

YIHR 2015.

APRIL-JUNE

YOUTH INITIATIVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

INICIJATIVA MLADIH ZA LJUDSKA PRAVA

NISMA E TË RINJVE PËR TË DREJTAT E NJERIUT

Our New Interns!

Dustin L. Hadfield

Duke University, Las Cruces, New Mexico, United States of America

I love working with the Initiative. It provides me with an opportunity to learn first hand about the problems that the minorities are faced with. Working with the Initiative also means that I am included in the necessary talks regarding the wider, international, process of reconciliation. I have learned a great deal during my visit to Serbia as I have been given an opportunity to see, first hand, how the past and present influence the opinions and attitudes of citizens. I find it wonderful that I can share my knowledge and my perspective as an observer with a group of people who care about me a lot.

Bethany R. Clark

Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, United States of America

Working for the Initiative is wonderful. It is a perfect addition to my previous academic education on peace and conflicts in the Balkan. The Initiative helped me with my independent research about peace building and has involved me directly in the process of reconciliation. I have truly learned a lot about the real world which I have previously only studied about. It is my pleasure to share my academic knowledge and my knowledge of theory, and to be part of such an important group of people.

Anita Mitić and Naim Leo Beširi in Dvougao

Naim Leo Beširi from the Youth Education Committee and Anita Mitić from the Initiative were guests in the cult TV show called Dvougao. The two of them, referring to the attacks suffered by the Committee, after inviting Hashim Thaci to attend a conference in Belgrade, responded to other known questions of Dvougao like what connects and what separates Serbia and Kosovo, whose rights are the most vulnerable today in Serbia. ■





The second YouthLINC Innovation Lab in Zagreb

REGIONAL

The second YouthLINC Innovation Lab was held from May 27th to May 31st in Zagreb. During these four days, young people from around the region developed ideas together on how they can solve some problem in their communities with the use of digital technology. The project was supported by the organization Internews, which provided financial resources for ideas that promote cross-border and inter-ethnic understanding, dialogue between young people and reducing of discrimination, in order to put those ideas into activity.

Exactly two years ago, on the first Innovation Lab the Initiative received support for developing projects Involved not Invalid, Watch Your Language and Active Balkans.

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDE.RS

next generation

A three-day training program for the sixth generation of human rights defenders was held from May 21st to May 23rd. Due to the negligence with regard to topics related to the protection of human rights at faculties of law and political sciences and a lack of practical knowledge among future jurists, six years ago, the Initiative set off the programme “Human Rights Defenders – Next Generation”.

This program offers students an opportunity to converse with experts in the field of protection of human rights, and a chance to attain practical knowledge “in the field”. The most prominent candidates accepted to the three-day education programme were tutored by judges, lawyers, and representatives of non-governmental organisations with experience in the field of human rights protection.

A large portion of the education was dedicated to the monitoring of trials in domestic courts. The most outstanding participants in the programme become researchers for the Initiative, and over the course of several months, aided by their mentors, they attend trials and participate in the creation of the annual report of the initiative “Application of Fair Trial Principle in Judicial System of Serbia”. The report written by last year’s “Human Rights Defenders” students has been released in May this year and presented in Belgrade, Niš and Novi Sad. ■



Presentation of yearly report in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Niš

Presentation of the report at the Faculty of Law

LONG READ

On May 8th at the Faculty of Law in Belgrade a Conference on "The Application of Fair trial Principle in the Judicial System of Serbia" was held. During this Conference a report of the same name from 2014 by the Initiative was presented.

In 2011 the Initiative began monitoring certain criminal and civil proceedings before national courts in order to analyse the degree of the implementation of the principles of fair trial in the judicial system of the Republic of Serbia. Within this program, in the past year, five researchers were trained for the monitoring of trials. Through the process of trial monitoring, researchers had an opportunity to attend trials and to gain insight into the practical application of the principles and procedural activities with which they were previously acquainted mainly through theoretical knowledge.

During the first panel discussion, Anita Mitić, Director of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, highlighted tha the greatest value of the project is the fact that young people are offered an opportunity to deal with difficult issues and have an opportunity to participate in the work of a human rights organization. Ms. Mitić said that it is important to follow the developments in the justice system and to follow the reactions to certain cases, as well as to understand the context in which the courts in Serbia function and the reason why justice must be equally available to everyone. "The right to a fair trial is one of the most important democratic institutions and for that we have to fight. "

Ivana Ranđelović from the Civil Rights Defenders organisation, which sponsors the publication of the report, said that the fact that the conference was held at the Faculty of Law is just a sign that the relationship of institutions towards human rights is changing. Ms. Ranđelović identified three major components of the training program for young researchers - improving their access to justice, mending of legislation in the field of human rights and empowerment of human rights defenders.

Jovan Karanović from the European Law Students' Association Belgrade said that the fair trial principle is an idealistic concept, but that the reality is completely different and that this report by the Initiative offers an insight to how it looks in practice.

Ivan Đurić from the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, at the end of the first panel, briefly presented the report, which consists out of four parts - the first part contains the legal theoretical framework of the right to a fair trial; the second part offers an overview of the Judiciary and independent institutions in 2014; the third part contains the events preceding the initiation of court proceedings relating to the murders of journalists in Serbia and a series of assaults on people and property following the Serbia-Albania football match; while the fourth part contains summaries of the selected cases which the researchers of the Initiative monitored.

During the second panel discussion, four researchers of the Initiative, who have participated in the production of the 2014 Report, spoke about the experiences gained during the monitoring of individual cases and writing of the report itself. Jovana Spremo, who has already been monitoring trials for two years, said that the reform of the judiciary and attorneys' strike significantly impeded the monitoring process. Spremo pointed out that this year the researchers paid special attention to the respect of the principle of trial within a reasonable time and the principle of public hearings, "The situation is better than the last year, we were able to attend certain trials, but it happened a few times that journalist were allowed into the courtroom, and we weren't. Spremo said, "The public's awareness needs to be raised. They need to be made aware that they can attend trials."

Isidora Ercević, whose work consisted of the monitoring of cases relating to assaults on LGBT people, said that the biggest drawback of the judicial system in Serbia is its (in)efficiency. She concluded that, "The Court can be efficient if there is legal and a political will for it to be efficiant." As an example, she cited a case pending against members of the movement "Istinoljublje" (Truthfulness), who distributed leaflets against the Pride Parade in 2014. Although it was expected that by the end of May closing arguments would be presented, the prosecution withdrew the indictment. Another example is the case of Mladen Obradović and other publicly known defendants accused of causing riots at the Pride Parade in 2009, 2010, and 2011, which still, six years into the proceedin-

gs, have not resulted in final verdicts. The question is whether the court takes into account who the defendants are.

Researcher Jana Vujić talked about the burning of embassies which took place in 2008 in the context of the efficiency of courts and trials within a reasonable time. The indictment for this criminal offence was filed in 2012 and the trial began in 2013. The proceedings have not yet been completed, and the hearings were constantly delayed. Vujić said that the late 2014 was the onset of talks about a working group at the Ministry of the Interior which was to deal with, not only the defendants, but also with establishing political responsibility for the burning of the embassies. This, however, is not applicable in practice, because the trial concerns only those defendants who are already charged by the Indictment. Vujić concluded that, "The trial began again in March 2015, and it seems like it will be completed soon, but it does not look like anyone else bearing political responsibility will be prosecuted." This is one case that echoes in the media, but nothing is happening before the court.

Milica Antić spoke about the case of the show titled Dvor in which the defendants were accused of hate speech and were eventually acquitted of charges. She also mentioned a case that was launched by the Initiative against the Internet Portal New Serbian Political Thought for hate speech against Albanians. Ms. Antić said, "This case is taking a very long time; the judge was changed, and the Initiative has not yet received any notification with this regardt; there is some talk about some trivial procedural matters and not about the essence of the case, i.e. whether hate speech was present or not."

Certain cases, such as the burning of the buildings owned by members of the Albanian national community or murder of journalists, have not yet been brought before the court. The only information on these cases can be found in the media. The Initiative will continue to monitor court cases with the aim of improving the implementation of the fair trial principle in the judicial system of Serbia. ■



THE REPORT CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE.

