The project « Youth involvement in a constructive dialogue: Communist Past in Contemporary Western Balkan » was funded with the support of the European Union under the Programme "Europe for Citizens"

Applicable to the Strand 2 – Measure 2.2 *"Networks of Towns"*

Measure 2.3 "C*ivil Society Projects*"

Strand 1 – "*European Rememberance*"

https://qskn.al/european-remembrance/

https://www.facebook.com/CenterCCIS

Preparatory activities the activities involved participants.
Location / Dates: Tirana Feb 3, 2021
Short description: these activities consisted:

1. **KICK OFF MEETING and approval of the communication strategy of the project - Youth involvement in a constructive dialogue: Communist Past in Contemporary Western Balkan (YOU-WB)**
   Feb 03, 2021
   Total participants: 17
   Participants 6 from Albania, 6 from North Macedonia, 3 from Italy and 2 from France

   The project "Youth involvement in a constructive dialogue: Communist Past in Contemporary Western Balkan" (YOU-WB) kicked off on 03rd February 2021. The kickoff meeting was organized online on Zoom Platform by Center for Comparative and International Studies (CCIS) as project leader with the participation of all project partners: Mediterranean Center; SCiDEV; Patrimoine sans Frontières: PERIPLI and CCM. Each project partner was represented by two staff, each introducing their organisation, their profile and role in the project.
   Ms. Juljana Sokoli, Executive Director of CCIS, welcomed all the participants and highlighted the relevance of YOU-WB project by pointing out there can be no reconciliation and peace without historical memory. She emphasized that the project will deepen the work in education and raising awareness of the younger generation, opening a debate through an analysis of the causes and consequences of dictatorial regimes, honoring victims and above all, transparency in crimes committed against humanity by communist and other dictatorial regimes.
   Prof. Nevila Xhindi, Project Advisor, facilitated the discussion by presenting the project aim, objectives, activities, financial arrangements and by particularly focusing on the project approach towards COVID-19. Partners also presented their views on how to arrange project activities so as to mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19, especially in terms of travel. In addition, the thematic content of each workshop was also discussed, and partners had opportunities to suggest their own perspectives on how it would be best to organise workshops in Italy, France and North Macedonia.
   Finally, the communication and visibility plan was presented by Dr. Blerjana Bino, Co-Founder of SCiDEV, project partner in charge of communication of project activities and results. She drew the attention of participants regarding the importance of communication and visibility not simply as an obligation to Europe for Citizen Programme, but also as a mean to reach target groups, raise awareness, expand the network of collaborators and engage stakeholders. The project will use several templates for communication and visibility developed with the communication and visibility plan. The project logo was also presented during the meeting and the guidelines for use of EU emblem and other graphics of Europe for Citizen progamme.
   All project partners confirmed their enthusiasm and commitment to this project. Social media posts communicated the kickoff meeting to wider audiences.
   Download Agenda (Click here)

2. Preparatory activity 2:
   Total participants in the selection process 11
   Selection of participants for the YOU-WB project
   Feb 18- March 5, 2021
   Participants: 5 from Albania, 2 from North Macedonia, 2 from Italy and 2 from France
   Center for Comparative and International Studies, in cooperation with Center Science and Innovation for Development and Mesdheu Center from Albania, the organization Center for Change Management- North Macedonia; PERIPLI- Italy; PSF- France, in the framework of Europe for Citizen Project "Youth involvement in a constructive dialogue: Communist Past in Contemporary Western Balkan" (YOU-WB), opened on Feb 18, 2022 a call for application for participants to be part of the project YOU-WB.
   Interested young people in from four countries had to fill in this application form in English and submit it till Feb 28, 2021.Project partners contact points shared the call for applications and supported young people to apply.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1e8UHtzB8FQawvhcoY1c2gGoByRhCLt7lh2ysXV2Hif0/edit?usp=sharing
The partners consortium shortlisted 85 participants from four countries Albania, Italy, France and North Macedonia
Only the shortlisted candidates were contacted.
CALL FOR APLICATION

