

STUDY VISIT

Narrative Report



PHOTO1: The interns in front of the Center for Regionalism office

A 17 day study visit for 5 young people from Kosovo, (2 Albanians, 2 Serbs and one half-Albanian and half-Serb, from Prishtina, Oraovac, Kosovska Mitrovica, Leposavic and Gnjilane), students and NVO activists was realized from October 28th to November 13th.

During the program, the group had the opportunity to visit relevant institutions and to familiarize themselves with the activities of various NGOs in Novi Sad, Belgrade and Zrenjanin. At the same time, they had an opportunity to learn more about the cultural and social life in Vojvodina.

On the first working day, interns were introduced with the **Center for Regionalism** and its major projects- Civic Dialogue, Igman Initiative and Association of Multiethnic Cities of Southeastern Europe. They also visited the **Vojvodina Center for Human Rights** where they discussed the protection of human rights, especially of the rights of national minorities in Vojvodina and Serbia, as well as the protection of women who are victims of domestic violence.

In the afternoon hosts and interns took a walk through the Center of Novi Sad. In the evening hours they spent a pleasant time at the **concert of the Symphonic Orchestra of Vojvodina** which was held in the Novi Sad Synagogue.

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PHOTO 2: Concert of the Symphonic Orchestra of Vojvodina

During the study visit, interns had an opportunity to attend various events and to have meetings with different organizations:

- **Center for work with Youth**, a Novi Sad youth organization which works in the field of informal education and training of youth. The interns learned more about the Action Plan of Youth Policy in Vojvodina-a strategy of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina toward youth.
- Representatives of **Non-governmental Youth Organization-ONO** shared their experience of working on the project with Albanian organization from Kosovo, within the Civic Dialogue Small Grants Program.
- **Covekoljublje**-humanitarian organization which deals with youth and marginalized groups, organizing different courses of handicraft, for children and youth without parents, with HIV positive people and with single parents. The interns had an opportunity to visit weaving workshop where the courses are performed.



PHOTO 3: Meeting in Covekoljublje

- Visiting **ELSA** office. The interns visited ELSA office which is situated at the Law faculty in Novi Sad. During the visit to this organization, participants had the opportunity to inform themselves about ELSA activities, it's offices in Serbia, international program of exchange, STEP program, which provides law students to have professional internship in the law area. The participants gave special attention for activities of ELSA Kosovska Mitrovica, and for activities that are carrying on in the region of Kosovo.

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- **Novi Sad Association of Students with Disabilities.** During the visit, participants had a chance to find out more about everyday problems that students with disabilities face during their studies. The representatives of the organization talked about upcoming festival of documentary movie which will be conducted by this organization.
- Visiting the **Student Union of Novi Sad University** –The interns were informed about activities undertaken by one of the biggest student organization in Serbia. The participants had a chance to get more information about EXIT festival, because this organization is one of the founders of this prestigious music festival.
- Meeting with the president of **BalkanIDEA Novi Sad.** The interns learned about the main activities of this youth organization and talked about international youth projects, especially in the framework of the European Commission program Youth in Action.
- Visit to Zrenjanin and meetings with the members of 3 NGOs operating on the territory of that town:**Zrenjanin Education Centre (ZEC)** – the interns met with the president of the organization and two staff members. Members of ZEC informed the guests about their activities in the field of improvement of the social status of women, promotion and protection of women's political, social, economic and health care rights. The interns had the chance to ask questions about the overall state of women's rights in Serbia, the cooperation of ZEC with other similar organization in the country and the region of Southeast Europe and to compare the situations and experiences in the similar fields between Vojvodina and Kosovo.**Centre for Development of Civil Society – Zrenjanin** and **European Movement in Serbia, Local Council Zrenjanin** – the interns had a meeting with these two organizations at the same time. Both organizations presented their projects and activities in the fields of the development of civil society as well as democratization and also in the field of European integrations and raising awareness about the European values in the community of Zrenjanin. The guests were interested in the success of the presented projects, especially in the engagement of young people in the activities and ways to motivate them to take part and also initiate new projects.



PHOTO 4: Interns in Zrenjanin



PHOTO 5: Meeting in Center for Development of Civil Society

- Visit to **Crna Kuca (Black House)-Youth Cultural Center:** Meeting with the representative of **NGO Kuda.org**- interns discussed media and youth activism through examples of cooperation between Kosovo and Vojvodina. The representative of Kuda.org presented their projects on artists

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exchange, activities on the mapping of the national extremism and a project focused on role of religion in our society. Interns expressed particular interest on the role of religion in the life of young people and were eager to exchange their experience in this field. One of interns already cooperate through his organization with the Kuda.org which motivated other interns to explore possibilities for further cooperation with cultural center CK13. In the meeting with the representative of **AKO (Alternative Cultural Organization)**-interns discussed cultural exchange between regions of SEE emphasizing the necessity for future cooperation between Vojvodina and Kosovo. The representative of NGO AKO presented its organization and projects with the EU countries as well as projects with SEE organizations. Interns were interested in foreign experiences of AKO and their implementation in domestic situation. After meetings interns attended a **presentation of the cultural magazine from Sombor and three short movie presentations** made by alternative artists from this town from Vojvodina.

- Attendance to the Conference: **RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE-Art and Culture and people with disabilities**. Interns learnt more about the affirmation and integration of people with disabilities in social and cultural life through concrete artistic work. They also had an opportunity to meet with Jo Verent, an independent consultant and adviser on disabilities to the Arts Council of England, who held a lecture on programs of empowerment of art work with people with disabilities in Great Britain. The conference was organized by **Per. Art** organization from Novi Sad, which works under the slogan *Art in service of social changes!* This organization is an active participant in the Civic Dialogue project and so far has realized 3 project of cultural cooperation with Kosovo.
- Visit to the **Serbian National Theater: Dance Performance: "The Language of the Walls"**. Interns enjoyed in a spectacular dance performance of the Forum for New Dance, a contemporary dance group from Novi Sad.