Novi Sad

The report was presented in Novi Sad on May 11th. The inter-ethnic relations in Vojvodina and the cases of destruction of buildings owned by members of the Albanian national community were discussed. Seven months after these events, no trial was launched before the domestic courts. ■

Niš

On May 12th, the report was presented in Niš. One of the conclusions of the discussion was that the most common violation of the fair trial principle concerns the trial within a reasonable time, as well as the fact that the media coverage of court cases often violates the presumption of innocence. ■

Gatherings in front of the Assembly cannot be prohibited

Concerning the allegation in the media that the decision on internal order in the National Assembly building prohibited the gathering of citizens in front of the National Assembly, the Initiative urged the state authorities to pay due attention to the freedom of assembly, as one of the fundamental human rights.

The Initiative emphasized that this decision relates to the yard and parking of the building of the National Assembly, and that such a decision cannot be grounds for a ban on assembly of citizens at the usual place in front of the National Assembly. The Initiative also emphasized that the representatives of the competent committees are obliged to give an explanation for such a decision to the public. The Constitutional Court of Serbia, in early April, ruled the Law on Public Assembly unconstitutional and set a six-month deadline for the adoption of a new law. The Initiative believes that it is counter-productive to adopt new Acts that regulate this section at this time; especially those lacking specific ways of restricting freedom of assembly.



The Initiative is expecting that the new Law on Public Assembly enables the effective right of appeal in case of prohibition of the gathering, and that local governments will be denied the right to decide what locations are suitable for gatherings of citizens.

All previous decisions of the Constitutional Court, including the decision on the unconstitutionality of the Law on Public Assembly, as well as the decision on the unconstitutionality of consecutive bans of the Pride Parade and the prohibition of other assemblies are the clearest indication that the freedom of assembly in Serbia is not adequately secured. All the efforts of the National Assembly and other actors in public life should be focused on improvement, not further limitation of these rights. ■

Together Against Torture!

REGIONAL

On the occasion of June 26th, International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, partner organizations Youth Initiative for Human Rights Montenegro, Albanian Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma and Torture Victims (ARCT), the Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Serbia and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) invite competent institutions in Montenegro, Albania and Serbia to respect the right to rehabilitation of victims of torture and to effectively combat impunity. Although there is no systematic torture in these three countries, unfortunately, it was noted that a number of individual cases of torture and abuse that occurred in the past, remained uninvestigated and the perpetrators failed to beprosecuted. None of the three countries have yet developed an adequate mechanism for the support of victims of torture. Victims of torture need rehabilitation, and the state and society must provide it to the victims and they must create a mechanism for effective support in restoring decent living.

Most of the problems listed in the report of all three countries are based on the following facts: Among the biggest obstacles that these three countries are facing are the problems of inefficient judicial procedures related to reports of abuse and inhuman treatment and punishment, and the problem of ineffective investigations conducted in such cases. Also referred to as a problem is the inadequate rehabilitation of victims of torture and inhumane treatment as well as overbooking problem of prison units and unhygienic conditions.

The project “Building societies free of torture and impunity at the Western Balkan” is supported by the European Union. ■



THE FULL REPORT IS AVAILABLE HERE.

Security Information Agency (BIA) eavesdropped 168 individuals and 2 legal entities during 2014

The Initiative submitted a request for free access to information of public importance this year as well. They demanded that BIA supply them with the information on the number of the persons who were eavesdropped during 2014. The request was submitted on March 4th, while the Security Information Agency responded within the statutory period - rejecting the request.

On the same day the Initiative filed an appeal with the Commissioner, who on April 29th sent a ruling which required BIA to provide the Initiative with the requested information. BIA acted on this ruling on May 11th, saying that, on the basis of an order by the Higher Court in Belgrade, it implemented special measures towards 168 individuals and 2 legal entities. Those measures included surveillance and recording of electronic communications with insight and without insight into the content of communication - “listings”, secret surveillance and recording of other conversations regardless of their form and technical resources through which they were performed, including conversations in public places and places where access is restricted. ■

Academic cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina



Perspectives of a Multiethnic Society in Kosovo

REGIONAL

The publication “Perspectives of a Multiethnic Society in Kosovo”, presented in Pristina on May 26th, is a pioneering step in the establishing of an academic cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina. It is the result of work of ten associates from the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade and the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Pristina.

It was created spontaneously from the perceived need that some issues relating to the functioning of the Kosovo political system be academically presented. Upon the initiative of Stefan Surlić, a researcher of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of the Balkans at the Faculty of Political Sciences, a group of young associates from the Belgrade Faculty who have expressed interest in exploring political and social life in Kosovo was gathered. By participating in this project, experts from the Belgrade Faculty for the first time travelled to Kosovo, where they met colleagues from Pristina and were actively involved in the implementation of scientific research.

Data reported in the scientific work within the framework of this publication testify to the intimidating and huge ethnic distance between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo. They are disappointing, but they can also be used as motivation for more intense and consistent work to reduce existing prejudice between the two nations.

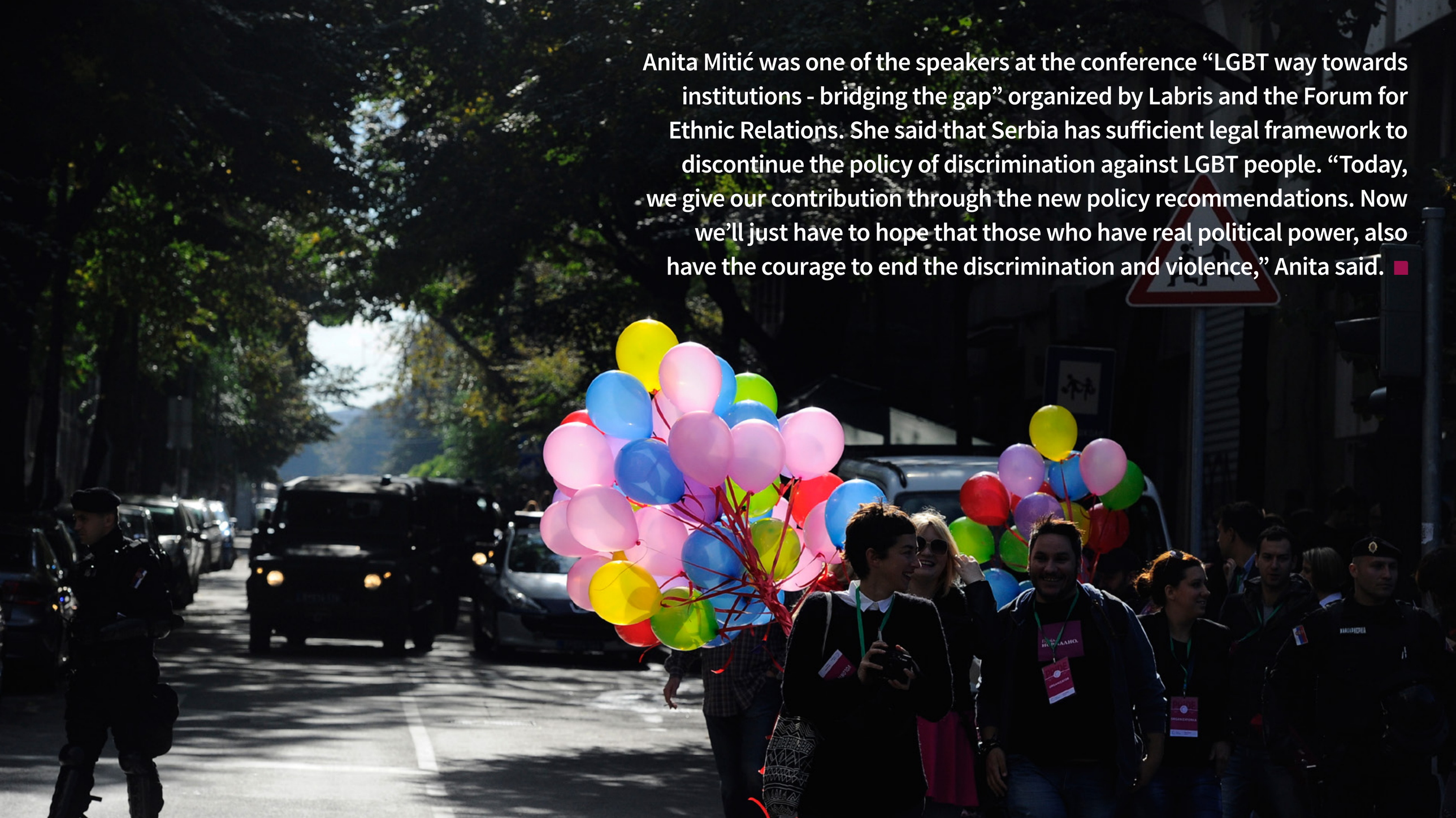
The ten people who signed the text made the first steps, but also committed to thinking about how to contribute to the intensification of communication between universities in Serbia and Kosovo, as well as other forms of institutionalized cooperation.

