

Call for Partnership Building Activity

within

Mountain spirit – Strategic EVS for Nature Conservation project

Dates: 22.02-1.03.2019

Place: Peja/Peć, Kosovo



The Cursed Mountain, Kosovo



[Velebit Association Kuterevo](#) and [GAIA Kosovo](#) are organizing a networking activity for organizations, volunteers, youth workers and activists who are or would like to be involved in nature conservation and youth volunteering activities. The PBA meeting is part of the [Mountain spirit – Strategic EVS for Nature Conservation](#) Erasmus+ project and aims at providing space for the participants to establish contacts, exchange and work on ideas and future cooperations.

Main topics include:

- [European Solidarity Corps](#) – new approaches and possibilities for cooperation
- Nature protection and volunteering – examples, challenges, needs and opportunities
- Mountain spirit project – what has been done, what comes next?

The specific objectives of the PBA are:

- To create space for developing new and strengthening existing strategic partnerships for nature protection projects through youth and voluntary work
- To give opportunity to the participants to share good and bad practices in their work on the topics
- To provide opportunity for partners within Mountain spirit project to meet and plan next activities



mountain
spirit



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- To give an overview and details on the possibilities of the European Solidarity Corps and Erasmus+ programmes
- To serve as a place for setting up future projects and initiatives between the participants.

Within the PBA we will be discussing and working on the following subjects:

- The new philosophy and opportunities which the European Solidarity Corps provide especially with the focus on nature protection (volunteer project, volunteer teams, solidarity projects) and cooperation with the Western Balkan partner countries
- Solidarity and nature protection
- Quality of Volunteer management
- Challenges in establishing cooperation at local and national level;
- Mountain spirit – Strategic EVS for Nature Conservation – presentation of 2018 activities and achievements, challenges, recommendation, next steps
- opportunities and role of youth organization for working in nature conservation
- Volunteering activities for nature conservation – realities (Balkan region, Central and Western European countries), needs, challenges, possibilities
- Developing new or improving existing volunteering programs – i.e. NP Sharr, NP Bjeshkët e Nemuna
- Service Civil International and nature protection
- Erasmus+ and other programs

We are looking for 25 participants (age: 18+) from both Erasmus+ program and partner countries from the Western Balkans (**eligible ONLY for: EU countries, Macedonia, Turkey, Liechtenstein, Norway, Iceland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia**). The participants should be representatives of youth or nature conservation organizations, volunteers or activists, who have interest, motivation and energy to work on the topic, who want to establish new partnerships and develop volunteering activities for nature conservation.

Profile of suitable organizations:

- Youth organizations with some or no experience with Erasmus+ volunteering programs willing to get familiar and active within ESC framework
- Nature conservation organizations who would like to explore the opportunities to include international volunteers in their work
- Nature protection organizations interested to exchange experience and share knowledge
- Youth and nature protection organizations from the Western Balkan countries
- Mountain spirit project partner organizations
- Members and partners of Service Civil International

Suitable participants could be:

- Project coordinators
- Decision makers in the organizations
- Activists and volunteers with some experience in the field of nature protection, voluntary and youth work
- Active members of the organizations with long-term project ideas

If you are interested to apply, fill in the [following form](#) until January 14th.



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Important practical information

The PBA will happen in the city of **Peja/Peć, Kosovo**.

Accommodation and food is covered. The participants will be sharing rooms (2-4 people in one room).

Food will be vegetarian or vegan, seasonal and domestic as much as possible.

Travel costs will be covered up to 80 % and within the Erasmus+ limits of distance band (100-499 km = 180 euro, 500-1999 km = 275 euro, 2000-2999 km = 360 euro). Be aware that we encourage environmental friendly means of transport (bus, train, etc.) therefore **travelling by plane will be reimbursed only up to 60 %** (unless really necessary).

Participants are expected to buy their own tickets and will be reimbursed once they sent the original tickets. *The travel reimbursement could take up to few months.*

About Mountain spirit – Strategic EVS for Nature Conservation

Mountain spirit is a project involving several EVS short and long-term volunteer exchanges in Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia and Bulgaria. It aims at combining efforts of international volunteers and local people from mountainous/rural areas for nature conservation activities in protected areas or species.

Short-term volunteer exchanges in 2018:

- Croatia – Kuterevo Bear Refuge, Velebit Mountain (12 volunteers for 59 days) – July-September
- Kosovo – National Park Sharr Mountain (12 volunteers for 30 days) – July-August
- Kosovo – Prishtina Bear Sanctuary (14 volunteers for 15 days) – August – September
- Serbia – National Park Frushka Gora (12 volunteers for 15 days) - July
- Bulgaria – Nature School Vlahi, Pirin mountain (10 volunteers for 20 days) – June

Long-term volunteer exchanges in 2018 and 2019

- Croatia – Kuterevo Bear Refuge (3 volunteers for 8 months)
- Kosovo - National Park Sharr Mountain (2 volunteers for 6 months)
- Bulgaria – Nature School Vlahi, Pirin mountain (2 volunteers for 8 months in 2019)

The project involves activities in mountains spread from West to East in the Balkans. **Velebit Association Kuterevo, Croatia; GAIA Kosovo; Vlahi Nature School and Cooperation for Voluntary Service Bulgaria** have been working together for some years now, aiming at making strong connections between people through learning from and acting for nature in the Balkans.

The Spirit of Kuterevo Refuge for Bears and People served as inspiration for the current project which involves new partners such as **Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia** and **Four Paws, Kosovo**. For 40 years now Kuterevo has been a place where young people can learn and volunteer by being close to nature, bears, local people and their traditions. Thus experiencing and creating the **Kuterevo Spirit**. We believe each place has its uniqueness and its messages to be listened to and respected, therefore exploring and developing its own spirit.