



Balkan regional platform for  
youth participation and dialogue

# BALKAN YOUTH FORUM 2018



CREATIVITY AND INNOVATIONS TOWARDS  
ACTIVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE BALKANS



14-17 May  
Skopje

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS



Funded by the  
European Union



## **ABOUT THE FORUM**

The Balkan Youth Forum is organized for the fourth time within the project Balkan Regional Platform for Youth Participation and Dialogue.

The program includes presentations, debates, exchange of experiences and panels. The purpose of the Forum is to establish a regional network of civil society organizations and local authorities to strengthen youth participation, especially for young people with fewer opportunities. Over 70 representatives of CSOs, local authorities and youth workers participated in the three-day forum, all of them coming from different Western Balkan countries.

The forum included an open conference, creative workshops and study visits. The young participants learned about creative innovations in the field of youth participation through positive practices. The youngsters also visited the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia during the forum, where the two youngest Members of Parliament presented themselves in front of the participants and a tour of the building was organized.

The European Association for Local Democracy - ALDA is implementing the project Balkan Regional Platform for Youth Participation and Dialogue from 2015 in partnership with 7 local democracy agencies from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo and ALDA Skopje. The fourth and final year of the project is designed to continue the creating an enabling environment of youth active citizenship for achieving equality, well being and tolerance of diversity in Western Balkans.

The project is financed by the European Union through the programme for Civil Society Facility Operating Grants to IPA CSO Associations. This year, the project is supported also by the Western Balkans Fund. The Balkan Youth Forum was the first event that was organized with the direct support of this fund.

## **OPEN CONFERENCE**

The Balkan Youth Forum titled "Creative innovations towards active youth participation in the Balkans" officially started on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May in Skopje with an open conference.

### **Mr. Lutfi Haziri, Member of the Governing Board of ALDA**

European Association for Local Democracy - ALDA is the lead partner and coordinator of the project. Mr. Lutfi Haziri, Member of the Governing Board of ALDA and Mayor of Municipality of Gjilan, Kosovo, gave an opening speech at the conference. He presented the role and objectives of ALDA in the field of local democracy and youth participation in the region.

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MR. LUTFI HAZIRI, MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF ALDA

"YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AT LOCAL LEVEL COMBINED WITH THEIR CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION  
IS A RECIPE FOR A SUCCESSFUL SOCIETY"

15 MAY  
SKOPJE



### H.E. Christian Thimonier, Ambassador of France in Macedonia

The ambassador of France, H.E. Christian Thimonier addressed the issue of youngsters from the region leaving their home countries and asked for finding ways to reach out and motivate young people in this part of Europe.

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H.E. CHRISTIAN THIMONIER, AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE

"MOTIVATED AND ACTIVE YOUTH EQUALS BRIGHTER FUTURE"

15 MAY  
SKOPJE



### Mr. Sasa Bogdanovic, Mayor of Municipality of Centar

The Municipality of Centar is involved in the project since the first year. Together with the municipality, several activities have been implemented, including meetings with Local youth advisory groups, Balkan Youth Forum, Local Youth Fund etc.

The Mayor of Municipality of Centar, Mr. Sasa Bogdanovic was a guest speaker at the open conference during the Balkan Youth Forum. He talked about the importance of involving and supporting young people and shared the experience of the municipality as part of the project.

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MR. SASA BOGDANOVIC, MAYOR OF MUNICIPALITY OF CENTAR

"INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS"

15 MAY  
SKOPJE



**Ms. Eliska Gerthnerova**, representative of **EU delegation in Skopje** also gave an opening speech during the conference.

The European Union finances the project for four years through the IPA programme for civil society facility and media.

This year, the project is also supported by the Western Balkans Fund. The forum is the first event that's being realized with the direct support of the fund. **Ms. Antoaneta Ivanova** presented the **Western Balkans Fund** during the opening ceremony, talking about its main mission to support initiatives that promote cooperation and to encourage initiatives that foster the youth integration process.



## THEMATIC PANEL I

*"Education for Youth active citizenship, good governance and social inclusion - a generational choice for the Balkans towards the EU"*

The panelists in the first thematic panel were: Mr. **Fatos Mustafa**, Deputy Secretary General of **Regional Youth Cooperation Office - RYCO**, and Mr. **Angel Mojsovski**, representative of **European Policy Institute** in Skopje.