The British Embassy in Serbia helped the establishment of the first steps of cooperation between academic communities of Kosovo and Serbia; and the Initiative looks forward to these and similar projects implemented from money allocated from the state budget or from the Faculty departments themselves. Thereby, academic cooperation between Belgrade and Pristina would be incorporated into the regular university activities which are not given an exclusive character.

Despite negotiations with the Deans in Belgrade and Pristina, which lasted over a year, this publication does not contain the logo of any of the faculties. Neither side had the political courage to stand behind the initiatives of young academics and recognize their need to establish official channels of communication with colleagues from the region. However, this group of young people did not take it as a failure, but an incentive to continue their cooperation until the moment when their efforts would be academically recognized. ■



YOU CAN DOWNLOAD THE PUBLICATION HERE.



Anita Mitić was one of the speakers at the conference “LGBT way towards institutions - bridging the gap” organized by Labris and the Forum for Ethnic Relations. She said that Serbia has sufficient legal framework to discontinue the policy of discrimination against LGBT people. “Today, we give our contribution through the new policy recommendations. Now we’ll just have to hope that those who have real political power, also have the courage to end the discrimination and violence,” Anita said. ■

Days of Sarajevo Award to Women in Black

REGIONAL

Days of Sarajevo Award, which has been delivered for the sixth year in a row to individuals and institutions that contribute to the establishment of a permanent and peaceful communication between Belgrade and Sarajevo was awarded on May 15th to the Women in Black at the Cultural Centre Parobrod.

The festival Days of Sarajevo in Belgrade, organized by the Initiative since 2007, was held as a reminder of the siege of Sarajevo and the reaction to the silence of the official Belgrade about what had happened during the war in the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. During all the years of their holding the Days of Sarajevo have become a meeting point for new generations of young people who are building new relations between the two cities, based on understanding and reviewing of our recent past.

Eight years ago, the siege of Sarajevo, in the domestic public, was a subject we knew nothing about. Six years ago Days of Sarajevo were supported by the city of Sarajevo and the city of Belgrade, whose representatives met at the festival. Days of Sarajevo in its heritage counts 23 performed plays, 38 shown films, 13 held debates, 17 concerts and many other cultural and art events. Today, eight years after the first festival, artists from Sarajevo are no longer a taboo in Belgrade. They found their place in front of the Belgrade audience and are regular guests of the city. Therefore, from this year onwards, the Days of Sarajevo is changing its format. The festival is not going to be held for a few days in May; it will last 365 days in year from now on, and it will continue to provide selfless support to the young artists who want to work on the exchange and to establish some new connections.

Although Days of Sarajevo was not held in the previous festival format this May, the Initiative awarded the Days of Sarajevo Award, whose last year's Laureates were Borka Pavićević, Branko Cvejić and the Yugoslav Drama Theatre, Mirjana Karanović, Nataša Kandić and Biljana Srbljanović, this year as well.

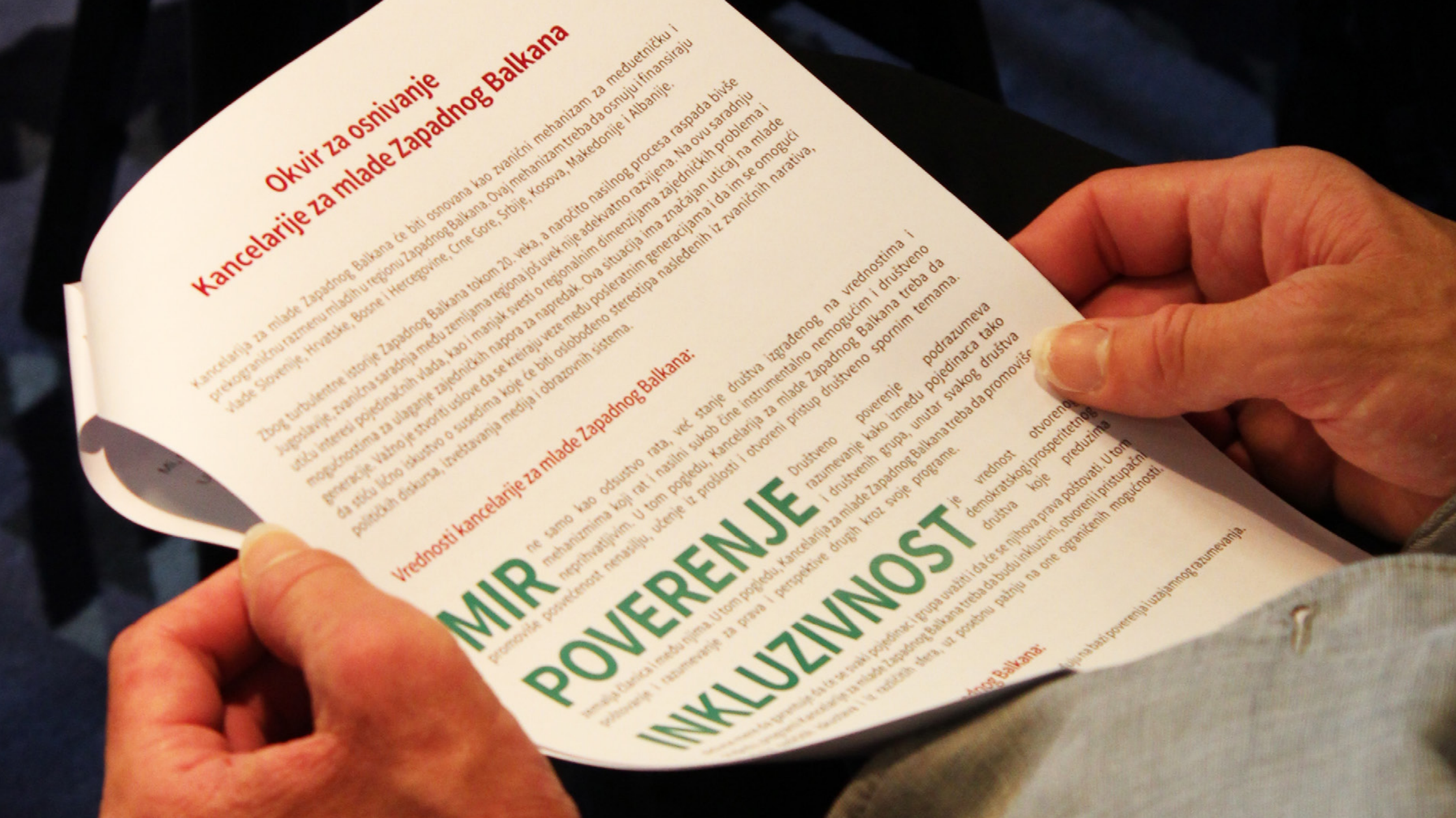
This year the prize was awarded to the Women in Black in gratitude for all the years during which they fought against the siege to the best of their abilities, and who continued to maintain the memory of the siege more than twenty years after the war.

Generations to come have an obligation to continue the noble and brave doings performed during the most difficult times by activists in the area of the former Yugoslavia. Many speak and write of the history of Women in Black and their scope and importance, not only for this region, but further. However, the award of the Days of Sarajevo went to their hand in a delicate political moment as a strong support for this brave movement's long-term efforts in maintaining the memory of serious abuses committed in the past.

