

# Balkan Caucasus

- Learning tool for NGO activists -
- Review and results of the program -



Институт за развој на заедницата  
Community Development Institute

Институт за развој на заедницата  
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## **I. Introduction**

Is the Caucasus really in Europe? Who are these people always asking about the Balkans? Do they have their own problems? What is really happening in their region?

These are only some of the questions raised within the Democratic Leadership Program (hereafter “DLP”), back in 2002 and 2003. It was very difficult to have people around you who were very much interested in mutual cooperation but for whom, at the time, there was hardly any background information.

The Balkan Caucasus Program was initiated in order to open these regions for the participants within the DLP, to provide an opportunity to get together, to exchange, to identify points of common interest and concerns, and above all, to enable people learn more from each other, especially in the field of conflict resolution and peace building.

Through the implementation of the planned activities, we realized that the image we used to have about the Caucasus was much different. That may have been due to the fact that we always look upon the western European countries, and the prejudices towards the eastern countries are that of an under-developed region and a region in conflicts. But being there, during the study visit in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, and talking to our colleagues during the seminar in Ohrid, we encountered a very different picture about this region and its ongoing dynamic processes. This could be noticed also in our idea about the program, how we started and what the focus in the beginning was, and what we have done in the end. Taking into consideration the political and social environment in the South Caucasus, the policies of the big power states, the current threats on a global level, we were very much surprised how these countries deal with and manage these issues. I must admit that the study visit significantly changed our opinion about the countries we visited. We expected to see poverty, ethnic problems, social exclusion and marginalized groups. The reality is that the GDP of some of the countries is almost the same as the one of Macedonia, they are very active in the field of EU or NATO integration, and they have more political than ethnic tensions within their countries. They are also very rich with natural resources that in a way, guarantee their economical development.

Prior to the study visit, it was very difficult to find people that were able to depict the real situation in the Caucasus. There may have been initiatives, but the quantity and the quality of information we gathered, didn't give us a clear picture of what was happening there, especially within the NGO sector and relevant activities.

At the beginning we were focused more on youth issues, but step by step, as we were developing the idea and the program, we came to realize that much more was going on in the Caucasus, and thus, now, we are strongly convinced that a broader picture of different spheres of life should be addressed and presented to a wider auditorium, in order to bring the Caucasus closer to the ordinary people on the Balkans.

The program is only the onset of the activities that should follow up in the near future. We hope that this brochure, along with the documentary film, will be useful for those willing to initiate such activities in Caucasus. Reading the brochure without watching the documentary film, and vice versa, is not sufficient. You have to see both of them in order to understand the situation there.

From all the activities, we learned much more. Let it be also an encouragement for you to explore. While the Caucasus and the Balkans have much in common, they have their own specific characteristics which make the two regions incredibly challenging.

Sreten Koceski  
Participant in the Balkan Caucasus program

## II. Presentations - get to know something about us<sup>1</sup>

### A. The Balkans

The Balkan Peninsula is situated in southeastern Europe, bounded on the east by the Black and Aegean seas, on the south by the Mediterranean Sea, and on the west by the Adriatic and Ionian seas. It comprises the countries of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, and European Turkey.

### Macedonia

- ❖ **Location and area:** Macedonia is the country in the centre of the Balkan Peninsula. It is bounded on the north by Serbia, on the east by Bulgaria, on the south by Greece, and on the west by Albania. It is completely landlocked. It has an area of 25,713 sq km.



Ohrid

- ❖ **Capital:** The capital of Macedonia is Skopje. It is the largest and most developed city in Macedonia.
- ❖ **Independence:** Macedonia became independent in September 1991.

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<sup>1</sup> Factual data is taken from various encyclopedias (Encarta, Wikipedia) and listed web pages in Appendix 3.

- ❖ **Population:** Macedonia had an estimated population of 2,050,554 in July 2006.
- ❖ **Ethnic composition:** It has one of the most complex ethnic populations in Europe. Macedonians constitute the majority of the population, according to 2002 census with 64.2%. Minorities: Albanians 25.2%, Turks 3.9%, Roma 2.7%, Serbs 1.5%, Vlachs 0.4% and others. Albanians are the largest group among minorities.
- ❖ **Official language:** Macedonian. Minority groups speak their own languages.
- ❖ **Religion:** Predominant religion practiced is Orthodox Christianity, but the largest part of the minorities practices the Muslim religion.
- ❖ **Literacy:** Education is free and compulsory from age 7 through 14. The literacy rate is 96.1% percent (2002 est.).
- ❖ **Universities:** 4 states and a rising number of private universities. Languages of study: Macedonian, English and Albanian.
- ❖ **Government structure/type:** Parliamentary Democracy. The president of the Republic is the head of state.
- ❖ **Foreign partnerships and membership:** Macedonia is a member of the Partnership for Peace Program of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Macedonia is also a member of the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe, and the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).
- ❖ **EU status:** Candidate.

## Serbia

- ❖ **Location and area:** Serbia is bounded on the north by Hungary, on the east by Romania and Bulgaria, on the south by Macedonia, on the southwest by Albania, and on the west by Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia. The area of Serbia covers 88,361 sq km.

- ❖ **Regional division:** Most of Serbia can be divided into three regions: Vojvodina, a large province in the north, Šumadija, a hilly and heavily populated area in central Serbia, and Kosovo, a mountainous province in the south.
- ❖ **Capital:** Serbia's capital and largest city is Belgrade.
- ❖ **Independence:** The constitution from 2003 allowed either Serbia or Montenegro to carry out a referendum about independence after three years. As a result of that, Serbia and Montenegro became separate countries in June 2006.
- ❖ **Population:** Serbia's estimated population according to the 2002 census was 9,396,411.
- ❖ **Ethnic composition:** The Serbs constitute the majority of the population (66%, 1991 est.). Minority groups are Albanians (17%) who predominately live in Kosovo, and Hungarians (3.5%), who live in Vojvodina.



**Belgrade**

- ❖ **Official language:** The official language of Serbia nationwide is Serbian. Minority groups in the regions speak their own languages as official, such as Albanian and Hungarian, the former being official in Kosovo and the latter in Vojvodina.
- ❖ **Religion:** The dominant religion is Orthodox Christianity, with smaller numbers of Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants.
- ❖ **Literacy:** According to 2003 estimate, literacy rate is 96.4%.

- ❖ **Government structure:** Republic. Serbia is governed under a constitution adopted in 1990. This constitution formally stripped the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina of their autonomous status and also laid the groundwork for multiparty elections. The president is the head of state.
- ❖ The ethnic Albanian majority in Kosovo had resisted the Serbian government ever since the province lost its autonomy.
- ❖ **Foreign partnership and membership:** Member of OSCE, UN, Interpol and others.

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

- ❖ **Location and area:** It is a mountainous country bounded on the north and west by Croatia and on the east and south Serbia and Montenegro respectively. Bosnia also has 20 km of coastline along the Adriatic Sea, wedged between Croatian territories. Bosnia has an area of 51,129 sq km.
- ❖ **Capital:** The capital and largest city is Sarajevo.