Events: 5 events have been carried out within this project:

Workshop events were announced as public events on Facebook and EU Logo and disclaimer were included

https://www.facebook.com/events/455765806233571/
https://www.facebook.com/events/797064277565747/

Event 1

1st Workshop in Tirana – Youth perspectives on remembrance (online)

Participation: The online event involved 57 citizens, including 42 participants from Albania, 7 participants from North Macedonia, 5 participants from Italy and 3 participants from France

Location / Dates: The event took place in Tirana, hybrid (Tirana, Albania), from 09/04/2021 to 11/04/2021

Short description: The aim of the event was youth perspectives on remembrance in Albanian context

Center for Comparative and International Studies in cooperation with Center Science and Innovation for Development and Mesdheu Center are organizing the first workshop in Tirana in the framework of the Europe for Citizen Project "Youth involvement in a constructive dialogue: Communist Past in Contemporary Western Balkan" (YOU-WB).

In a blended format from 9 – 11 April 2021, this workshop brought together academics, researchers, experts, civil society activists and young people to discuss on the involvement of youth in a constructive dialogue regarding the communist past focusing on the case of Albania.

In addition to the two days of workshop, presentation by 8 speakers and participation of young people, the third visit included visits to House of Leaves in Tirana and tour of the capital.

https://qskn.al/workshop-1/
Full video of the 1st day of the workshop in Tirana – Youth perspectives on remembrance
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kv4zr9t-nIk
https://scidevcenter.org/3rd-day-of-tirana-workshop-on-youth-involvement-in-a-constructive-dialogue-on-communism-in-albania-field-tour-in-tirana/
https://scidevcenter.org/2nd-day-of-the-tirana-workshop-on-youth-involvement-in-a-constructive-dialogue-political-culture/
https://scidevcenter.org/1st-day-of-the-tirana-workshop-on-youth-involvement-in-a-constructive-dialogue-need-for-decommunization-to-fully-take-place/

2 Video produced

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5eTpyMLjEA

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONQOYAWycQ8

Event 2

2nd workshop in Skopje

Participation: The online event involved 40 citizens, including 5 participants from Albania, 25 participants from North Macedonia, 7 participants from Italy and 3 participants from France

Location / Dates: The event took place in Skopje, online (**North Macedonia**), from 18/06/2021to 20/06/2021

Short description: The aim of the event was "The effect of rapid social changes during post-communist transition and people's perceptions in Macedonia"

Center for Change Management (CCM) organized the second workshop in Skopje in the framework of Europe for Citizen Project "Youth involvement in a constructive dialogue: Communist Past in Contemporary Western Balkan" (YOU-WB).

In a blended format from 18-20 June 2021, the workshop brought together academics, researchers, experts, civil society activists, and young people to discuss the involvement of youth in a constructive dialogue regarding the past focusing on peace, transition, and self-determination in the case of North Macedonia. About 40 young people attended the two days' workshop and together with the panelists, discussed topics related to the period of communism and the transition of the Balkan countries, but with an emphasis on the case North Macedonia

The agenda was well-thought-out, with the participation of important figures, academics, researchers, professors and students from Macedonian universities with experience and contributions in the field of communication studies, economy, history, minorities, politics of the communist period in Macedonia and its impact on the younger generations and on Macedonian democracy.

The theme of the workshop was "The effect of rapid social changes during post-communist transition and people's perceptions in Macedonia". It reflected the effect of rapid social changes during post-communist transition and people's perceptions in Macedonia. A national and a transnational civil dialogue referring to the past and the fight for democracy under totalitarian. Ethnonationalist Conflict in Post-communist States Varieties; Internal conflict dynamics are critical, especially interactions between ethnic majorities and minorities in the final days of communist rule. The threats to democratic achievements, civic rights, counterbalances.