For young people, those born at the beginning of the armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia, Women in Black will remain a bright spot and heritage, and they will always urge us not to forget that Albanian women are our sisters, that we do not want to be subjects and that we always need to be disobedient.

One of the main messages from the Women in Black's standings is NOT IN OUR NAME, and the Initiative said, with great pride and gratitude: WOMEN IN BLACK IN OUR NAME. ■





Okvir za osnivanje Kancelarije za mlade Zapadnog Balkana

Kancelarija za mlade Zapadnog Balkana će biti osnovana kao zvanični mehanizam za međuetničku i prekograničnu razmenu mladih u regionu Zapadnog Balkana. Ovaj mehanizam treba da osnuju i finansiraju vlade Slovenije, Hrvatske, Bosne i Hercegovine, Crne Gore, Srbije, Kosova, Makedonije i Albanije.

Zbog turbulentne istorije Zapadnog Balkana tokom 20. veka, a naročito nasilnog procesa raspada bivše Jugoslavije, zvanična saradnja među zemljama regiona još uvek nije adekvatno razvijena. Na ovu saradnju utiču interesi pojedinačnih vlada, kao i manjak svesti o regionalnim dimenzijama zajedničkih problema i mogućnostima za ulaganje zajedničkih napora za napredak. Ova situacija ima značajan uticaj na mlade generacije. Važno je stvoriti uslove da se kreiraju veze među posleratnim generacijama i da im se omogući da steku lično iskustvo o susedima koje će biti oslobođeno stereotipa nasleđenih iz zvaničnih narativa, političkih diskursa, izveštavanja medija i obrazovnih sistema.

Vrednosti kancelarije za mlade Zapadnog Balkana:

MIR ne samo kao odsustvo rata, već stanje društva izgrađenog na vrednostima i mehanizmima koji rat i nasilni sukob čine instrumentalno nemogućim i društveno neprihvatljivim. U tom pogledu, Kancelarija za mlade Zapadnog Balkana treba da promoviše: poštovanje, nenasilju, učenje iz prošlosti i otvoreni pristup društveno spornim temama.

POVERENJE Društveno poverenje podrazumeva razumevanje kako između pojedinaca tako i društvenih grupa, unutar svakog društva između različitih i među njima. U tom pogledu, Kancelarija za mlade Zapadnog Balkana treba da promoviše

INKLUZIVNOST je vrednost otvorenog demokratskog prosperitetnog društva koje preduzima zemalja i razumevanje za prava i perspektive drugih kroz svoje programe.

Antoni Balkana:

...ja na bazi poverenja i uzajamnog razumevanja.

Region as it should be:

Improving regional youth cooperation

Institutionalization of exchange programs as a key prerequisite for improving regional youth cooperation

LONG READ REGIONAL

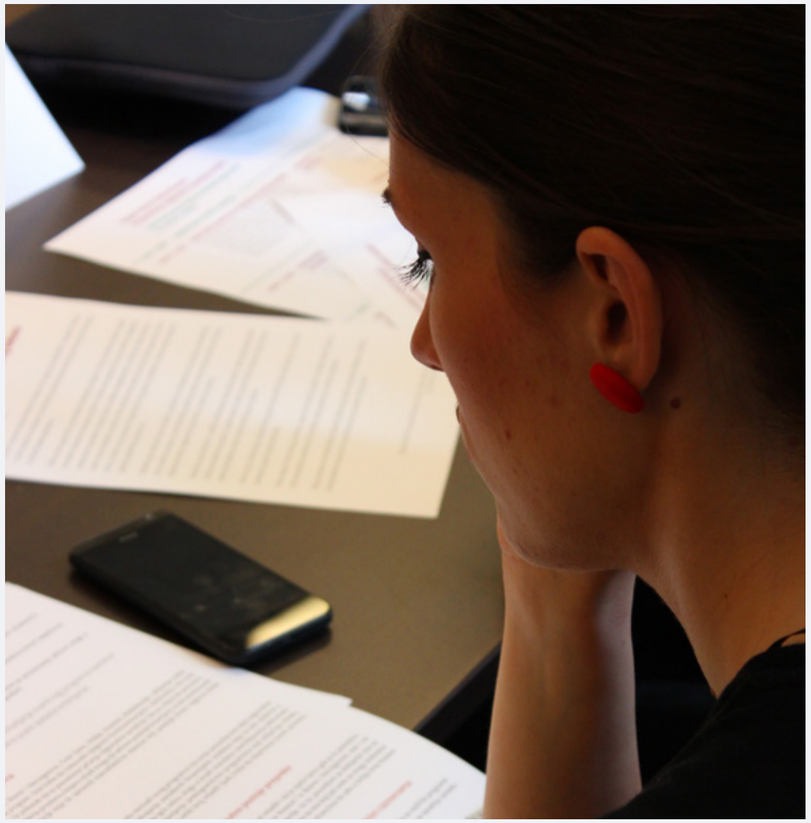
Since August 2014, at the level of the Western Balkan region (comprising the countries of the former Yugoslavia and Albania) there has been talks about institutionalization of youth exchange programs and the establishing of channels of intensive communication between young people from post conflict countries. Snežanja Klašnja, Assistant Minister of Youth and Sports, said at the opening of the conference: "The Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia is involved in advocating the establishing of the Western Balkans Youth Union* in a format that involves government agencies in the region, but also non-governmental organizations. "Region as it should be: Improving regional youth cooperation" which was organised by the Initiative on May 19th in Belgrade, as part of the Regional Youth Exchange Association projects supported by the European Union.

Klašnja added that umbrella youth organizations have a special place in advocacy efforts and that her Ministry works closely with the National Youth Council of Serbia. Klašnja also said, "For this process, there is support from the countries in the region, but also the Council of Europe. All this is done in order for the Balkans to be prosperous and peaceful" She also noted that there is a plan for the preparation of a concept for the future of the Western Balkans Youth Union until this August and the conference on the Western Balkans which will be held in Vienna. Snežana Klašnja concluded that "A lot of conversations, discussions and cooperation are separating us from our goal. It is necessary to define the structure, budget and other details. Special attention is paid to the inclusion of the region in this process in order to avoid a situation where the establishing of the Youth Union is imposed on any country."

Morana Makovec from the Croatian Ministry of Social Policy and Youth highlighted the importance of regional youth exchange at a conference held on May 21st in Zagreb. He also encouraged youth exchange in a wider European context. She pointed out that there are already formal and informal discussions and initiatives about the program of regional cooperation, and in this context the Initiative's conference is a welcome contribution to the debate on the format and content of the future program.

Goran Svilanović of the Regional Cooperation Council based in Sarajevo said at a conference held on June 22nd and 23rd on Jahorina that the process of setting up a youth exchange program in the Balkans is a bilateral process in which two countries agree on the principles of establishing the program, and that it is a process requiring a regional approach of all countries. He sees the purpose of this program not only in contributing to reconciliation, but also in the fact that the objective of the regional youth exchange program should be to deal with the deeper social and economic problems that young people in the region face.

The establishing of the Western Balkans Youth Union was first mentioned last year in Berlin, at the conference which brought together prime ministers from the region. The main inspiration for the Youth Union came from the experience of the Franco-German Youth Office (FGYO)



*The name the Government of the Republic of Serbia uses when talking about the regional youth exchange program for youth, which would be established by governments of Slovenia, Croatian, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania.

which was established in 1963 on the initiative of Charles de Gaulle and Konrad Adenauer. Frank Morawietz, representative of the Franco-German Youth Office, said, “After World War II, France and Germany were faced with the legacy of hostile relations that had been seen in historical narratives, political discourse, literature, and had been handed down from generation to generation in families. It was clear that something had to be done to overcome the existing hatred.” He explained that the first steps towards bringing the two nations together were made by non-governmental organisations which insisted on dealing with the past immediately after World War II. Morawietz said, “In particular, it was launched by the French who survived imprisonment in Nazi concentration camps.” According to him, who was present at conferences in Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the capacity of an international expert, similar processes were initiated in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, where non-governmental organisations also played an important role.

That the civil sector has ambition and concrete results and that it often goes in front of the states in the region, was confirmed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Montenegro, Igor Lukšić at a conference in Podgorica on June 19th. According to him, a society that does not answer the questions of young people - has no future, and the mobility of young people is a topic that is present in all of Europe, not just in our region. Lukšić said, “The Berlin Wall has fallen, but in Europe there are other, smaller walls. Young people in the region almost do not know each other, and it is as if the wall had never fallen, “Luksic said, adding that a Western Balkan Fund should be formed soon, which would, among other priorities, deal with youth mobility.

At five national conferences of the Initiative more representative institutions spoke about the importance of working with young people and their contribution to the progress in the region in the future. Suljo Mustafić, Vice President of the Montenegrin Parliament stressed that it is necessary to invest in the future of young people and that the legislative authority in Podgorica is ready to do everything to develop this program as soon as possible and as good as possible. Xhevat Bajrami, from the Kosovo Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, said at the conference held on May 26th in Pristina, that he sees youth in his own country as promoters of progress. Bajrami said, “The ministry is trying to ensure adequate conditions for the advancement of young people and youth networks in general and to provide them with the ease of communication with their counterparts at an international level.”

Speaking about the experience of re-establishing relations between France and Germany following World War II, Gudrun Elisabeth Steinacker, Ambassador of Germany in Montenegro, as a particularly emotional moment in the history of the program FGYO mentioned De Gaulle’s speech before the German youth in the sixties of the last century, when he urged them to overcome the past and resolutely move forward. She said that in Southeast Europe “the hand of reconciliation” must come from the high political leadership with the provision of funds for the implementation of civil society activities. She said that for the Balkans political responsibility and funding from the government are important, but without their further interference in the activities of the future program office that will deal with youth exchange. “Civil society fills the framework with life in terms of reconciliation which is given through governments’ political will and the necessary finances,” said Steinacker.

During 52 years, in the Franco-German Youth Office more than eight million participants were involved. They were worked with from the earliest ages in order to understand the differences between the German and the French, as well as the roots of the earliest conflicts. The Office continues to work, and since 2000 it is present on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Over ten thousand young people from Germany, France and the countries of the Western Balkans participated in the programs of FGYO South Eastern Europe Initiative. According to Frank Morawietz, the purpose of these programs is for young Germans and French to learn about the Balkans, but also to learn about themselves, about how they see people from the Balkans. In addition, the idea is for Germany and France to share the experience of dealing with the past after World War II with young people from the former Yugoslavia.





At the beginning of June in Sarajevo the Franco-German Youth Office celebrated 15 years of work in the Balkans. The Initiative also participated in the organization of this event - and the meeting of ministries that work with young people and for young people from Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina on establishing a regional youth exchange program was one of the topics included in the conference agenda.



Intensification of good neighbourly relations between Germany and France, as well as the development of cooperation between the two countries on many levels has enabled the establishibg of the European association, which would later evolve into the European Union. One of the core values of the EU is regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations. Therefore, the EU institutions support, in many ways, initiatives that encourage regional cooperation, consequently youth cooperation in the region of the former Yugoslavia. These are the words of Nadežda Dramićanin from the Delegation of the European Union in the Republic of Serbia. "The policy of reconciliation is the foundation of the European Union and, therefore, the EU supports such initiatives. Given that today there are disagreements and conflicts in the Balkans, it is important to work on improving good neighbourly relations," Dramićanin added.

The envoy to the Kosovo parliament from the Democratic League of Kosovo, Teuta Sahatqija reminded that in people's minds the memory of the many painful moments of the past war is still present, but there are still people with the vision of a different future in which it is necessary to invest, as well as that reconciliation as such is inevitable.

In the wake of talks on the tensions in the region, Marija Bulat, from the National Youth Council of Serbia (NYCS) recalled that 20 years have passed since the Dayton Agreement was signed, but it is encouraging that young people did not wait for 20 years, they worked to improve interactivity, dialogue and cooperation. "Young people have a need for regional cooperation, and are now seeking support from the government for this purpose", said Bulat, adding that institutional support in this process is important to ensure the sustainability of the exchange program. Bulat concluded, "To make the process of institutionalization of youth exchanges become widely accepted, it has to become part of the system. NYCS does not think that this process should be politicized, but that it should be established with the support of government. The danger of politicization can be provided by involving civil society in the process of forming the Youth Union, and later in its functioning". She also added that the needs of young people in this region must be a priority for the governments in the region, and not the governments of other countries, as it has been the case until now.

At the conference in Zagreb, Marko Kovačić, senior expert associate at the Institute for Social Research, presented the results of a public survey on the stance of Croatian youth towards other peoples in the region. The results showed that the youth in Croatia has no willingness to fraternise with Albanians and Serbs, and a great amount of ethnic distancing is present with regard to other peoples in the region. Such devastating results give further reason for establishing a youth exchange program, with the goal of offering young people an opportunity to meet and get to know each other and realise that they have a lot in common.

Fatlum Gashi, the Kosovo Youth Reconciliation Ambassador, spoke at the conference in Pristina. He said that the youth of Kosovo and Serbia have a similar view and impression of each other and those are mainly negative. According to him, Serbs and Albanians have many more similarities than they have differences, but that there is no effort to take notice of the common ground. "It is necessary to work on establishing joint narratives about the past, free from propaganda and particular unrealistic statements", said Gashi.

Obstacles and challenges for regional youth cooperation

The necessity for establishing a regional youth exchange program for the countries of the former Yugoslavia and Albania was not the only topic of discussion during the national conferences in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo and Montenegro. Representatives, from more than 200 youth organisations also talked about the problems they face in their day to day activities. Special attention was devoted to suggestions for governments in the region, related to implementation problems of cross-border programs, whose resolution requires a lot of effort.

The first highlighted issue was the role of the media, which should create a positive atmosphere for regional cooperation, and offer a diffe-

rent, more positive, image of the region. The ministries responsible for education and the need to redefine educational program, primarily relating to the dealing with the wars from 1990s were placed right next to the media. It was mentioned on a number of occasions that the European council supports the formation of a Youth Union of the Western Balkans, and that the council wants to put its experience and aid behind the creation of such an initiative. It has been concluded that the European council can provide guidelines for the study of history in environments where conflicting historical narratives are present. Additionally, it is necessary to create an institutionalised exchange framework between the countries in the region for school programs.

Concerning the academic cooperation the efforts invested in establishing relations with universities in Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia were commended. It was also concluded that the attention now needs to be directed towards cooperation with universities in Kosovo. It is commendable that the negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina allowed the freedom of movement between Serbia and Kosovo (which does not exist between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo); however, the process of recognition of Kosovo diplomas in the region needs to be further alleviated. It is also necessary to start the academic mobility between universities in Kosovo and the rest of the region.

Former initiatives and exchange programs conducted outside the institutional level will not cease to exist after the founding of the official



regional youth exchange program. The idea is for the regional cooperation of non-institutional framework to move to schools, colleges, regular activities of local governments. It would be unfair to talk about the institutionalization of exchange programs in the future, not to mention all those programs that are already in place, both through school and university cooperation, and through the activities of youth offices. However, all currently existing programs that are implemented through institutional channels are the product of individual initiative of a few enthusiasts who often have to deal with a number of administrative difficulties. In light of the participation of primary and secondary school students in exchange programs, it is pointed out that it is necessary to pay special attention to the work with parents so that they become aware of potential positive sides of organizing such programs.

The general conclusion from all conferences is that civil society is ready to share their decades of experience in the field of cross-border cooperation with institutions, particularly in the area that would deal with issues related to the dealing with the past that should never be swept under the carpet in the framework of the future Western Balkans Youth Union. Even when the topics on the disintegration of Yugoslavia are not included in the official program, the experiences of non-governmental organizations say that young people do get involved in these topics in informal parts of the program. This is why it is necessary to engage specially trained leaders of the exchange programs that will know how to react in situations where participants raise issues related to the legacy of the past.