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**FATOS MUSTAFA, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF RYCO**

'COMBINING ALL OF US AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR ACHIEVING INTEGRATIVE SOCIETIES'

15 MAY  
SKOPJE



## THEMATIC PANEL II

*"Civil society and local authorities: mobilizing CSOs and youth for active citizenship and participation in policy making - good practices from Western Balkans"*

The panelists in the second thematic panel were:

- Mr. **Zoran Ilieski** from **Coalition of Youth Organizations - SEGA**;

- Ms. **Dragana Brajovic**, representative of **Ministry of Public Administration and Local Government** in Serbia;

- Mr. **Emir Coric**, representative of **Municipality of Centar** in Skopje;

- Mr. **Dino Sinanovic**, representative of **LDA Zavidovici** in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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**ZORAN ILIESKI, COALITION OF YOUTH ORGANISATIONS SEGA**

'FINDING NEW INNOVATIVE MECHANISMS TO SUPPORT YOUTH AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION'

15 MAY  
SKOPJE



"OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP- FROM VISION TO REALITY"

15 MAY  
 SKOPJE



### THEMATIC PANEL III

*"Enhancing the culture of participation through innovative youth cultural participation"*

The panelists in the third thematic panel were: Mr. **Pavle Pavlovic**, researcher from Podgorica, Montenegro; Mr. **Gorjan Atanasov**, representative of **Makedox Festival**, Skopje; Mr. **Engelbert Zefaj**, Director of **Culture, Youth and Sport**, Peja, Kosovo; Ms. **Tatjana Pajovic**, representative of **POD Theatre**, Belgrade, Serbia; and Mr. **Vladimir Coric**, representative of **OKC Abrasevic**, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina.



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of the [European Association for Local Democracy - ALDA](#) is to promote good governance and citizen participation at the local level in Europe and its Neighborhood. Mr. Lutfi Haziri, Member of the Governing Board of ALDA and Mayor of Municipality of Gjilan further elaborated on the goals of ALDA in the field of youth participation.

“Youth engagement at local level combined with their creativity and innovation is a recipe for a successful society”, Mr. Haziri said during his opening speech.

Several speakers talked about the increasing number of young people leaving their home country in the Balkans, including Macedonia. Thus, it’s more important than ever to find ways to reach out and motivate young people, as [H.E. Christian Thimonier](#), Ambassador of France in Macedonia, said during his opening remarks.

It’s crucial to involve young people in the decision-making process, [Mr. Sasa Bogdanovic](#), Mayor of Municipality of Centar stated. How to involve young people in the decision-making process? Mr. [Emir Coric](#), representative of Municipality of Centar talked about the principle of direct involvement. He presented several positive practices:

- Local reading rooms where youth activities could be organized;
- Making manuals to inform the young people how to get the services they need from the municipality;
- Public debates;
- Creating a Social Card together with youth NGOs;
- Establishment of a Youth Office.

Often, young people don’t have enough skills, knowledge and experience to represent themselves, Mr. [Zoran Ilieski](#) from Coalition of Youth organizations - SEGA said. The local authorities should support and encourage youth councils and the young people. The goal needs to be finding out new mechanisms to support the youth and youth participation.

Several positive practices for using culture to foster youth participation were shared during the conference. Mr. [Gorjan Atanasov](#), representative of Makedox Festival; Mr. [Engelbert Zefaj](#), Director of Culture, Youth and Sport from Peja; Ms. [Tatjana Pajovic](#) from POD Theatre; and Mr. [Vladimir Coric](#) from OKC Abrasevic presented positive practices for promoting youth participation. More specifically, they talked about initiatives that involves creating creative documentary films, organization of a film festival, using theatre and organizing events as a way of using culture to foster youth participation.

Youth Councils are a positive legal tool that was presented by Mr. [Dino Sinanovic](#), representative of LDA Zavidovici in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Youth Councils are incorporated by law for representing young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and they are present on local, country and federal level. Their objective is to be part of the development of youth strategies and programs, thus having impact on policies and strategies that target the youth.

Close cooperation between the local authorities and civil society was recognized also by Ms. **Dragana Brajovic**, representative of Ministry of Public Administration and Local Government of Serbia. She presented the Open Government Partnership (OGP), which was launched in 2011 by 8 governments. Today, 75 governments participate in Open Government Partnership. The main principle of OGP is close cooperation with civil society and its core values are:

- Access to information;
- Civil participation;
- Public accountability;
- Technology and information.

The Western Balkans Fund is another positive example of an initiative that encourages cooperation. Ms. **Antoaneta Ivanova** presented the Western Balkans Fund during the conference, talking about the main mission of the fund: to support initiatives that have people-to-people contact and encouraging cooperation.

Finally, Mr. **Pavle Pavlovic**, researcher from Montenegro, presented the findings from the latest research conducted through the project Balkan Regional Platform for Youth Participation and Dialogue. The research dealt with cultural participation among youngsters in five Western Balkan countries: Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia.

Key findings:

- 4.5% of European GDP goes to culture;
- The European youth strategy is based on creativity and innovation;
- One of the biggest problems is unemployment;
- One of the main recommendations is regional integration on cultural ground.



## WORKSHOPS AND CULTURAL VISITS

During the second day of the Balkan Youth Forum, the participants were involved in creative workshops and cultural visits.