**Sarajevo**

- ❖ **Independence:** Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence in March 1992.
- ❖ **Population:** According to July 2006 estimate, Bosnia and Herzegovina counts with a population of 4,498,976 citizens.

- ❖ **Ethnic composition:** No single ethnic group comprises a majority of the population in Bosnia. Bosnia's major ethnic groups are Muslims 48% (in Bosnia, Muslim is an ethnic designation for Muslim Slavs), Serbs 37.1%, and Croats 14.3% (2000 est.). Since the Muslim-Croat federation formed in 1994, Bosnian Muslim leaders have insisted that their people be called "Bosniaks."
- ❖ **Religion:** The primary difference among the largest ethnic groups is religious, the Serbs being traditionally Orthodox Christians and the Croats Roman Catholics.
- ❖ **Official language:** The people of Bosnia speak the Bosnian dialect of the Serbo-Croatian language. However, according to the Bosnian government, the country officially has three languages: Serbian, "Bosnian" (the language associated with the Muslims), and Croatian. In writing, the Serbs use the Cyrillic alphabet, while the Muslims and Croats use the Latin alphabet.
- ❖ **Literacy:** Education is compulsory and at no cost for all children from ages 7 through 15. Secondary education is also free. Literacy rate: 94.6% (2000est.)
- ❖ **Government structure:** Emerging federal democratic republic. There is a three-member presidency. Bosnia's three-member joint presidency comprises one Muslim, one Croat, and one Serb member. All members are formally equal, with chairmanship of the collective body rotating every six months. The central government has very little authority within the country. For the most part its power extends only to foreign trade and foreign affairs. The new constitution recognizes Bosnia as a state officially composed of two entities, the Serb Republic and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- ❖ **Foreign partnership and membership:** Bosnia is a member of several international organizations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations (UN).

## Montenegro

- ❖ **Location and area:** Montenegro is bounded on the north by Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the east by Serbia, on the south by Albania, and

on the southwest by the Adriatic Sea. Montenegro covers an area of 13,812 sq km. Montenegro is mostly mountainous, with elevations ranging from 800 to 2,400 m. The most famous peak is Mount Lovcen (1,748 m), called the “black mountain” for its basaltic rock, from which the name Montenegro is derived.



**Budva**

- ❖ **Capital:** The capital and largest city is Podgorica.
- ❖ **Population:** In 2004 the republic had an estimated population of 630,548.
- ❖ **Ethnic composition:** More than 43% percent of the people in Montenegro are of Montenegrin ethnicity, chief minorities include Serbs (32% percent), Bosniaks (8% percent), and Albanians (5% percent).
- ❖ **Religion:** Predominately Orthodox Christian.
- ❖ **Government structure:** Republic. Executive power is held by the president.
- ❖ **Foreign partnership and membership:** OSCE, UN.

## Croatia

- ❖ **Location and area:** Croatia is bounded on the north by Slovenia and Hungary, on the east and south by Bosnia and Herzegovina, and on the east by Serbia. The total area of Croatia is 56,510 sq km.
- ❖ **Capital:** Zagreb is the capital and largest city of Croatia.
- ❖ **Independence:** Croatia gained its independence in 1991.
- ❖ **Population:** The total population of Croatia estimated in July 2006 is 4,494,749.



Dubrovnik

- ❖ **Ethnic composition:** The population of Croatia is overwhelmingly ethnic Croat (89.6% according to 2002 census). Ethnic Serbs comprise the most significant minority group (4.5%). There are also small populations of Muslims, Hungarians, Slovenes, and others.
- ❖ **Religion:** The primary difference between Croats and Serbs is religion: by tradition, Croats are Roman Catholic while Serbs are Orthodox Christians.
- ❖ **Official language:** In Croatia, all ethnic groups speak Croatian. In some parts of Croatia Italian is official as well.
- ❖ **Literacy:** Preschool, elementary, and secondary education is free to all citizens, and compulsory from ages 7 to 15. The literacy rate is 98.5%.

- ❖ **Government structure:** Parliamentary Democracy.  
The president of the republic is the head of state, and also exercises substantial governmental functions. Local governmental functions are exercised at the levels of counties, towns, municipalities, and districts.
- ❖ **Foreign partnership and membership:** Croatia was admitted to the United Nations (UN) and to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 1992. In 1996 Croatia became a member of the Council of Europe. Candidate for membership in NATO.
- ❖ **EU status:** Candidate.

## Albania

- ❖ **Location and area:** Albania lies along the northwestern edge of the Balkan Peninsula. It is bordered by the Adriatic Sea to the west, Greece to the south, the Republic of Macedonia to the east, Serbia and Montenegro to the northeast and north respectively. Albania lies on a total area of 28,748 sq km.
- ❖ **Capital:** The capital and largest city is Tirana.
- ❖ **Population:** In July 2006 Albania's population estimate was 3,581,655.
- ❖ **Ethnic composition:** Modern-day Albania consists almost exclusively of ethnic Albanians (95%, 1989 estimate). According to Albanian officials, only 5 percent of Albania's residents are of non-Albanian heritage, most of whom are Greek (3%).

Tirana



- ❖ **Official language:** Albanian.
- ❖ **Literacy:** Education is compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 13. The literacy rate was estimated to be 86.5% in 2003.
- ❖ **Religion:** With 70 percent of its population Muslim, Albania is Europe's only predominantly Islamic state. Orthodox Christians, living mostly in southern Albania, make up 20 percent of the population, and Roman Catholics, mainly in the north, make up another 10 percent. Religious divisions in Albania are not significant. Religious tolerance is such that members of the same family sometimes belong to different religions.
- ❖ **Government structure:** Emerging democracy. Between 1990 and 1992 Albania ended 46 years of xenophobic Communist rule and established a multiparty democracy. In the early 1990's Albania began its transition to a democratic state and market economy. A president serves as Albania's head of state and shares control of the armed forces with the prime minister.
- ❖ **Foreign partnership and membership:** Since 1991 Albania is a member of several international organizations including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); all the bodies of the United Nations (UN); and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol). Albania also gained membership to the North Atlantic Cooperation Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and has participated in NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

## **B. The Caucasus**

The **Caucasus** or **Caucasia** is a region in Eurasia bordered on the south by Turkey and Iran in Asia, on the west by the Black Sea, on the east by the Caspian Sea, and on the north by Russia. Caucasus includes the Caucasus Mountains and surrounding lowlands.

## Azerbaijan

- ❖ **Location and area:** Azerbaijan presents the southern portion of the region of Caucasus. The country is bordered on the north by Russia, on the east by the Caspian Sea, on the south by Iran, on the west by Armenia, and on the northwest by Georgia. The enclave of Nachicevan borders with Turkey as well. Azerbaijan covers an area of about 86,600 sq km. The borders of Azerbaijan generally correspond to natural geographic features.
- ❖ **Regional division:** The country includes the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, a predominantly Armenian-inhabited enclave in western Azerbaijan, and the autonomous exclave of Naxçıvan (Nachicevan), which is separated from the rest of Azerbaijan by a mountainous strip of Armenian territory.
- ❖ **Capital:** Baku, which is a large port city on the Caspian Sea, is Azerbaijan's capital and largest city.