In addition, the effects of the work of the Western Balkans Youth Union will be far-reaching if the governments in the region dedicate themselves to the consistent promotion of good neighbourly relations. In a situation in which negative statements given by regional politicians about their counterparts, where the other side is always presented in a negative context, can be found on a daily basis in the media, we cannot talk about an atmosphere that motivates young people to meet their peers from these countries. Representatives of the governments in the region must change the discourse in the same way that the leaders of Germany and France did in 1963. In all of these conferences a memorandum of regional network of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights on the establishing of commitment program for youth exchange was presented which can be downloaded HERE. ■

Initiative vs. Informer

The derogative word “Shiptar” was used multiple times in an article published in Informer newspapers on February 18th to describe the Albanians who, according to the newspaper, assaulted an ethnic Serb and beat him up. This event took place in Austria. The assaulted person passed away several days later as a consequence of the attack.

The Initiative filed an appeal against Informer to the Appeals Commission of the Press Council. Following the appeal, the Appeals Commission uttered a public reprimand to this daily newspaper due to the violations of the Journalists’ Code of Serbia by using the term “Shiptar”. It was concluded that the Informer violated the Code regarding the liability of journalists and journalistic attentiveness.

In its appeal, the Initiative pointed out that the use of the word “Shiptar” is being justified by the fact that the same word is used in the Albanian language. In the media and in the public in Serbia, the term “Shiptar” is used in a negative and derogative context, unlike the word Albanian. In addition, the word “Shqiptar” in Albanian and “Shiptar” in Serbian, do not have the same meaning, nor do they have the same pronunciation or accentuation.

In its statement of grounds the Commission repeated this standing of the Initiative, pointing out that the Informer obviously used a derogative term with the aim of insulting Albanians. They also pointed to the fact that the Code stipulates that suspects’ and victims’ ethnicity is not to be mentioned in reports, unless they are in direct connection to the type and nature of the committed offence. The Commission also mentions that there was no evidence that the aforementioned assault was an ethnically motivated offence.

The Initiative welcomed this move by the Appeals Commission and urged journalists to adhere to the Code; and to oppose all of those who violate human rights or promote any kind of discrimination, hate speech or incitement of violence. The Initiative also drew the attention of journalists to the fact that, according to the Code, they have to be aware of the danger of discrimination spread by the media, and that they should do everything in order to avoid discrimination based on race, sex, age, sexual orientation, language, faith, political or any other opinion and ethnic or social origin. The content of the appeals procedure is available on THIS LINK. ■



The Initiative at the Volunteer Fair

During two days in May, at the Volunteer Fair organized by the Smart Collective – Initiative had the opportunity of presenting its work to young people and offering them to do something good for their surroundings, while gaining new knowledge and experience at the same time ■



“I know what offside is” in the cultural centre Grad

The movie “I know what offside is” is part of a series of documentary films “Živeti zajedno” (“To live together”) which talk about reconciliation and recovery of inter-ethnic trust in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Initiative’s activity from 2014 “Root for your neighbours,” found itself in this film which was screened on April 24th at CC Grad.

After the film, there was a discussion during which the audience was addressed by the authors and actors of the film. Ivan Đurić from the Initiative also addressed the audience. ■



Involved not invalid on Bosifest

Speaking on Bosifest, representatives of the Initiative spoke about the achievements made so far under the program “Involved not invalid” and campaigns Everyone has the right to education, which dealt with the accessibility of educational institutions. ■


INFORMER
HIT!
WSHOR
PSHAND

MY INITIATIVE is back!

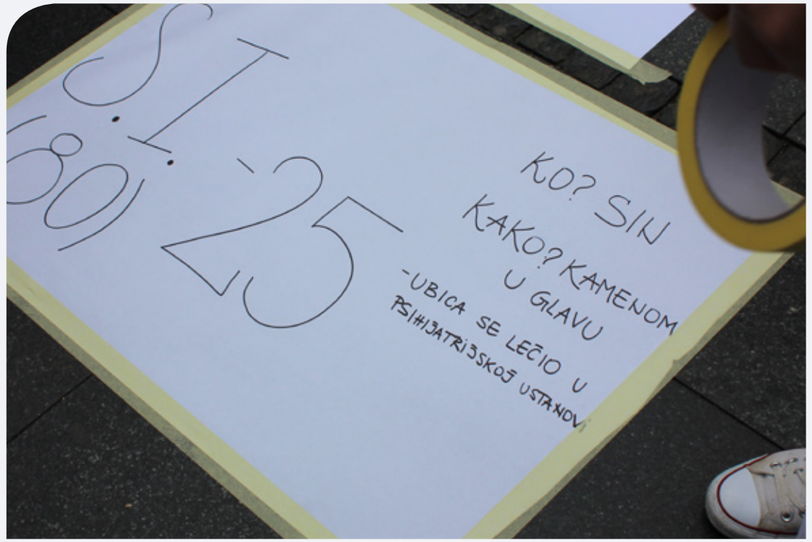
On May 3rd activists of the movement MY INITIATIVE performed two activities, one at the Republic Square and one on the Knez Mihailova Street. Thereby they drew the attention of the public to two particular problems out of the many that the Serbian society is facing today - the problem of unethical, discriminatory reporting regime of the daily newspaper Informer and the problem of violence against women.

The first activity was performed at the Republic Square, during which the activists of MY INITIATIVE invited the citizens to assume the role of the editor in chief of Informer for a day. The daily newspaper Informer has been nurturing and spreading lies and hate speech for years; it also discriminates against minorities and fabricates scandals in relation to certain individuals. Informer and its editor in chief violate the principles of journalistic ethics on a daily basis, as evidenced by numerous decisions of the Press Council.

More than 70 people joined the activity and wrote headlines on blank covers of Informer, e.g.: “Toma tweets to a free number,” “Scandalous: Steel factory is being moved to Mars!”, “Belgrade on water in 20xy years”, “It has been proven: Vučić is a radical at heart “... On the World Press Freedom Day, we demonstrated that the boundaries of one’s rights stop where they begin to endanger other people, and that even the Informer’s freedom of speech must have boundaries. All the edited covers were published on Initiative’s facebook page following the activity.

The second activity was held on the Knez Mihailova Street with the aim of drawing the attention of the public to the fact that fifteen women were murdered from the beginning of 2015 as a consequence of family and partner violence by men with whom they have had a private relationship. Although the largest number of victims previously reported the acts violence to the police, inadequate police response and omissions in the law, that does not properly protect the victims, ultimately led to the tragic outcomes.

Over seven hundred citizens who participated in the activity signed the letters in which they urge the Ministry of the Interior to adopt the necessary amendments to the Criminal Code and the Law on Police, which would allow the police new powers in effectively preventing domestic violence and violence in partner relationships. ■


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KO? SIN
KAKO? KAMENOM U GLAVU
-UBICA SE LEČIO U PSIHIJATRIJSKOJ USTANOVI

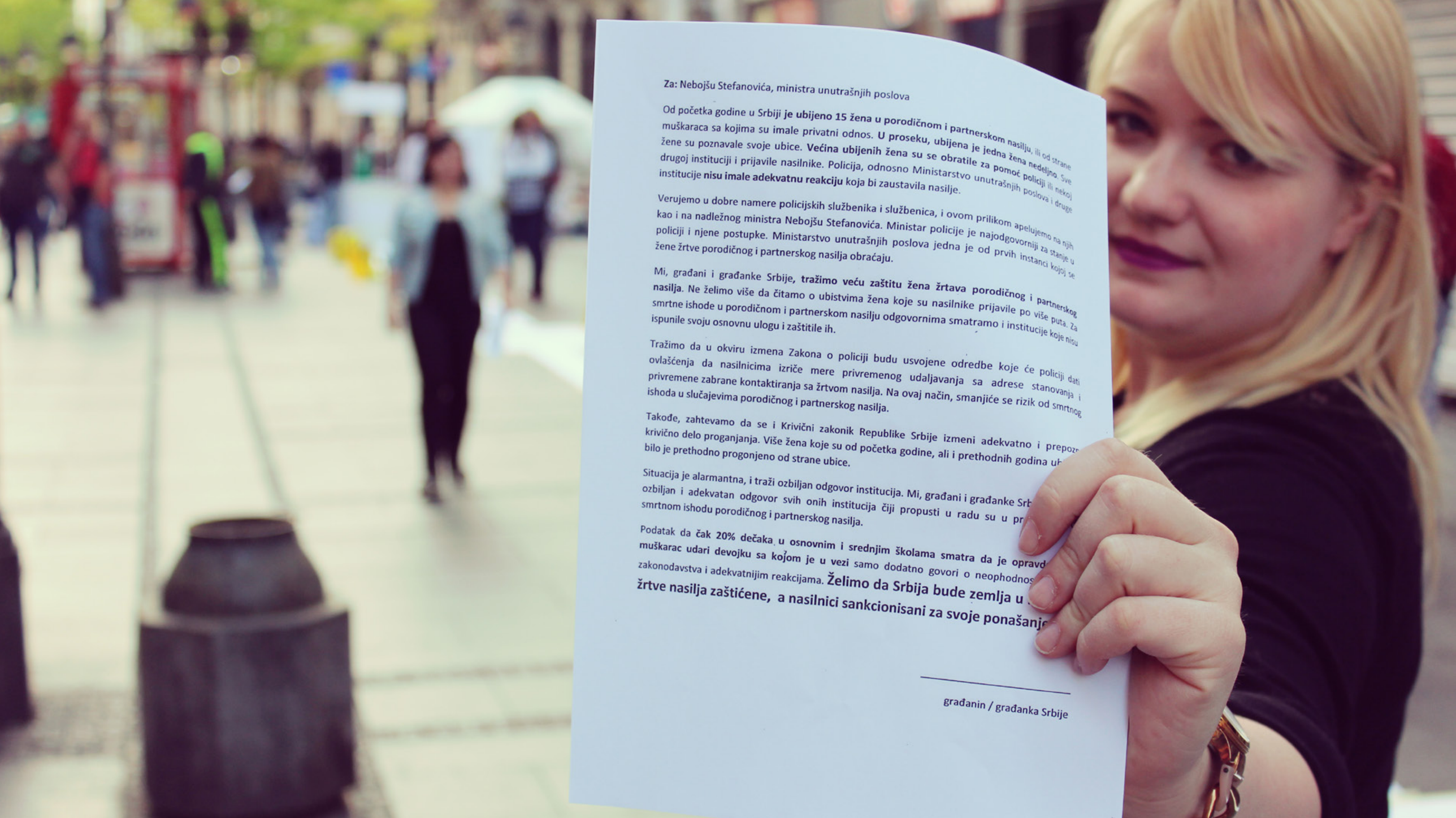





NEZAVISNE DNEVNE NOVINE
INFORMER
ŠOKANTNO:
DOKAZANO
HIT!
SKANDALOZNO:
PINK


11
9
8
7
6
5





Za: Nebojšu Stefanovića, ministra unutrašnjih poslova

Od početka godine u Srbiji **je ubijeno 15 žena u porodičnom i partnerskom nasilju**, ili od strane muškaraca sa kojima su imale privatni odnos. **U proseku, ubijena je jedna žena nedeljno**. Sve žene su poznavale svoje ubice. **Većina ubijenih žena su se obratile za pomoć policiji** ili nekoj drugoj instituciji i prijavile nasilnike. Policija, odnosno Ministarstvo unutrašnjih poslova i druge institucije **nisu imale adekvatnu reakciju** koja bi zaustavila nasilje.

Verujemo u dobre namere policijskih službenika i službenica, i ovom prilikom apelujemo na njih kao i na nadležnog ministra Nebojšu Stefanovića. Ministar policije je najodgovorniji za stanje u policiji i njene postupke. Ministarstvo unutrašnjih poslova jedna je od prvih instanci kojoj se žene žrtve porodičnog i partnerskog nasilja obraćaju.

Mi, građani i građanke Srbije, **tražimo veću zaštitu žena žrtava porodičnog i partnerskog nasilja**. Ne želimo više da čitamo o ubistvima žena koje su nasilnike prijavile po više puta. Za smrtne ishode u porodičnom i partnerskom nasilju odgovornima smatramo i institucije koje nisu ispunile svoju osnovnu ulogu i zaštitile ih.

Tražimo da u okviru izmena Zakona o policiji budu usvojene odredbe koje će policiji dati ovlašćenja da nasilnicima izriče mere privremenog udaljavanja sa adrese stanovanja i privremene zabrane kontaktiranja sa žrtvom nasilja. Na ovaj način, smanjiće se rizik od smrtnog ishoda u slučajevima porodičnog i partnerskog nasilja.

Takođe, zahtevamo da se i Krivični zakonik Republike Srbije izmeni adekvatno i prepoz krivično delo proganjanja. Više žena koje su od početka godine, ali i prethodnih godina ub bilo je prethodno progonjeno od strane ubice.

Situacija je alarmantna, i traži ozbiljan odgovor institucija. Mi, građani i građanke Srb ozbiljan i adekvatan odgovor svih onih institucija čiji propusti u radu su u pr smrtnom ishodu porodičnog i partnerskog nasilja.

Podatak da čak **20% dečaka u osnovnim i srednjim školama smatra da je opravd muškarac udari devojku sa kojom je u vezi** samo dodatno govori o neophodnos zakonodavstva i adekvatnijim reakcijama. **Želimo da Srbija bude zemlja u žrtve nasilja zaštićene, a nasilnici sankcionisani za svoje ponašanje**

_____

građanin / građanka Srbije

The White Ribbon Day marked in Zagreb

REGIONAL

Activists from the Initiative from Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina marked the White Ribbon Day and showed solidarity with the victims of crimes in Prijedor in a joint activity on Ban Jelačić Square.

On May 31st, 1992 the local radio Prijedor issued an order that the non-Serb population of Prijedor must put white sheets on their houses and must not leave the house without wearing a white ribbon around one of their hands. The same radio read out lists with the names and addresses of Bosniaks and Croats, indirectly referring to their execution.

During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serb authorities in Prijedor, led by the Serbian Democratic Party of Radovan Karadžić, set up concentration camps where serious violations of human rights occurred. Thousands of people passed through the Omarska, Keraterm and Trnopolje in 1992, 3173 of whom were killed. Most of them were buried in mass graves, out of which Tomašica, discovered in 2013, has been the largest so far.

About twenty activists gathered at the main square in Zagreb and surrounded themselves with a white ribbon. This gesture sent a message of support to victims, their families, and particularly families of children killed in Prijedor and their demands for erecting headstones.

Wearing white ribbons is an act of remembrance of the victims of horrible crimes, but also a reminder that not all those responsible for these crimes have been brought to justice. Also, the white ribbons are not only a symbol of remembrance of the persecution, but also a sign of fight against all forms of fascism and discrimination. ■





100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide

The Initiative was part of the largest ever international delegation that in April this year visited Istanbul and attended the commemoration of the Armenian genocide. The delegation was consisted of representatives of the organizations from more than 20 countries, and the commemoration was organized by EGAM (European Grassroots Antiracist Movement). ■



Commemoration of Genocide in Rwanda

The European delegation led by the movement EGAM (European Grassroots Antiracist Movement) was at the memorial in Kigali on the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda. The initiative is a member of EGAM.

