

## Study Visit to Serbia

with the focus on innovative practises of youth work and non-formal education in facilitating young people's life-long learning

8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2013



### Background

Modernisation of educational systems and practises is one of the most prominent elements in the contemporary framework of the European Union for confronting the emerging economic and societal challenges. Alongside the structural reforms, a new conceptual understanding of what learning is and aims for, has been adopted in the Union's education and training policies to better correspond to what is required to develop and sustain a European knowledge society. The concept of life-long learning means that the learning process extends from taking place in youth and early adulthood, and in a formal educational environment, to on-going accumulation of competences in a variety of spheres and settings.

Connected to this, in the past decade the emphasis in the European youth field has shifted towards highlighting the educational value of youth activities, and recognising youth work as a pedagogical approach to facilitate young people's non-formal learning. The Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013) and its predecessors, as crucial instruments in putting the youth policies of the European Union into practise, have contributed significantly to better identification of young peoples' learning outcomes, gained competences, their value and validation. The current shift of the programme generations marks a further symbolic interconnection between youth work and education by unifying the individual programmes in the fields of formal education and youth within one single programme, Erasmus + (2014-2020).

Youth work as non-formal education has both, advantages and challenges in contributing to the development of knowledge- and learning based society. Youth field being cross-sectorial, characterised by a diversity of practises and lacking rigid institutional formality enables it to deliver innovative educational practises, which can be promptly adjusted to the learners' altering needs and contexts. On the other hand, the field lacking standardisation can compromise quality assurance, professionalization and finally recognition. Question has also been raised if youth work should at all be considered as a part of a mainstream pedagogical practise, or does it endanger its critical potential as a part of the corrective mechanisms of the civil society.

Furthermore, the South East European region with a prospect for accession to the European Union foresees increasing streamlining with the policies and practises adopted in the Union, yet balancing with the needs and possibilities bound to political, economic and cultural specificities. Historically, non-formal education in South East Europe has remained fairly unrecognised and often misunderstood. However, in the recent years along with the strengthening of the independent civil sector and growing international mobility, many new practises have been initiated, also in the field of youth.

Connected to the overall capacity building of the civil society, youth work in Serbia has seen dynamic development since mid-90s, and reached a point where issues such as quality assurance, professionalization and recognition of learning have become a priority in the agendas of both, relevant state institutions and youth NGOs. In 2013 Serbia is preparing to make its initial steps towards establishing a national mechanism for recognition of competencies gained by young people within the youth work activities, mainly funded by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The initial commitments by the relevant stakeholders, namely Ministry of Youth and Sports, National Association of Youth Work Practitioners and representatives of youth NGOs have been made during the regional Symposium on Youth Policy Cooperation in South East-Europe: focus on recognition of youth work & non-formal learning, held in Tirana, Albania, 1st – 3rd of October 2012\*.

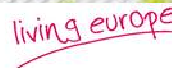
### **Aim and objectives**

The aim of the study visit is to explore innovative practises of youth work and non-formal education in Serbia in the context of the European paradigm of life-long learning. Additionally, the activity provides the participants a space to establish partnerships for future cooperation.

The specific objectives are:

- To showcase a selection of innovative practises in the field of youth in Serbia, with the focus on strategies and methods of facilitating young people's learning
- To explore the current policies and initiatives for better recognition of youth work and non-formal learning at national level
- To discuss about the about the challenges and possibilities of non-formal education as a tool to promote young people's personal development and diverse pathways of learning in a contemporary European society
- To learn about the possibilities in the context of youth within the Erasmus + Programme
- To establish contacts and partnerships for further cooperation

\*The symposium was organised by The European Commission and Council of Europe through their partnership in the field of youth (EU-CoE youth partnership) in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sport of Albania, SALTO South East Europe, Training and Cooperation and Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centres, and Interkulturelles Zentrum - Austrian National Agency for the YiA Programme.



**Programme of activities** will consist of field visits, group reflections and inputs related to the topic.

**Target group for the activity:** persons / organisations who / which are:

- Active in the fields of youth and non-formal education
- Having prior experience in developing, implementing and evaluating non-formal educational activities with / for young people
- Interested in raising their awareness and understanding on youth work as a pedagogical approach for promoting young people's non-formal learning in different contexts
- Interested in the political processes for better recognition of youth work and non-formal learning in Serbia
- Interested in cooperation with South East Europe, possibly within the Erasmus + Programme
- Able to communicate in English
- Above 18 years old

### **Team of organisers**

The activity is organised by SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre [www.salto-youth.net/rc/see/](http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/see/) in cooperation with a local contact point organisation in Serbia "Hajdeda..." [www.hajdeda.org.rs/](http://www.hajdeda.org.rs/) , Institute Movit (the Slovenian National Agency for the Youth in Action Programme) [www.mva.si/](http://www.mva.si/) and Jugend für Europa (the German National Agency for the Youth in Action Programme) [www.jugendfuereuropa.de](http://www.jugendfuereuropa.de) .

The study visit is facilitated by a Serbian trainer and consultant Darko Marković <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toy/darko-markovic.110/>

### **Venue**

The activity will take in Belgrade, Serbia. More information of the exact venue will be provided at a later stage.

### **Application procedure:**

The application is available at <http://trainings.salto-youth.net/3919> . It is open until 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2013. **NOTE the deadline has been extended for South East Europe until 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2013!**

### **Financial conditions**

The organisers will cover the board and lodging of all selected participants.

### **Travel costs and reimbursement**

The selected participants from Youth in Action Programme countries must agree with their respective National Agencies about the travel costs. The travel costs of participants from South East Europe will be reimbursed by the SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre. The local transfers in Serbia are covered by the organisers.