Prof. D-r Zoja Buzalkovska, professor at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Skopje delivered a creative workshop at Kino Kultura. The youth workers and the other participants learned about innovative ways of using theatre to foster youth participation.

Through different exercises and activities, Ms. Buzalkovska showed the participants methods of working with youngsters to encourage them to be more active in their society.

The same day, cultural visit was arranged in the vicinity of Skopje. The participants visited Makedonsko Selo, complex of traditional Macedonian houses and structures. The participants learned about different cultural traditions of working and living in different regions of the country in the past.



## VISIT TO THE ASSEMBLY OF MACEDONIA

The Balkan Youth Forum finished with a study visit to the National Parliament of Macedonia situated in the center of Skopje. Only the youth workers took part in the visit.

The participants were provided a tour of the building, visiting some of the oldest rooms dating from the first construction, but also some new parts of the buildings that are a result of recent renovations.

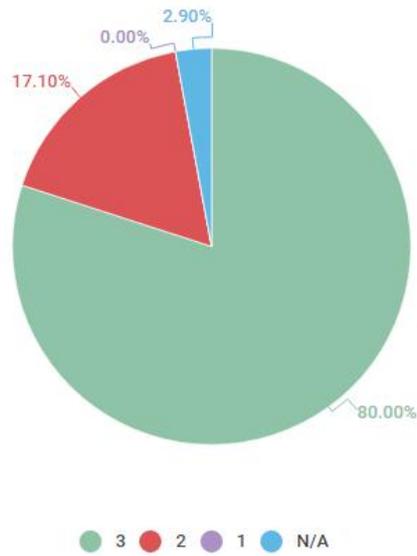
During the visit, the youth workers had the chance to talk to two Members of Parliament. Ms. Nevenka Stamenkovska and Ms. Ivana Tufegdžik, who are among the youngest Member of Parliament, presented the working groups they're part of, which are related to youth. In addition, they presented some of the facts in regards of youth participation and the general problems youth is facing in Macedonia.

The youth workers compared the situation with their countries and draw conclusions together with the Members of Parliament. Finally, through a discussion about some positive practices, they learned about new ways to encourage youngsters to be part of the decision-making processes.

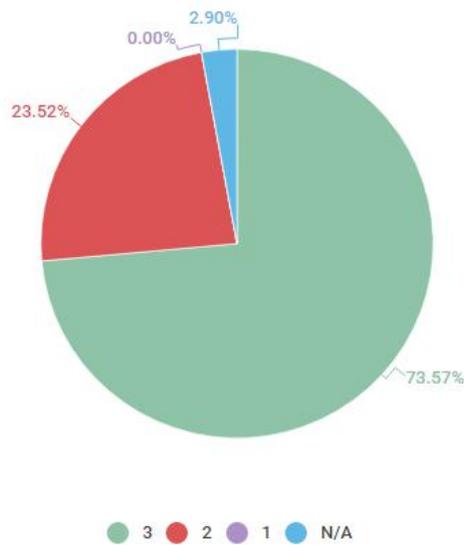


## WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT IT

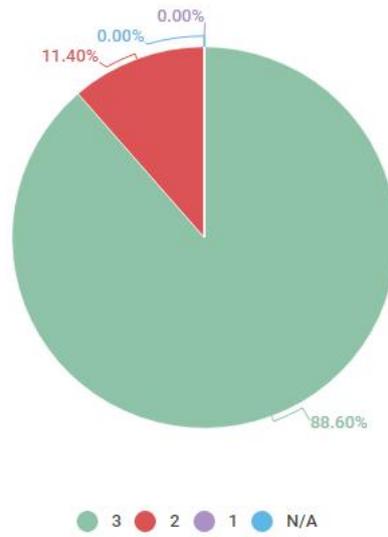
- The content of the Forum was relevant to my work and will be beneficial to my future activities (rating from 1 to 3)



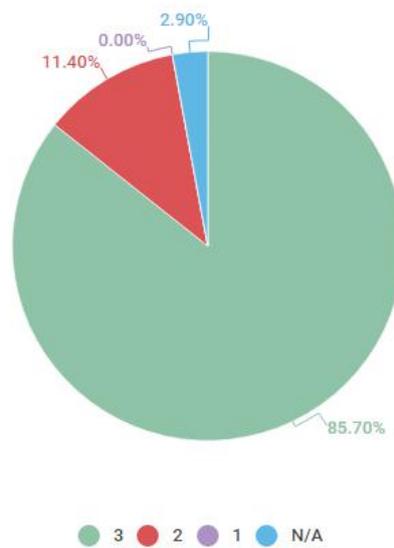
- I established contact with the panelists/participants and will use the contacts for future activities (rating from 1 to 3)



- The activities were well balanced and relevant to the subject (rating from 1 to 3)



- The activities stimulated reflection and new ideas (rating from 1 to 3)





**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
PARTICIPATION!**