Baku

- ❖ **Independence:** Azerbaijan proclaimed independence in August 1991.
- ❖ **Natural resources:** Contains many, the most important being crude oil.
- ❖ **Population:** Its population was an estimated 7,961,619 in July 2006.
- ❖ **Ethnic composition:** Azerbaijan, including the autonomous enclave of Nachicevan, is populated mostly by ethnic Azerbaijanis, or Azeri

(90.6%, 1999 census). The Azerbaijani majority has increased dramatically as a result of recent population shifts. During the ensuing war, which continued until 1994, nearly the entire Azerbaijani population in Armenia fled to Azerbaijan and northern Iran, while many Armenians in Azerbaijan fled to Armenia. The Armenian community, which comprised slightly less than 6 percent of Azerbaijan's population before the war, dropped to about 1.5% percent of the total. Armenians now reside almost exclusively in the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, where they constitute a majority. There are also Dagestani (2.2%) and Russian (1.8%) minorities in Azerbaijan.

- ❖ **Official language:** The official language of Azerbaijan is Azeri language.
- ❖ **Religion:** Azerbaijanis are traditionally Muslim.
- ❖ **Literacy:** Most adults in Azerbaijan can read and write. The literacy rate was 98.8% according to 2003 estimate.
- ❖ **Government structure:** Presidential democracy. The head of state is the president. The president appoints a prime minister and a cabinet of ministers, who carry out the day-to-day operations of government.
- ❖ **Foreign partnership and membership:** Since 1992 Azerbaijan is a member of the United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In September 1993 the republic was admitted as a full member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), a loose alliance of most of the former Soviet republics. In May 1994 Azerbaijan became a member of the Partnership for Peace program of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

## Armenia

- ❖ **Location and area:** Country situated in the south of the Caucasus region. Armenia occupies about 29,800 sq km of the northeastern portion of the Armenian Highland. Armenia is bordered by Georgia on the north, Azerbaijan on the east and the Azerbaijani exclave of Naxçıvan (Nachicevan') on the southwest, Iran on the south, and Turkey on the west. Armenia is extremely mountainous.

- ❖ **Capital:** Yerevan is the capital and largest city.



Yerevan

- ❖ **Independence:** Armenia became independent in September 1991.
- ❖ **Population:** The population of Armenia is 3.145.354 (July 2006 estimate).
- ❖ **Ethnic composition:** Ethnic Armenians constitute 97.9% percent of the population (2001 census). Kurds (1.3%) and Russians (0.5%) are the next two largest ethnic groups in the republic, each making up less than 2 percent of Armenia's total population. Small numbers of Ukrainians, Assyrians, Greeks, and Georgians also live in Armenia. Azerbaijanis were the largest minority group during the Soviet period, but in the early 1990s nearly the entire Azerbaijani population fled or was forcibly deported from Armenia because of ethnic tension brought on by a secessionist conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. In the reverse direction, many Armenian refugees entered Armenia from Azerbaijan during the conflict.
- ❖ **Official language:** Armenia's official state language is Armenian. Armenia's ethnic minorities also speak their own native languages, mainly Russian and Kurdish.
- ❖ **Religion:** Armenians were converted to Christianity in the early 4th century. According to historical accounts they were the first in the world to adopt Christianity as a state religion. Among ethnic minorities, there are Russian Orthodox Christians, Protestants, and Muslims.

- ❖ **Literacy:** Nearly all adults in Armenia (98.6%, 2003 estimate) can read and write due to the Soviet Government emphasis on free and universal education. Today, primary and secondary levels of education are compulsory and available free of charge.
- ❖ **Government structure:** Presidential democracy. The president, who is head of state, has broad executive powers. The political system is multiparty. The president appoints the prime minister, who presides over the council of ministers. For purposes of local government, Armenia is divided into ten marz (regions), including Yerevan. The regions are subdivided into “hamaynk” (communities). The communities exercise local self-government.
- ❖ **Foreign partnership and membership:** Armenia is a member of the CIS, the United Nations (UN), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) International trade organization (ITO), Council of Europe, international agreements. In October 1994 the country joined the Partnership for Peace program of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

## Georgia

- ❖ **Location and area:** Georgia is a country of extremely diverse terrain, with high mountain ranges and fertile coastal lowlands. Georgia covers an area of about 69,700 sq km. It is situated on the east coast of the Black Sea and bounded by Russia on the north and by Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkey on the south.
- ❖ **Regional division:** Georgia includes two autonomous republics: Ajaria, located in Georgia’s southwestern corner, and Abkhazia, in the northwestern arm of the republic. Both republics include stretches of the Black Sea coast. Georgia also contains the autonomous region of South Ossetia, which is located in the north central part of the country. Abkhazia and South Ossetia are bordered on the north by Russia, and Ajaria is bordered on the south by Turkey.
- ❖ **Capital:** The capital of Georgia is Tbilisi.
- ❖ **Independence:** Georgia gained independence in April 1991.



Tbilisi

- ❖ **Population:** The population of Georgia is 4,661,473 (July 2006 estimate).
- ❖ **Ethnic composition:** Ethnic Georgians constitute the majority although nearly 100 different ethnic groups make up Georgia's population. The largest minority group is represented by Armenians (about 5.7 percent), then Russians (about 1.5 percent), and Azeri (about 6.5 percent) according to 2002 census. Significant numbers of Ossetians, Greeks, and Abkhazians also reside in the republic.
- ❖ **Official language:** Georgian is the country's official language. Many of the country's ethnic minorities do not speak Georgian, such as the Ossetians and Abkhazians, who speak their own native languages and often Russian as well. Russian is the first language of about 9 percent of the population. Abkhazian is the official language in Abkhazia.
- ❖ **Religion:** Orthodox Christianity is the religion of about 83.9 % (2002 census estimate) of the Georgian population. About a fifth of the country's population is Muslim, with ethnic Azerbaijanis, Kurds, and Ajars (ethnic Georgians who converted to Islam in the 17th century) as principal Muslim groups. Judaism is also practiced, although to a lesser extent.
- ❖ **Literacy:** Georgia has an adult literacy rate of 100% (2004 estimate), due to the Soviet emphasis on free and universal education. Georgians were among the most highly educated of all the nationalities in the former USSR. Since independence, however, educational issues

appeared as a result of serious under-funding which led to lower educational standards. Education is compulsory from the first through eleventh grades, and most students enter the school system at age six.

- ❖ **Central government structure:** Georgia is a democratic republic with a strong executive presidency. The president is authorized to appoint a council of ministers headed by a minister of state. The council of ministers is eventually accountable to the president.
- ❖ Each of Georgia's autonomous political entities—the Republics of Ajaria and Abkhazia and the region of South Ossetia—has its own locally elected government, consisting of a legislature and a local leader. The local governments of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are not recognized by the central government. Abkhazia is essentially independent, and South Ossetia is almost independent. Ajaria does not seek secession from Georgia. Its local government cooperates with the central government and recognizes the constitution of Georgia as the guiding force for local legislation. For purposes of local administration, the rest of Georgia is divided into prefectures headed by prefects appointed by the Georgian president, who report to the central government.
- ❖ **Foreign partnership and membership:** Georgia was admitted to the United Nations (UN) in July 1992. In 1993 Georgia became a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), a loose political alliance of most of the former Soviet republics. In 1994 the republic joined the Partnership for Peace program of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Georgia is a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as well.

### III. The Conference

#### Conference overview

The conference took place in Ohrid, between December 18 and 22, 2005. Over 30 participants and speakers took part in the activities in form of plenary sessions, debates and working groups. The aim of the conference and training was:

- to explore the role of the youth in confidence building and intercultural activities

- to foster peer to peer EQUAL education
- to provide direct contact and space for intercultural dialogue between the participants in this program
- to recommend further activities and steps within the network
- to gain practical skills in mediation and negotiation.



**Balkan Caucasus conference in Ohrid**

The conference treated the issues of greatest concern for the two regions. Immediately after presenting the countries, there was a presentation on the topic “Social Changes in the Countries in Transition”. Although the presentation focused on Macedonian experience, it concerned all countries since all of them are passing through transition period. The greatest emphasis was put on the Ohrid Framework Agreement<sup>2</sup> as a model that stopped the conflict and contributed to building multicultural society and multicultural state and a stable democracy. This topic attracted the interest of all participants and raised many questions and a productive discussion.

The Kosovo issue was further elaborated the following day. Besides the debate among participants, there was a presentation on possible solutions for the status of Kosovo by a Serbian participant. It was followed by a panel discussion during which three films were projected on the following topics:<sup>3</sup>

- a. Kosovo Metohija 1998-2003
- b. Genocide and terror over the Serbs, and
- c. Amateur picture of church being burned in Podujevo.

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<sup>2</sup> For further information on OFA, see Appendix 2 for web links

<sup>3</sup> The booklet publisher is not responsible for the contents of the cited films. The topic of films was chosen by participants.

Although these films were of Serbian production, the conference was a convenient event where the opinions from both Serbia and Kosovo were presented, and a debate was raised once again.



**Training session at the Balkan-Caucasus conference**

The final conclusion of the participants considering this issue was that Kosovo is prepared to become independent and it is prone to political, economical and social problems as any other state in transition.

The conference progressed with a presentation on “History and the current political and institutional situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

This information of the presentations and follow-up debates provided the participants with sufficient data to make a simple conclusion about the situation on the Balkans: Balkan countries have high rate of poverty, unemployment, and corruption. Democracy has not yet been consolidated, multiculturalism is still a challenge. There is a strong presence of ethnic discourse.

The conference continued with presentations, discussions and role play assignments related to the following issues: Intercultural dialogue, Fundraising and Cross Border Possibilities–Lessons Learned, Euro-integration Processes and Interethnic Relations. This opportunity was used for a broader discussion to be raised among participants concerning the current EU integration processes, preconditions and funds that will be available for candidate members.

On the last day of the conference the participants received training on Mediation skills. It was followed by practical activities through role play on scenario cases.

## **Results from the conference**

The conference was a great opportunity for supporting the dialogue among young people from different ethnic backgrounds and to learn more for each other. During the meeting, the participants through an informal discussion exchanged sample information regarding current issues and mainstreams in their societies. The participants also discuss in what direction the network could be developed, what are the weak and strong moments and challenges the network might face in future. Their conversation on activities they organize, and possibilities for collaboration opened many discussions on specific issues. Particular actions were also discussed such as a common approach to European Youth Foundation for financial support to organize events in Caucasus, than the EU grant possibilities as well as other programs. Finally, the conference established a strong link and collaboration between the Balkans and the Caucasus. The report from the conference could be downloaded at: [www.mic.org.mk](http://www.mic.org.mk)

## **IV. Study Visit in Caucasus**

### **Study Visit Overview**

The study visit in the Caucasus region was carried out between June 27 and July 11, 2006. Seven participants from the Balkans visited Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, and spent up to 5 days in each country. During the visit the participants had the chance to visit non-governmental organizations, governmental institutions and media. The primary aim of the study visit was to get a deeper understanding of the region, its culture, and history, to explore and to learn more about the role of young political leaders and methods they use in confidence building, to learn more about the current situation, to visit other donors active in the region, to explore the possibility of organizing activities in the Caucasus republics, and to investigate the interest for involvement of various structures in this program. In addition, the conference aimed at exchanging knowledge and experience and enabling participants learn more about peer education and counseling on youth policy and national strategy. Also, as a part of the entire program, the study visit offered a step forward in establishing a relation between the two regions through meeting potential partners for cooperation and discussion issues that are common for the countries of the Balkans and the Caucasus.

The activities in the Caucasus were organized in form of:

- Plenary sessions
- Debates
- Round tables
- Separate meetings according to the field of interest with the colleagues from the Caucasus, and
- Field visits.

## **Problem issues**

### **a) Religious, national and social**

Although these countries have population of mixed religious and national background, generally it does not provoke any significant conflicts.

#### **1) Azerbaijan**

One of the greatest social issues of Azerbaijan is human trafficking.

#### **2) Georgia**

A serious problem in Georgia related to the minorities is the lack of knowledge of the Georgian language. Azeris understand Russian but not Georgian. With the up-coming generations, the problem has increased as young people understand neither Georgian nor Russian and they only use Azeri language, which affects the integration of the Azeris in the society. The educational system is presently in a very bad condition due to the lack of means. The average salary is about 60 EUR per month. While the Armenians request educational materials and express willingness to learn the language, the government is not in a position to produce books because of lack of funds. However, the Government pays attention to this issue and constantly works on improvement.

#### **3) Armenia**

The young people from Armenia involved in the study visit of their country, showed that they were dissatisfied with the State Policy and classification of experts after completion of the studies. There are also problems with employment. Young people who have finished university studies have unfair competition for posts by persons who have not, since they are often not recognized by the educational advantage. For example, there are many international students from India and Asia. While the

diplomas of the European universities are recognized, according to the representatives of youth organizations present at the panel discussion in Armenia the students still need to be trained abroad in order to work in some other country.

## **b) Political and territorial**

As the majority of countries in transition, they, too, are facing with the problem of corruption and high unemployment rate. The main problems come from the clash of defining the status of certain regions.

### **1) Azerbaijan**

The most sensitive issue for Azerbaijan is the Nagorno - Karabakh<sup>4</sup> with Armenia. Azerbaijan sees the resolution of its conflicts in the EU integration. Another problem is that the opposition parties have hardly any chances to address the public on national television due to the dominating president.

### **2) Georgia**

Even though Georgia is the most democratic country in the region, it still faces some problems with the implementation of democracy. According to GFSIS (Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies) the international organizations come to Azerbaijan for oil, and not to promote democracy. Russia's intentions are to establish monopoly over Georgia and to prevent the western values to come to the country. NATO is seen as a way to solve the security problem with Russia. Russia is trying to control the region and reacts in any attempt for cooperation between the Caucasus counties (e.g. Nagorno Karabakh).

There are two conflict zones in Georgia, Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia). There is a trend that every eleven years since 1960, Abkhazia shows mechanisms against Georgia. Abkhazia region has a significant natural treasure. It also has a military base and an airport which are inaccessible for organizations, but which are of a unique value and military interests for Russia. At the moment, the military is in process of withdrawal.

Russia controls Abkhazia and South Ossetia as prima-head leader. Abkhazia anticipates directions from Russia. Since 1993, there are ongoing negotiations between Abkhazia and Georgia, mediated by Russia, USA,

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<sup>4</sup> For further information on this issue as well as others, refer to Appendix 2 for web links.

Great Britain, France and Germany. In 1997 the Geneva process started where specific negotiation organs were involved in Abkhazia like OSCE, UN, Russian forces. Only friendly methods have been used to neutralize the Russian influence.

There are no conflicts between the minorities (Azeris and Armenians). The final goal of the negotiations is solution of the problems, for the IDPs to go home, equal conditions for everybody, special conditions and positive discrimination. The problem is not regionally connected. Both Abkhazians and South Ossetians have double citizenship – Russian and Abkhazian, and South Ossetia respectively. Both disputable regions have de facto (unrecognized) Governments, supported by Russia. Abkhazia had a referendum in 1999 and looks at building an independent associative state, member of the Russian provinces.

USA and EU are trying to help in the pro-European policy for Georgia to ban the Russia policy, through negotiations (OSCE Istanbul Summit). However, no concrete steps have been agreed upon. There is an organization called “Georgia for NATO” which considers that NATO integration is the right solution for the problems in Georgia. Georgia sees the resolution in EU integration, while Armenia strives to be integrated both in EU and NATO, but with the support of Russia.

### **3) Armenia**

Armenia and Azerbaijan have closed borders for each other for the Nagorno Karabakh issue. Another problem is with Turkey. Armenia claims that Turkey has made a genocide of over 1 000 000<sup>5</sup> Armenians in 1915 and 1917 while Turkey denies it.

Another issue that Armenia works on is to return the IDP's back home.

### **The NGO sector**

The NGO sector in the Balkans is on a higher level of functioning and better coordinated than the Caucasus's.

#### **a) Azerbaijan**

The principal problems that the NGOs from Azerbaijan face with are the problems concerning self-sustainability. Namely, since they are grant dependent, they will be faced with a tough task once the donors stop their

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<sup>5</sup> Different sources (from the internet) provide different information on the number of casualties. They vary from 300 000 to over 1 500 000. One million is most frequent estimate

support, especially with the US Government budget decrease for Azerbaijan. Yet, the NGOs are generally money oriented. Furthermore, there is a strict registration policy for NGOs. The relation between government and NGOs is improved after a period of government pressure on NGOs, especially those concerning human rights issues. It was carried out through series of seminars and conferences which included participation of local authorities and the police.

#### **b) Georgia**

The Open Society Foundation in Georgia is not only a grant-making organization, but it also works on civil in-house projects, policy analyses, advocacy, monitoring on the public administration structure, integration and civic education, culture, media and civil society. Another subject of interest for the Open Society Foundation Georgia is the development of NGOs in crises. After the Rose Revolution in 2003, part of the NGO sector got positions in the Government, and a part of it remained in the civil sector. There are harsh personal issues between these two groups and no consultation whatsoever. According to the study visit hosts, the NGOs blame the Government for not respecting the human rights and for challenging the organized crime. The NGOs are 100% foreign donor and activity dependant. There are 500 registered NGOs but only 200 are really active. USAID gives the biggest support on projects for promoting tolerance and integration.

In Georgia there is no national strategy for youth and there are only few youth organizations.

#### **c) Armenia**

In Armenia it is easy to establish an NGO. There are over 3000 registered NGOs and almost half of them deal with youth issues. However, although many of them exist, only a hundred are specified as youth NGOs. There is a limited youth participation in Armenia. In order to develop youth engagement and to improve the position of youth in the society, the government has designed a youth strategy, the implementation of which is being currently in an early phase. There are networks linking the youth organizations whose main purpose is mutual assistance.

## V. Case Studies

The following case studies summaries will provide you with the information of what the organizations involved in this program are concerned with through specific projects, as well as the methods they use while implementing them.

- Interethnic Centre for Youth and Children BABYLON Tetovo - The project incorporated different activities designed to animate the children's creativity, motivation and willingness to cooperate together in groups of ethnically mixed participants and by that, overcoming the ethnic division in this part of the society. Methods of non-formal education were used such as individual and group work. In addition, there were seminars, workshops, and trainings organized.
- "Liberal Student Association" - LSA from Croatia carried out a project concerning the continuous conflicts in the NGO sector, where the following methods were used: communication, advanced discussions framework discussions, brainstorming and game rules. During the implementation of the project Conflicts/fights and communication problems on an inter-ethnic level the methods that were used entailed communication, advanced discussions / framework discussions, ground rules and mediation.
- Vukovar Institute for Peace Research and Education, during 2002/2003, run the project in few phases named "Colleagues to Colleagues ", the aim of which was to connect county administration and non-governmental organizations whose members are mostly national minorities, to develop education- information from the field of human rights, and to promote language and cultural heritage of national minorities in Vukovar-Sirmium and Istrian County, creation of an institutional and administrative framework that would improve progress of democracy, respect of human rights, multiethnic tolerance and civil principles. The European Committee supported the project in the Republic of Croatia. Methods used throughout the implementation of the project were meetings, creating work groups, seminars (lecturing and round tables), and education.
- The Vukovar Institute for Peace Research and Education has another positive case study: Project kindergarten "Vukovar together". The aim

of the project-kindergarten is to create a day care center that will be based on experiential learning, which would enable children in Vukovar to be educated in the spirit of accepting democratic principles, multiethnic tolerance and multiculturalism, respect of human, citizens and minority rights, and development of social competence from the early childhood. Methods used were education and training.

- AWDC (Azerbaijan Women and Development Centre) was established in 1995. It is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization and the only NGO in Azerbaijan in Special Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC and UNDPI, Focal Point of UN INSTRAW in Azerbaijan, member of 12 International Organizations and Networks. The Centre develops activities on advancement of women and children. The mission of the Centre is improvement of the women's and children's status. Its curricula comprises of the following topics: "Reproductive Health and Family Planning", "Education and Upbringing", "Human Rights". Methods used in the activities of the Centre were conferences, workshops, trainings, education, human rights study and implementation, lectures, dialogues, seminars, community-based services, distribution of leaflets, brochures, videotapes, and audiotapes.<sup>6</sup>

**Methods used in the case studies:** Seminars, workshops, trainings, discussions, mediation, meetings, workgroups, round tables, lectures, studies, distribution of leaflets, brochures, video and audiotapes.

## VI. Lessons Learned and Conclusions

- It was concluded through the study visit in the Caucasus region that the ethnic and religious issues are not the main problem of the Caucasus countries.
- The greatest social problem of all countries is the high rate of unemployment.
- The human trafficking is an important issue in Azerbaijan. Abkhazia is used as trafficking zone for illegal trade and people.
- Georgia faces a serious educational problem. Only by solving it, the state will be able to integrate the Armenians in the society, and thus, their plan for inclusion of minorities becomes feasible.

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<sup>6</sup> Borrowed from the following web-page <http://www.zenskestudie.edu.yu/wgsact/azerbaijan/az-wdc.html>

- Georgia has surprisingly strong civil society institutions due to experienced and competent personnel who have taken part in international monitoring and negotiation missions, NGO initiatives, peace agreements, etc. At times, there is a case when activists from the civil sector enter the Government and vice versa, which on one hand, represents an advantage in terms of experience and knowledge, but it may be also a disadvantage in cases of total change of policy and attitudes.
- Caucasus region is very interesting and challenging place for cultural knowledge enrichment and investigations. There are still living Assyrians and Kurds with Orthodox Christian confession.
- There is a Youth policy in a written form only in Azerbaijan. In the case of Armenia, according to participants from there, they were not invited to the youth strategy creation process. Youth participation and initiatives should be strengthened in all Caucasus countries.
- Neighbor relations in the Caucasus region are more complicated in comparison to the Balkans. Closed borders between Georgia - Russia, Armenia - Azerbaijan, and Armenia - Turkey.
- The North – Caucasus is the most explosive region in the world. Georgian determination to become a member of NATO should contribute to successfully completing the reforms and reuniting the breakaway republics. The political direction that Azerbaijan takes is the integration in the European Union. Armenia, on the other hand, strives towards integration to EU and NATO as well, but with Russian support.
- According to a survey done among local people, the vast majority declares that Caucasus countries belong to Europe for their values, although geographically they are in Asia.
- The people from the Caucasus do not know much about the Balkans. Surprisingly enough, they often replace it with the Baltic.
- Balkan countries have high rate of poverty, unemployment and corruption. Democracy has not yet been consolidated, multiculturalism is still a challenge. There is a strong presence of ethnic discourse.
- In the end of the conference, **a declaration was prepared and signed** by participants. The declaration calls on fostering intercultural dialogue, understanding and coexistence and promotion of peace and stability.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 3

More conclusions and findings as a result of the study visit could be found at: [www.mic.org.mk](http://www.mic.org.mk)

Such program is often the first direct contact between cultures. It is a way of learning for and from each other about the culture, beliefs, values, society, environment, economics, politics, history and much more. It is a bridge for overcoming prejudices and breaking stereotypes. In this particular case, as the activities of the conference were approaching the end, there were more open discussions and many of the existing prejudices that we were aware of were not noticed among participants. Substantial information was exchanged and there was a significant learning process.

### **Participants' comments**

- “I enjoyed every moment of the study visit. It was a great opportunity to make friends. All the way to Caucasus and back, we were discussing what we saw, comparing our region with Caucasus and enriching our points of view. Our skills were complementary, each of us being engaged in a different field (media, youth NGOs, local government, international relations), and thus, we learned a lot not only from our hosts but also from each other.” - Kristina Jovanovic - Serbia.

### **VII. Recommendations:<sup>8</sup>**

The Recommendations demonstrate the following potential fields of cooperation:

- As the two regions share EU and/or NATO aspirations, exchange programs could be organized among NGOs with the aim of enabling activists from the two regions to have direct insight into the way the civil sector is working on topics such as raising awareness among the youth through lectures that explain the EU and NATO membership and integration.
- Exchange programs could also be organized in the field of women's issues. The countries of both regions lack female representation in politics and business. Through the exchange programs, activists in

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<sup>8</sup> The recommendations have been provided by the participants in the study visit

NGOs could exchange experience concerning ways of lobbying for the need for a higher level of women's presence in these fields.

- Regional cooperation is seen as a prerequisite for development in the Western Balkans. Young representatives of political parties in the South Caucasus could be interested in learning more from their regional partners about the ways in which the West Balkans are cooperating.
- Journalism internships in cooperation with media stations from the two regions could also prove successful. Firstly, journalists would be able to feel the media in the regions. Secondly, through their experience, they could contribute to breaking stereotypes that exist in one region about the other.
- Some of the project participants highly recommend formation of a Balkan–Caucasus Network web page. During the study visit, an idea was expressed to be able to directly contact particular NGOs from the Western Balkans. Therefore, the web page would contain information about the program and the countries involved, but it would also contain list of NGOs per country and their interest in cooperation and exchange of knowledge and experience.
- Prevention of regional crises and promotion of cross-border cooperation between municipalities and civil society actors could be of great importance for development of the region.
- This initiative should be more profiled in the future. Program participants should divide themselves into several working groups, the first one dealing, for example, with international relations, the other one with the general situation of NGOs, the third one with media, the fourth with women issues, etc. Thus, they would enhance their analytical level without losing the picture of the whole, and at the same time the participants in one field will not be excluded from other fields. Everybody will take part in every activity, but some will become “experts” on particular issues. It is the only way to conduct a comprehensive comparative analysis on each field, which should be considered as the most important aim of the activists.

## **VIII. Appendices**

### **Appendix 1. List of Organization Partners of the Program**

#### **Macedonia**

Community Development Institute –Macedonia  
Marsal Tito St. 132/1 Tetovo, Macedonia  
Sreten Koceski, executive director  
Tel: +389-70-250-286  
E-mail: [sreten@mt.net.mk](mailto:sreten@mt.net.mk)  
[www.mic.org.mk](http://www.mic.org.mk)

#### **Serbia and Montenegro**

DLP Club Serbia  
Contact person: Borko Ilic  
Tel: +381 63 478 380  
[borko6opko@yahoo.com](mailto:borko6opko@yahoo.com)

#### **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

DLP Club  
Contact person: Asmir Ahbabovic  
E-mail: [asmir.a@lol.ba](mailto:asmir.a@lol.ba)

#### **Georgia**

The Union "Century 21" association  
17 G. Akhvlediani Street,  
0108, Tbilisi, Georgia  
Tel/Fax: (995 32) 93 12 42  
Contact person: Khatuna Tsintsadze  
Deputy Chairwoman  
[www.century21.ge](http://www.century21.ge)  
[khatuna.tsintsadze@century21](mailto:khatuna.tsintsadze@century21).

Nana Saginashvili  
President of the  
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E-mail: [internationalu@yahoo.com](mailto:internationalu@yahoo.com)  
<http://ertoba.myweb.ge/>  
msn: [leocka@hotmail.com](mailto:leocka@hotmail.com)  
skype: nanikela-georgia

Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies  
Contact person: Nini Bakradze, [nini@ghsis.org](mailto:nini@ghsis.org)

### **Azerbaijan**

Azerbaijan DLP Alumni Association  
Tural Kerimli

Azerbaijan Human rights Foundation  
[tural.kerimli@foundation.az](mailto:tural.kerimli@foundation.az)

Saadat Novruzova  
Head of Division on Legal Enlightenment, Office of the Ombudsman of the  
Republic of Azerbaijan  
[saadat\\_n@yahoo.com](mailto:saadat_n@yahoo.com)

### **Armenia**

Armenian Young Women Association  
Contact person: Lilit Asatryan  
E-mail: [lilit.asatryan@aywa.am](mailto:lilit.asatryan@aywa.am)  
[www.aywa.am](http://www.aywa.am)

## **Appendix 2: Democratic Leadership Program background information**

The Democratic Leadership Program (DLP) is an initiative established by the Political Directorate at the Council of Europe. The objectives of the DLP is to develop and strengthen the political skills of young potential leaders who have demonstrated a clear commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law and who are active in youth branches of political parties, non-governmental organizations, journalists, trade unions, employees in national and local administrations, etc.

The program also aims at building confidence between these different categories of young leaders from different societies and ethnic communities, and it is designed to ensure the existence of a veritable network of Alumni of the DLP, who should become the initiators of activities to be organized within the core program.

On a converging track, the Council of Europe, through the DLP, has provided financial assistance and substantive input to seminars and training program undertaken by outside organizations involved in like-minded initiatives, including the Moscow and the Tbilisi Schools of Political Studies.

The DLP provide participants with practical training courses in the necessary skills (conflict-management and team work, leadership, relations with the media and campaigning, project management) that will enable them in the future to take responsibilities in political, administrative and civil society structures. Participants are encouraged to build national groups and clubs and to organize their own DLP activities with the support of the overall DLP.

The DLP network is comprised of more than 250 Alumni who come from 16 European countries.

### Appendix 3. Suggested Links for Further Information

MKD:	<p><a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Macedonia">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Macedonia</a> - detailed information</p> <p><a href="http://www.macedonia.cjb.net/">www.macedonia.cjb.net/</a> - detailed information</p> <p><a href="http://www.historyofmacedonia.org/">www.historyofmacedonia.org/</a> - history</p> <p><a href="http://www.macedonia.org/">www.macedonia.org/</a> - detailed information</p> <p><a href="http://www.mymacedonia.net/">www.mymacedonia.net/</a> - detailed information, language analysis</p> <p><a href="http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mk">www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mk</a> - statistics, demographics</p> <p><a href="http://www.culture.in.mk">www.culture.in.mk</a> - culture news</p> <p><a href="http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/macedonia/">www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001/macedonia/</a> - news articles on the conflict</p> <p><a href="http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr115">www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr115</a> - analysis of the conflict</p> <p><a href="http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61662">www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61662</a> - human rights</p> <p><a href="http://www.newbalkanpolitics.org.mk/">www.newbalkanpolitics.org.mk/</a> - articles on political issues</p>
SRB:	<p><a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbia">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbia</a> -detailed information</p> <p><a href="http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/rb">www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/rb</a> - statistics, demographics</p> <p><a href="http://www.answers.com/topic/history-of-serbia">www.answers.com/topic/history-of-serbia</a> - history</p> <p><a href="http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388">www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388</a> - detailed information</p> <p><a href="http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/serbia/political_profile_en">ec.europa.eu/enlargement/serbia/political_profile_en</a> - political profile</p> <p><a href="http://www.serbia-info.com">www.serbia-info.com</a> - news portal</p> <p><a href="http://www.srbija.sr.gov.yu">www.srbija.sr.gov.yu</a> - official site of the government</p> <p><a href="http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61673">www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61673</a> - human rights</p>
BIH	<p><a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina</a> - detailed information</p> <p><a href="http://www.historyofnations.net/europe/bosniaandherzegovina">www.historyofnations.net/europe/bosniaandherzegovina</a> - brief history</p> <p><a href="http://www.ericdigests.org/1995-2/bosnia.htm">www.ericdigests.org/1995-2/bosnia.htm</a> - information on the war</p> <p><a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnian_Genocide">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnian_Genocide</a> - Bosnian genocide</p> <p><a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnian_War">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnian_War</a> - Bosnian war's history</p> <p><a href="http://www.sarajevo.ba/en/">www.sarajevo.ba/en/</a> - Sarajevo website</p>
MONT.	<p><a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montenegro">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montenegro</a> - general information</p> <p><a href="http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mj">www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mj</a> - statistics, demographics</p> <p><a href="http://www.visit-montenegro.com/tourism-mi.htm">www.visit-montenegro.com/tourism-mi.htm</a> - travel information</p>

	<p><a href="http://www.vlada.cg.yu/eng/">www.vlada.cg.yu/eng/</a> - official site of the government</p> <p><a href="http://hwww.einnews.com/serbiamontenegro/">hwww.einnews.com/serbiamontenegro/</a> - news portal</p>
HRV:	<p><a href="http://www.hr/croatia">www.hr/croatia</a> - general information</p> <p><a href="http://www.vlada.hr">www.vlada.hr</a> - official site of the government</p> <p><a href="http://www.hr/darko/etf">www.hr/darko/etf</a> - detailed information regarding science and history</p> <p><a href="http://vlib.iue.it/history/europe/croatia">vlib.iue.it/history/europe/croatia</a> -- links to numerous organizations and detailed historical overview</p> <p><a href="http://mirror.veus.hr/myth/">mirror.veus.hr/myth/</a> - an article about the ideology that stood behind forming Yugoslavia</p> <p><a href="http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/croatia0903/">www.hrw.org/reports/2003/croatia0903/</a> - human rights watch publication about refugees</p> <p><a href="http://www.mythinglinks.org/euro~east~Balkans~Croatia">www.mythinglinks.org/euro~east~Balkans~Croatia</a> - for Croatian history, arts and mythology</p>
ALB:	<p><a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albania">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albania</a> general information</p> <p><a href="http://www.balkanum.com/">www.balkanum.com/</a> - discussion forum (various opinions and topics), world news connected with Balkan countries</p> <p><a href="http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/al">www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/al</a> - general information</p> <p><a href="http://digital.library.unt.edu/govdocs/crs">digital.library.unt.edu/govdocs/crs</a> - Congressional Research Service country background report regarding problems, history, external policy, trafficking, social problems and development</p> <p><a href="http://www.km.gov.al/english/default.asp">www.km.gov.al/english/default.asp</a> - government of Albania, Department of Information</p> <p><a href="http://www.albca.com/aclis/">www.albca.com/aclis/</a> - arts, culture and history</p> <p><a href="http://vlib.iue.it/history/europe/albania.html">vlib.iue.it/history/europe/albania.html</a> - history, universities, government and media</p>
GEO:	<p><a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgia">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgia</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.humanrights.ge/eng/">www.humanrights.ge/eng/</a> - web portal of human rights in Georgia (NGOs)</p> <p><a href="http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51553.htm">www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51553.htm</a> - religious freedom report 2005</p> <p><a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_Europe">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_Europe</a> - general information and history</p> <p><a href="http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/georgia/">www.eurasianet.org/resource/georgia/</a> - daily news regarding Georgia and other Eurasian countries</p> <p><a href="http://www.caucaz.com/home_eng">www.caucaz.com/home_eng</a> - Weekly online publishing articles and reports about Georgia and South Caucasus</p> <p><a href="http://georgien.blogspot.com/">georgien.blogspot.com/</a> - culture, history and economy of South Caucasus, mainly Georgia</p> <p><a href="http://photo.hit.ge/forum/index">photo.hit.ge/forum/index</a> - Georgian photo club and historical monuments gallery Os</p> <p><a href="http://www.internet.ge/en">www.internet.ge/en</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.humanrights.ge/eng">www.humanrights.ge/eng</a> - web portal on human rights in Georgia</p>

ARM:	<p><a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenia">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenia</a>  <a href="http://www.armenica.org/">www.armenica.org/</a> - complete history of Armenia  <a href="http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/Asia/Armenia/_Texts/KURARM/home.html">penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/Asia/Armenia/_Texts/KURARM/home.html</a> - an interesting book about Armenian history  <a href="http://hrw.org/doc/?t=europe&amp;c=armeni">hrw.org/doc/?t=europe&amp;c=armeni</a> - Human Rights watch report  <a href="http://www.armenianhighland.com/">www.armenianhighland.com/</a> - wonderful page on Armenian history and culture  <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Genocide">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Genocide</a> - an article about the Armenian Genocide</p>
AZE:	<p><a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azerbaijan">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azerbaijan</a>  <a href="http://www.azeris.com/history/index.htm">www.azeris.com/history/index.htm</a> - history and forum  <a href="http://www.zerbaijan.com/var/undp.htm">www.zerbaijan.com/var/undp.htm</a> - regarding the conflict in Nagorno Karabah  <a href="http://www.azer.com/#Azerbaijan">www.azer.com/#Azerbaijan</a> - large website about Azerbaijan  <a href="http://www.azerbaijan.az/">www.azerbaijan.az/</a> - general info  <a href="http://www.azerb.com">www.azerb.com</a> - NGOs</p>

## **Appendix 4. The Declaration**

### **Declaration**

Of the "Balkans-Caucasus" Conference Participants

Committed to continuous efforts for promotion of intercultural dialogue, climate of tolerance and peace,

Having considered the painful experiences of conflict of the countries from the Balkans and the Caucasus during the transition period,

Acknowledging the need for constant active engagement for achieving and maintaining intercultural and regional cooperation,

We, the participants of the "Balkans- Caucasus" conference, held in Ohrid, between December 18 and 22, 2005, hereby,

**Declare to adhere to and promote the principles of intercultural tolerance and peace, based on mutual respect.**

*Underscore* the importance on collaborative effort of all relevant societal actors, including government and civil society, for the promotion of culture of dialogue and nonviolence.

*Acknowledge* the need of, and call for a more active role and enhanced responsibility of young people from the regions of the Balkans and Caucasus in designing and implementing activities aimed at promotion of the intercultural dialogue.

*Call for* active regional cooperation among countries from the respective regions, and for enhanced cooperation between the regions of the Balkans and Caucasus, especially in view of the similarities of their problems and the need to learn from each other's experience.

*Highlight* the need for learning from best practices, research, documentation and sharing of positive experiences in multicultural work, reconciliation and dialogue.

On behalf of the participants,

December 20, 2005, Ohrid

**Appendix 5. List of participants on the conference and the study visit**

<b>No</b>	<b>Name and surname</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Organization</b>
1	<b>Nemanja Starovic</b>	Serbia and Montenegro	Serbian Renewal Movement / DLP Club Serbia
2	<b>Artemon Cukalla</b>	Albania	Liberal democrats youth and students
3	<b>Nana Saginashvili</b>	Georgia	International Union ERTOBA
4	<b>Vanja Karanovic</b>	Serbia and Montenegro	Association of citizens for affirmation tolerance, religions freedoms and humanity
5	<b>Sladjana Milunovic</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Consultant
6	<b>Blerta Selenica</b>	Albania	Training institute of Public Administration/ training manager
7	<b>Narmin E. Mammadova</b>	Azerbaijan	Reliable Future
8	<b>Saadat S. Novruzova</b>	Azerbaijan	Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of Azerbaijan Republic +ADELPA organization
9	<b>Ilir Osmani</b>	Kosovo	Kosovar Youth Council
10	<b>Valon Kurhasani</b>	Kosovo	Kosovar Youth Council
11	<b>Shahin Bayramov</b>	Azerbaijan	Association of Young Azerbaijan Friends of Europe
12	<b>Munir Mammadov</b>	Azerbaijan	Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of Azerbaijan Republic +ADELPA organization
13	<b>Alina Kosyan</b>	Armenia	Armenian young women association
14	<b>Aram Harutynyan</b>	Armenia	Nominated by Balkan Caucasus NGO network
15	<b>Dragan Ristov</b>	Macedonia	FRESTA program Kanal 77

16	<b>Stojce Todorovski</b>	Macedonia	Center for civil action - CCA
17	<b>Dejan Dodovski</b>	Macedonia	Youth Cultural Centre-Bitola
18	<b>Saso Dodovski</b>	Macedonia	Youth Cultural Centre-Bitola
19	<b>Sreten Koceski</b>	Macedonia	Community Development Institute
20	<b>Rudina Zeka</b>	Albania	Human Rights in democracy center
21	<b>Kliment Gligorov</b>	Macedonia	Common values Skopje
22	<b>Anita Vojnovska</b>	Macedonia	Common Values Skopje
23	<b>Biljana Cavkoska</b>	Macedonia	European University
24	<b>Daniela Kuzmanovska</b>	Macedonia	Coalition Sega
25	<b>Risto Karajkov</b>	Macedonia	University of Bologna
26	<b>Miodrag Stamboldziev</b>	Macedonia	Center for Civic Initiative
27	<b>Dimce Kanevce</b>	Macedonia	Coalition Sega
28	<b>Dimce Josifovski</b>	Macedonia	Coordinator
29	<b>Goran Apostoloski</b>	Macedonia	Technical assistant
30	<b>Violeta Josifoska</b>	Macedonia	Program assistant
31	<b>Slavica Indzevska</b>	Macedonia	Speaker
32	<b>Jonuz Abdulai</b>	Macedonia	Speaker
33	<b>Snezana Manceva</b>	Macedonia	Speaker
34	<b>Albert Hani</b>	Macedonia	Trainer

### Participants in the study visit

N°	Name and surname	Country	Organization
1	<b>Sreten Koceski</b>	Macedonia	Community Development Institute - Macedonia
2	<b>Dimce Josifovski</b>	Macedonia	Community Development Institute - Macedonia
3	<b>Jelena Nikitovic</b>	Serbia	City Hall – Local government - Kragujevac
4	<b>Kristina Jovanovic</b>	Serbia	Active with various institutions in Belgrade, Serbia
5	<b>Milly Antonia Dollan</b>	Croatia	Croatian Radio, international program
6	<b>Violeta Josifovska</b>	Macedonia	Together network – European network - CPP- CDI
7	<b>Saso Serafimovski</b>	Macedonia	TV MENADA Tetovo

**Notes:**