Visit to Belgrade



PHOTO 6: Interns in Belgrade

The group spent two days in Belgrade, visiting the most relevant NGOs. They also had a chance to get acquainted with the Serbian capital. One of the most interesting visits, in the opinion of the interns, was the visit to **Fractal** organization, since the main focus of their activities is establishing, fostering and continuing permanent Serb-Albanian dialogue, as well as contributing to the return and reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) from Kosovo. The most interesting part of the conversation was the presentation of the plans for a future project which will gather young Serbs, Albanians and other nationalities to work and live together in the form of a reality show.

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PHOTO 7 and 8: Meeting in Fractal

The group also visited following organizations:

- **Youth Initiative for Human Rights.** Representatives of this organization presented their activities in the field of protection of the victims of human rights violations and in establishing of communication and trust in post-conflict societies. Special attention was placed on the projects dealing with facing the past. They also presented a regional magazine REZ which covers events in former Yugoslav countries and represents the space for critical retrospective views on social-political occurrences.
- **The Center for Civil-Military Relations-**the interns were provided with the basic information about this organization whose main field of work is expert and public activities is the security domain of Serbia, with a special emphasis on research and public discussion of the need, course and pace of Serbian security integration into regional, Euro-Atlantic and global cooperation and integration processes. The Centre specifically deals with the problems of reforms in the security sector and armed forces in transition and post-conflict countries. After the power point presentation, the interns and hosts led an interesting discussion about security in Kosovo and NATO integrations.



PHOTO 9 and 10: Discussion and the power point presentation in The Center for Civil- Military Relations

- **The Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence.** The interns were informed about activities of this organization, which are mainly oriented toward educational programs for political and social elites in Serbia. The most important role of the Fund is to provide acquirement of the additional knowledge and skills which are necessary for democratic transformations of the

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society. The interns showed special interest for the education for women in politics which was conducted by the Fund.

- **Meeting at the Freedom House office.** At the end of the first day in Belgrade, the group met with the Freedom House Belgrade office staff. They spent a pleasant time in conversation about their impressions of the present program of the Study Visit.
- During the second day of the visit to Belgrade the interns visited **The Humanitarian Law Center**, one of the most respected organizations in Serbia. The interns had an opportunity to learn more about methodology of collecting documents about war crimes and victims of wars in former Yugoslavia, and other numerous activities in the field of protecting human rights.



PHOTO 11: In the YIHR Office



PHOTO 12: Conversation with the representatives of The Anti-Trafficking Centre

Afterwards, the interns visited **The Anti-Trafficking Centre**, where they discussed the activities of this organization which is trying to contribute to eradicating trafficking with human beings, with a special emphasis on the causes of the problem of trafficking, such as gender-based violence, poverty, unemployment, and the lack of suitable opportunities.

Back to Novi Sad, the participants of the Study Visit continued with the program. During the next days the interns had the opportunity to participate in various events and to visit more organizations:

- In cooperation with **Art Klinika**, the multimedia art center and **Vojvodjanka**, a regional women initiative organization, participants had the opportunity to take part in the presentation of **Festival on Human Rights - Vivisect**. During the presentation, a group of students of the Novi Sad Faculty of Philosophy, sector for media studies, joined the event. After the projection of the documentary on war in Kosovo, *The Valley* (author Dan Reed), students and interns discussed current political issues, as well as the questions that young people are concerned about. The students made a short documentary of the discussion which was broadcasted on Novi Sad Television. After the discussion, another projection of the documentary *Blue Eyed* (author Bertram Verhaag) followed.

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PHOTO 13 and 14: Projection and discussion in Art Klinika

- **Visiting Novi Sad School of Journalism** -participants visited the office of the Novi Sad School of Journalism. During the meeting with representatives of this organization, participants were informed about activities of the school whose aim is to educate journalists and students of journalism on development of professional journalism in Serbia.
- **Visiting Independent Society of Journalists from Vojvodina** -during the visit to this organization, Dinko Gruhonjic, a president of the Society, and Pavel Domonji, director of the Novi Sad Helsinki Committee for Human Rights Office welcomed the participants and presented the work of these two organizations. On the same occasion, representative of this Society held the lecture about arising nationalism in Serbia and breaking and violation of human rights that has happened in past year in Serbia. There was discussion about future status of Kosovo as well.
- Marking the **International Day against Fascism and Anti-Semitism –Conference in the Assembly of the Autonomous province of Vojvodina**. The interns attended the conference and had the opportunity to hear, among others, speeches of Mr. Bojan Kostres , President of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Mr. Hans Ola Urstad OSCE Head of Mission in Serbia, and Mr.Tamas Korhec, the Vice president of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.



Photo 15: Interns in the Assembly of the Autonomous province of Vojvodina

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The last event that interns had the opportunity to attend was the 17th Session of the **Igman Initiative** which was held in Belgrade. A numerous respectable representatives of NGOs from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro participated in the Session „**The Dayton Triangle Countries on Their Way to Full Normalization of Relations - Achievements, Challenges and New Initiatives**“



PHOTO 17: 17th Session of the Igman Initiative-keynote speakers: Ramo Bralic, Branko Lukovac, Aleksandar Popov, Zivorad Kovacevic and Vehid Sehic