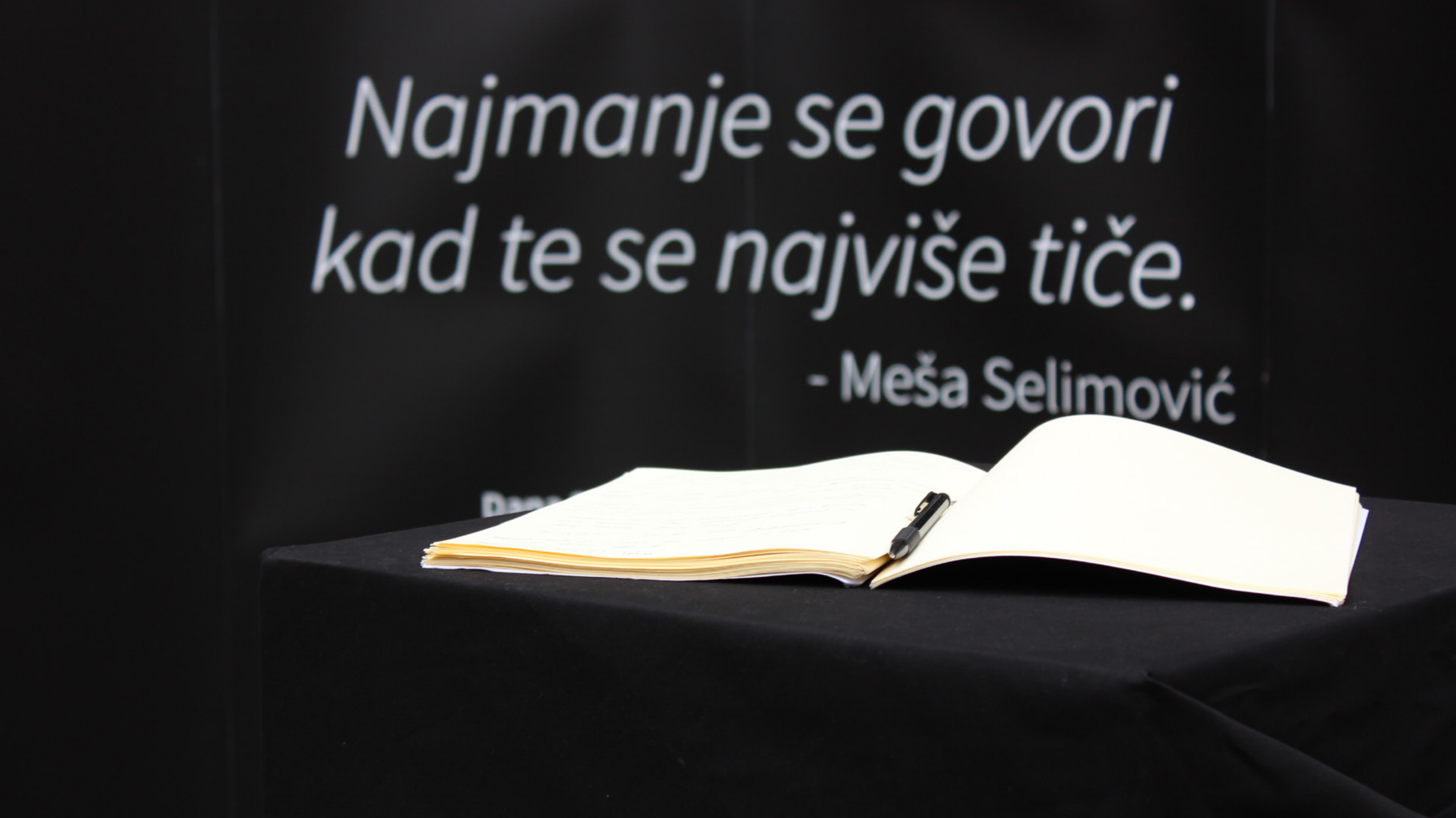
In 100 days, between April and July 1994, the ruling Hutu tribe killed more than 800,000 members of the minority Tutsi tribe and moderate Hutus from their ranks who opposed the regime. ■



Defender's Day in Stockholm

Representatives of the Initiative were part of one of the most important conferences on human rights in April.

The Civil Rights Defenders Defender's Day in Stockholm brought together more than 160 defenders of human rights from 35 countries. ■


Najmanje se govori
kad te se najviše tiče.
- Meša Selimović

Too young to remember, determined never to forget!

REGIONAL

The Initiative, together with MY INITIATIVE, organized a number of street activities in Serbia on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Tuzla Gate massacre, when 71 young people were murdered with a shell fired from the position of the Army of Republic of Srpska. During these street activities, the activists urged the citizens to sign the book of condolences and express solidarity with the victims of this crime and their families.

With the message “Too young to remember, determined never to forget” twenty young persons from Serbia walked into Tuzla on May 25th and laid flowers at the Tuzla Gate. After that, the Book of Condolences was handed over to the Mayor of Tuzla, Jasmin Imamović.

The reception at the Mayor Imamović’s was attended by the families of the victims - mostly parents of those killed at the Gate. They thanked the activists on this gesture, saying that activities such as these mean a lot to them. Šemsudin Alagić, father of the murdered Enes said, “As a parent I am very pleasantly surprised by the courage of these young people to decide to open a Book of Condolences. I thank them from my heart on behalf of all the parents whose children were killed at the Gate and on behalf of all the citizens of Tuzla. I do not remember when this was so hard for me like it is today when they came to Tuzla to honour the victims, who were their peers and to deliver this very important book to us.”

After thanking them for their arrival in Tuzla, Mayor Imamović added that such an activity required great civic courage, which is what is missing in the former Yugoslavia.

On behalf of the Initiative and the activists of MY INITIATIVE movement, Anita Mitić said: “Although we were children when the grenade was fired at the Gate, we promise that we will never allow the crimes committed in the name of the country we come from be forgotten.”

The Book of Condolence, which was presented to the Mayor Imamović, was signed by more than 500 citizens of Serbia on the streets of Novi Sad, Niš, Novi Pazar and Belgrade during 10 days.

The grenade fired at the Tuzla Gate from the position of the Army of the Republic of Srpska on Mount Ozren, killed 71 people and injured around 140 persons. The Tuzla Gate was the gathering place for young people - therefore the average age of those killed is 24 years, while the youngest child was less than 3 years old. Novak Đukić was sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment for this crime. He is currently located in Serbia, where he is avoiding the serving of this sentence. ■


Premladi da se sećam
odlučni da nikada
INICIJATIVA MLADIH ZA L



The support for the #sedamhiljada action

REGIONAL

On June 11th activists of MY INITIATIVE gathered in front of the National Assembly with the banner “See you here on July 11th!” Thus they supported the campaign marking the 20th anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica - #sedamhiljada (seven thousand).

One of the activists of the movement, said that she will be in front of the National Assembly on July 11th because it is important that we all remember the Srebrenica events from twenty years ago, when a genocide was committed in the name of the Serbian people.

On this occasion, activists of MY INITIATIVE urged all citizens to join the activity of reporter Dušan Mašić, and work together to send a message of solidarity from Belgrade, different from what is usually heard from the official Belgrade. ■

Sharing is caring

Working in the YIHR involves constantly learning new things - but also presents sharing and transfer of this knowledge. The focus of the YIHR are many issues that are not currently part of the education system in Serbia, although they should be. If you want to learn more about the protection of human rights or about the war during the 90s and the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, YIHR will always be willing to share its knowledge in these areas. It is important that in a system that does not give us the possibility to find out the facts about the important things we learn from each other. Sharing is caring!



Anita Mitić at Future Human Rights Defenders School

Anita Mitić, as a visiting lecturer, she held two lectures at the Future Human Defenders School organized by the Civil Rights Defenders. She spoke about dealing with the past, the role of youth in the democratization process, the importance of regional cooperation, the Initiative's actions and activities. The lectures were held in Belgrade and Niš. ■



Jasmina Lazović on institutional reform at the Faculty of Political Sciences

In late April, Jasmina Lazović held a lecture on the topic of institutional reform for the students of the master studies "European and International Policies and Crisis Management" at the Faculty of Political Sciences. She discussed various instruments used by a country during the transition from an authoritarian to a democratic regime, or during the process of dealing with the consequences of massive human rights violations in the aftermath of a war with the participants of this interdisciplinary program. About this mechanism of transitional justice which establishes conditions for the nonreccurence of human rights violations in the future, Lazović talked through the perspective of the experiences of former communist regimes, and through the experience of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia. The focus of the lecture was mostly on failed attempts of lustration//vetting in the Western Balkans. ■



Savoury regional Monday at Cultural Centre Grad

Regional team of the Initiative was preparing genuine Balkan cuisine on Monday, May 22 for all its friends. The menu contained Sarajevo cevapcici, smoked ham from Njeguš, tres leches cake that arrived to Belgrade directly from Pristina, Vojvodina cheeses and a lot of other “nom nom nom” food. Socializing and good food were the perfect way to mark the beginning of this summer! ■



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