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WRITE US

Did our newsletter make you think? Or do you have a different opinion regarding some of the topics? We would be delighted to hear from you and would like to invite you to send us your comments, opinions and questions. We will publish a selection of the entries in the next issue.

Write us at fokus.westbalkan@forumzfd.de

FOKUS

The Kosovo Dilemma

The recent border conflict has catapulted Kosovo back on top of the international political agenda. Streets were blocked, one Kosovar policeman died. A further escalation of the conflict was prevented, but the situation remains tense: Pristina insists on enforcing its independence, Belgrade refuses to recognize it and the Serbian minority in Northern Kosovo is caught in the middle. Which ways lead out of this complicated situation? Dragoslav Dedović, consultant for the Western Balkans at forumZFD, analyzes the situation and discusses three scenarios.

As a breakaway province of Serbia, Kosovo separated from Belgrade de facto in 1999 – or rather, it was occupied by NATO. Yet the majority of Kosovo-Albanians experienced this as liberation, whereas the Kosovo-Serbs understood the same events as an attempted forceful separation from their motherland. This was preceded by Belgrade's surrender in the same year following a 78-day air strike by NATO forces. What followed was a shaky, ambiguously-formulated UN mandate, which meant the exclusion of Kosovo from the state monopoly of Serbia but not quite independence. The multi-ethnic slogans from the Western powers did not do a good job of concealing the ethnic cleansing in the reverse direction: first the Albanians fled Milošević's troops, then non-Albanians fled the Albanian paramilitaries allied with NATO. The second phase of this violent ethnic "segregation" took place before the very eyes of NATO soldiers.

The Ibar River became an ethnic boundary, which passed through the very centre of the town of Mitrovica. To the north, on approximately 15 per cent of Kosovo's territory, the Serbs represent the clear majority; to the south of this unofficial boundary it is the Albanians – in their eyes, the people of Kosovo – who rule the roost. The absence of war in Kosovo could not belie the state of society: the ethnic divide remains perhaps the most conspicuous in the entire region of former Yugoslavia.

In 2004, the discontent of several Albanian hardliners culminated in acts of violence against the Serbian minority. In 2008, the Americans decided to grant Kosovo

independence; the Western European allies followed this decision, with few exceptions.

The price the Albanian political elite had to pay for a "supervised independence" was a package of laws and provisions drawn up outside of Kosovo (the Ahtisaari Plan). At its core, it meant independence for Kosovo on probation. The Western powers (the USA and EU) consequently restricted the sovereignty of the new state in advance. At the same time, they vehemently defended its formal independence in all international councils where Belgrade attempted to prevent international recognition. The price the Serbian political elite must in all likelihood pay for the EU admission they strive for is relinquishment of Kosovo. Or at least this is what German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel stated during her visit to Belgrade this August.



Newborn: The monument in the center of Pristina was consecrated in 2008 as part of Kosovo's declaration of independence. (Foto: [Hans-Jürgen Becker](#))

It isn't plain sailing for the Western states on the Kosovo question yet though. The EU's problem is that five members of the Union follow Belgrade's line of argument and refuse to recognize Kosovo. The Americans' problem is an even larger one, namely that Russia and China support Belgrade's position in the Security Council. This means that Belgrade has a kind of veto right on the Kosovo question through Moscow and Beijing.

How can the bartering look in this game? Is a solution that would permanently prevent an escalation of violence even possible?

There are several seemingly unchangeable factors in this conflict: every government in Belgrade to recognize Kosovo would not be able to

survive, particularly since the governing democrats barely differ from the conservative-national block on the Kosovo question rhetorically speaking. Moreover, every government in Pristina that appears to yield to Belgrade will come up against virtually insurmountable domestic policy issues.

Would it then be possible to fit a square peg into a round hole? Several unofficial proposals are circulating.

Scenario A – EU admission and autonomous North

Belgrade receives an unusually large amount of support in preparing for admission to the EU: an appointment for the negotiations. In return, Serbia renounces – at least tacitly – all claims on Kosovo. Territorial autonomy for the Kosovo Serbs in the north of the country would be conceivable as the carrot. A kind of “Ahtisaari Plan Plus X” or extensive autonomy, as in South Tyrol.

The problem in this solution is the West: it is hardly to be expected that the Western political elite would be prepared to pay the political and actual costs of the region’s fast-track admission into the EU in the midst of the enlargement fatigue and financial crisis.

Scenario B – The division of Kosovo

A division of Kosovo would be in line with the current de facto will of the Serbian minority north of the Ibar River in Kosovo. According to the Kosovo Serbs in the north, they still live in Serbia; Belgrade supports this position, as Kosovo’s statehood officially does not exist for Belgrade. Pristina would then receive international recognition and the blockade in the UN Security Council would be void.

This seemingly simple solution, which high-ranking Serbian politicians recently even presented to the Serbian and international community through the media, has clear faults however. Why?

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Literature

International Crisis Group. [North Kosovo. Dual Sovereignty in Practice.](#)

Marko Prelec. [North Kosovo Meltdown](#)

In the 1990s, the Badinter Arbitration Committee set up by the European Community resolved that the boundaries of the republics within the disintegrated

Yugoslavia were to be respected as state boundaries. Two decades later, the West violated this resolution by recognizing part of a republic – the province of Kosovo

– as a state. To this very day, the Western political elite have repeated one mantra: Kosovo is *sui generis*, it does not set a precedent! The credibility of this legal argument added as an afterthought for a politically-motivated venture is questionable.

The division of Kosovo must also be declared an exception, as *sui generis*. The credibility of such a classification would be even more doubtful. What would still stand in the way of the secessionist movements of the Bosnian Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Macedonian Albanians in Macedonia and the Muslim Bosniaks in Serbia otherwise? With what arguments would they be denied what the Serbian minority in Kosovo has been granted?