In addition to the two days of the workshop, presentation by speakers, and participation of young people, the third day included visiting the Museum of Contemporary Art-Skopje – Its History and its Future.

https://qskn.al/workshop-2/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-kX8MqtzPQ

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVuh-0hO684

Event 3

3rd workshop in Rome

Participation: The online event involved 59 citizens, including 11 participants from Albania, 2 participants from North Macedonia, 42 participants from Italy and 4 participants from France

Location / Dates: The event took place in Italy, hybrid, from 01/10/2021 to 03/10/2021

Short description: The aim of the event was Italian political culture from 1989 onwards

In particular, the association focused on the research of some characters who could first tell their experience and their point of view and then analyze the phenomenon from the technical-academic point of view.

The themes touched on include the political and institutional aspects that embodied the Italian political class at the end of the twentieth century up to the transformation of party and political communication of today. Young people had the opportunity to relive, thanks to the stories of the experiences lived by professionals, the capillary approach of Italian Christian Democrat politics. In fact, it has been seen how some political parties of the twentieth century have managed to create political structures that cover both small cities and institutional contexts of national importance. It was very interesting to note that in the past the political class managed to educate young and not so young on issues related to party politics. On the contrary, it has now been seen that the current political class needs to be refounded on some principles that reflected the parties of the First Republic.

The workshop ended with the intervention of the President of Peripli, who asked a question to all the young people and professionals present on the Zoom platform. In order to make the final discussion interactive, the question asked by Professor Donzelli urged those present to propose innovative solutions aimed at changing the economic, social and political context of the Euro-Mediterranean area.

"What action can we take to initiate a process of change?"

After a wide discussion, the meeting ended with the song "Bella ciao", song in nine languages and became a symbol of resistance around the world

The third day was dedicated to a virtual visit to the Museum of the Resistance in Rome.

https://qskn.al/workshop-3/
https://qskn.al/2third-you-wb-workshop-in-rome-italian-political-culture-since-1989007-2/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lptVbKdmoqs&t=120s

Event 4

4th workshop in Paris
Participation: The event involved 32 citizens, including 8 participants from Albania, 4 participants from North Macedonia, 7 participants from Italy and 13 participants from France
Location / Dates: The event took place in Paris, in person participation (**Paris, France**), from 01/04/2022 to 03/04/2022

Short description: The aim of the event was the notions of ‘national identities’ and ‘collective memory’ in an enlarged Europe

In the Paris workshop, we intended to better understand, and question, the notions of ‘national identities’ and ‘collective memory’ in an enlarged Europe, through the lens of dissonant heritage. We started this conference with Pr. Xavier Greffe presenting the community requirements of the European Union and the lack of cultural considerations into them – which creates a double debate among the Member States and within the countries themselves. At the end of his intervention, Pr. Greffe stated that bottom-up approaches to European cultural heritage should be preferred to top-down visions. After which, Pr. Christine Cadot, elaborated on the notion of ‘European narratives’, and the almost wasted effort to elaborate ‘common

narratives', when these discourses mostly serve national agendas.

Following these conversations on 'collective memories' and 'identities', Ms. Sophie Blanc and Ms. Laeticia Chabannes broaden the conversation by presenting concrete projects in which the identity of individuals is taken into account – identities coming from inside and outside the European continent. The PeP (Patrimoine en Partage) project shows that cultural heritage is essential in building the individual identities of newcomers in France, while the podcast Europe and Sentiments demonstrates how controversial it is, for individuals, to define their own identity in a rapidly changing context, like the one of the European continent.
In the afternoon, the debate focused more on the theme of dissonant heritage in the Balkans and, and how built heritage, architectures and urban landscape is often exploited when defining national identities. In his presentation, M. Patrick Leech showed that dissonant heritage – like the architecture of totalitarian regimes –, can help bringing countries together and building a shared understanding of some European narratives. Following this, Dr. Fabien Bellat, using the example of Skopje, showed that the urban landscape and its cultural heritage can become the place where identity struggles take place, and how it is used in the construction – or (re)construction – of national agendas. The debate at the end of the conversation pointed out how dissonant heritage can be a very sensitive subject that needs to be understood in context.
Following this, Dr. Oana Tiganea and Iona Iosa, through the example of Romania, explained why new generations can be sometimes mislead in the perception of communism due to a lack of interpretation of the legacy left by the Romanian totalitarian regimes, while the association Pauza, with its movie A MOUNTAIN ODDITY, nicely showed that the architectures of these regimes can be re-employed in an artistic manner, thus opening the door to creating another kind of narratives.
Considering all the elements and examples mentioned above, at the end of the workshop the roundtable discussion intended to answer the following question:

- Can dissonant heritage be used to bring together European countries, and promoting 'European values' in the elaboration of European narratives?

https://qskn.al/workshop-4/
https://qskn.al/about-our-4-th-workshop-in-paris-for-the-project-you-wb/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypOfwTuJo_4
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCjYLApAmXw
https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=669228037683848
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogZEzyLpLN4

Event 5:

Project end conference in Tirana

Participation: The event involved 92 citizens, including 80 participants from Albania,
6 participants from North Macedonia, 3 participants from Italy and 3 participants from France

Location / Dates: The event took place in Tirana, in person (**Tirana, Albania**), from 11/05/2022 to 12/05/2022

Short description: The aim of the event was Post-Communism and Democracy in Western Balkans
The conference brought together 92 participants from Albania, France, Italy and North Macedonia.

Excellent speakers, researchers from academia, think tanks and students come together in Tirana, at the premises of the Mediterranean University of Albanian, to share discus and sharetheir prospective regarding passive remembrance to active participation to preserve democratic achievements.

The transition from communism to post-communism in countries like Albania and North Macedonia has been determined and strongly influenced not only by the collapse of ideologies and by the changes in the

international political scene after 1989, but also by the profound changes that effected the customs, lifestyles, and collective mentality in EU. The impunity of the crimes of the communist regime continues to be a serious wound for these societies even 30 years after the fall of the dictatorship and yet it has not established a substantial division from the communist past. In that regard, there can be no reconciliation and peace without historical memory. The project participants suggested deepening the work in education and raising awareness of the younger generation, opening a debate through an analysis of the causes and consequences of dictatorial regimes, honoring victims and above all, transparency in crimes committed against humanity by communist and other dictatorial regimes.

Full conference program

The YOU-WB project partnership is interested in gaining a thorough overview, raise awareness and build the narrative of the role of youth generation, civil society, decision makers, historians, academics, politicians in remembering the past to build the future for the development of society within its historical context. The project has contribute to the creation of a shared transnational understanding and public debate on the relevance of remembrance in the countries' transitional democracy and political processes like Albania and North Macedonia.

The project fostered a national and a transnational civil dialogue referring to the past and the fight for democracy under totalitarian regimes and about the present threats to democratic achievements, civic rights, counterbalances.

The second day was organized by SCIDEV visits to remembrance places in Tirana

The best papers selected targeting themes of EU relevance, transnational and intercultural aspects, and project outcomes published in an e-book

This collection of papers is the result of the four workshops organized in the framework of the project 'Youth involvement in a constructive dialogue: Communist Past in Contemporary Western Balkan' (YOU-WB), funded by the Europe for Citizen Program of the European Union in 2021 and 2022. Four workshops were organized:

- 1st Workshop - Tirana, 09-11 April 2021
- 2nd Workshop - Skopje, 18- 20 June 2021
- 3rd Workshop - Rome, 01-03 October 2021
- 4th Workshop - Paris, 01-03 April 2022

We are grateful to all partners and collaborators, speakers, lecturers, researchers, young researchers, activists, and students, and all interested actors that participated in the four workshops and all project activity including the final event in Tirana in May 2022.
We are grateful to authors for contributing to this collection of papers and sharing with young women and men perspectives on the communist past and most importantly on the constructive dialogue for the future.

The project publication (click here)

https://qskn.al/european-remembrance/project-end-conference-in-tirana/

6 videos produced during the lifetime of the project

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5eTpyMLjEA

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONQOYAWycQ8

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-kX8MqtzPQ

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVuh-0hO684

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lptVbKdmoqs&t=120s

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogZEzyLpLN4