo and Serbia visited the Pristina headquarters of the **EULEX**

Mission in Kosovo, organized by the Youth Dialogue Program. The group included students from Universities in Novi Sad, Belgrade, Niš and Priština. This visit was organized with the aim of improving the knowledge and awareness of the EULEX Mission mandate and activities to be implemented in Kosovo over the forthcoming period. The visit was hosted by [Mr. Alessandro Tedesco](#) from the Programme Office, [Ms. Tanja Viikki](#) from the Policy Unit and [Ms. Valerie Marchand](#) and [Mr.](#)



[Declan O'Mahony](#) from the EULEX Justice Component. The visit was supported by Fund for an Open Society in Serbia and in Kosovo, through the „East-east partnership beyond borders program”

Training Session – “The Competencies of the Judiciary of the EULEX Mission”



The Novi Sad - based [Youth Dialogue Program](#), in cooperation with the [EULEX Mission](#), organized the first of the series of training sessions on the competencies of the judiciary within the EULEX Mission in Kosovo. The training was created for representatives of minority communities in Kosovo and

civil society activists, focused on the protection and strengthening of minority communities and vulnerable social groups. The training session, entitled “**The Competencies of the Judiciary of the EULEX Mission**”, was a part of the project “**EULEX Mission and the Minority Communities in Kosovo**”. The project was developed in close cooperation between the team of the Youth Dialogue Program and representatives of the EULEX Mission in Kosovo. The training session was held between [May 21 and 24, 2009](#) in Novi Sad (hotel Park) and gathered 25



participants from the Kosovo Serb areas, such as: Kosovska Mitrovica, Gnjilane, Osojane, Štrpce, Gračanica, as well as from Belgrade, Novi Sad and other towns in Serbia.

The Project is implemented with the support of the [Kosovo Foundation for Open Society](#).

Organized local consultation with youth about REKOM



The Youth Dialogue Programme in cooperation with NGO Fractal from Belgrade, on 12th of June 2009, organized local consultations with youth in Vojvodina, about establishment of the Regional Commission for Truth-seeking and Truth-telling about War Crimes

(REKOM). More than twenty five participants from different NGOs, from Vojvodina province, City of Novi Sad, Subotica, Sombor, Kikinda, took part in the consultation. At the assembly it was discussed about the mandate of REKOM, the criteria for selection and way of selection of the Commission members, about the Commission structure, public witnessing of the victims, as well as the treatment of the criminals. The

aim and the flow of the consultative process of the REKOM establishment were presented by Mr. Mario Mazić from the Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Croatia. Mrs. Marijana Toma, from the Impunity Watch talked about the best practice of others' way of affirmation of the facts in the past. The organization of the REKOM Consultations is supported by [Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands](#) in Belgrade.

The Evolution of Collective Security: NATO in the 21st Century



TransConflict Serbia, in conjunction with the Youth Dialogue Programme, held a workshop in Fruska Gora on July 25-26th, entitled “The of Collective Security - NATO in

the 21st Century”. The event was supported by Jagello 2000 - Association for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, the foremost Czech actor in the field of communication strategies concerning membership of the North Atlantic Alliance and security policy in general. The workshop was opened by Ms. Mirjana Kosić, executive director of TransConflict Serbia, and Mr. Srđan Vezmar,

executive director of the Youth Dialogue Programme. Ms. Kosić stressed the importance of holding such a workshop at a time when NATO itself has recently announced the launch of an intensive consultation process to devise its new Strategic Concept – which will define NATO's strategy priorities and outlook for the next decade. Ms. Kosić also emphasized that



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Auswärtiges Amt



Education and Culture
Youth in action

'even though Serbia declared its military neutrality, it still chose to become a part of the Partnership for Peace Programme. Active engagement in and contribution to the forthcoming debate on the new Strategic Concept is, therefore, extremely important for Serbia, should Serbia want to have a say in future deliberations and decisions. It is not the matter of choosing between military



Mr. Conrad W. Turner

neutrality and NATO membership, but rather distinguishing Serbia's future position and its role in collective security arena'.

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The Partnership for Peace Programme – Opportunities for Serbia?



TransConflict Serbia, in conjunction with the Youth Dialogue Programme, held its second workshop in Fruska Gora on November 14-15th, entitled 'The Partnership for Peace Programme – Opportunities for Serbia?'. The event was again generously supported by Jagello 2000 - Association for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, the foremost Czech actor in the field of communication strategies concerning membership of NATO and security policy in

general. The workshop was opened by Ms. Mirjana Kosić, executive director of TransConflict Serbia, and Mr. Vanja Milanović, a project manager with the Youth Dialogue Programme. Ms. Kosić emphasised how "the decision to focus on this topic at this particular time was not solely based on the originally defined programme of thematic areas, but instead rather imposed itself as a topic which needs to be explained and expounded upon if we are to better understand Serbia's official stance towards, and political decisions relating to NATO". Ms. Kosić went on to explain how "the Partnership for Peace Programme, in addition to other partnership programm



es, is a certain bridge between those countries that, for a variety of different reasons, chose not to be full member states of NATO, yet are aware of the potential benefits attained through intensified cooperation and communication with NATO". In addition, Mr. Milanović, emphasized the importance of continuous dialogue with and amongst young professionals on issues related to Euro-Atlantic integration.

ABOUT US

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

The first significant steps towards the establishment of this initiative were taken in February 2005, during an encounter between students from the University of Pristina on the one side and students from the University in Novi Sad, on the other. On that occasion, the primary framework was established on which to build towards the normalization of relations, restoration of trust and reconciliation among young people from Serbia and Kosovo.

As this is necessarily a lengthy process, investment in youth involvement is a decidedly constructive approach. Furthermore, the fact the founding initiative came from groups of young people, their first-hand knowledge of the problems facing young people can be readily applied in re-establishing mutual cooperation.

For more details about YDP, please visit www.ydprogramme.org