Religious-historical bond: In Kosovo exist some of the most significant Serbian-Orthodox monasteries – such as the one in Gračanica from the 14th century. (Foto: Q. Dombrowski)

A renewed level of escalation during further “segregation” of the ethnicities would probably be the consequence. This would signify the ultimate victory of the inhuman concept of *ethnic cleansing* in the Western Balkans though.

Then again, one could say that the philosophy with which the West accompanied Yugoslavia’s demise already contained this “segregation” of the peoples implicitly or explicitly. The ethnicization of society was far too readily misunderstood as democratization. The regional communicating vessels were disregarded: one did not ask whether the independence of Slovenia, even considered unproblematic by Milošević, could later help cause apocalyptic violence in Bosnia. The present-day Kosovo dilemma is the consequence of this misjudgment, among other aspects.

Scenario C – Occupation of Northern Kosovo

Forcible occupation of the north of Kosovo by government troops with support from the West would mean a stream of Serbian refugee to Serbia. The

political and human costs of this solution are so high that those involved hopefully know how this escalation can be avoided.

Conclusion

The EU has long been active in the Western Balkans, but it must understand that its absorption capacity has a de-escalating effect and its enlargement fatigue an escalating one. If predominantly Catholic Croatia becomes a member of the EU in 2013, only Christian Orthodox and Islamic sections of former Yugoslavia will remain excluded. This will not go unnoticed among those building their politics on the radicalization of cultural differences.

How about a new Marshall Plan for those that remain excluded with the prospect of admission to the EU at the same time and with honest European mediation?

How about massive reinforcement of the alternatives to ethnic nationalism with enhanced commitment within civil society work to reconciliation and dealing with the past?

Regardless of how the future solutions look, the decision-makers must apply some of the basic principles of civil conflict transformation in their search: They need to clearly identify the factors that exacerbate the conflict, exploit the conflict-abating potential, tirelessly develop the common ground and, where possible, induce the elements of a win-win situation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Network for Peace: Regional initiative ReMI founded

In June 2011, the regional peace initiative ReMI was officially founded in Derventa/Bosnia and Herzegovina. ReMI is a network of twelve local NGOs. It aims at promoting tolerance, nonviolence and mutual respect. Thereby ReMI will contribute to the long-term goal of establishing sustainable peace.

Sixteen years after the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the country is in a difficult political and social situation. The Dayton Agreement, which ended the war in 1995, institutionalized the partition of the country along ethnic lines. Today, Bosniaks, Bosnian-Serbs and Bosnian-Croats live mostly separate lives. Religious and ethnic hostilities are on the rise and lead to growing segregation within the population. This affects the youth in particular who are growing up in a climate of rising animosity and intolerance. This situation is a dangerous breeding ground for a new outbreak of violence. Countering this trend requires maximum commitment from all relevant institutions towards sustainably improving interethnic relations and promoting tolerance.



Following an initiative from the ZFD project by *forumZFD* and *pax christi* in Derventa, twelve NGOs from the cities Derventa, Doboj, Zenica, and Šamac in Northern Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 2010 developed the idea to establish a peace initiative. One year later, on 14 June 2011, the Regional Peace Initiative ReMI (Regionalna Mirovna Inicijativa) was officially founded in Derventa. During the inaugural conference, the founders agreed on the vision and core objectives of ReMI: It wants to act as a resource center for promoting tolerance, dialogue, nonviolence and respect for diversity.

The twelve members of ReMI are: Ekologika (Derventa), Merhamet (Doboj), *pax christi* (Derventa), ToPeeR (Doboj), Šesto Čulo (Doboj), Citizens Association for a Healthy Life and Ecology Awareness (Šamac), Primanatura (Doboj), "Sunce" (Derventa) and the Women's Association (Derventa). ReMI is also supported by the OSCE in Doboj and several non-formal support groups for people suffering from war traumas.

"The foundation of ReMI is only the first of many steps", says Lučiano Kaluža, co-

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[pax christi Derventa](#) (German/Bosnian)

["Network for Peacebuilding"](#) (Bosnian)

[forumZFD - Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

worker in the pax christi office in Derventa and chief executive of ReMI. "We are calling on all interested persons, groups, organizations and networks to join the initiative in promoting peace, reconciliation, coexistence and nonviolence in our society."

For the future, it is planned to extend the work of ReMI to a national context. For this, the cooperation with the "Network for Peacebuilding" in Sarajevo will be expanded. The network is a union of more than 60 national and international organizations active in peacebuilding. Together they work towards the comprehensive

reconstruction of the social and economic quality of life, as well as the capacity of the Bosnian society to deal with differences and conflicts in a constructive and non-violent way.



On September 21st, ReMI organized its first big event: the International Peace Day in Derventa. More information in the 'News in brief'.

Kosovo

Promoting conflict-sensitive Journalism

With a new project in Kosovo focused on conflict-sensitive journalism, forumZFD aims at strengthening local radio stations while, at the same time, initiating a debate on dealing with the past within the media.

The 3rd of May 2011 was the international day of freedom of the press. Like every year, celebrations took place in Kosovo. But was there much to celebrate? Not really. According to the latest Freedom House report, Kosovo has the lowest degree of press freedom within the whole Western Balkans.

In Kosovo, very different, often contradictory 'truths' about the past exist. The society is marked by nationalism and strong distrust between ethnic groups. The lack of dealing with the past (DwP) is reflected by a polarized media landscape. Media often take sides with political figures, support convicted war criminals and occasionally even reveal the identity of protected witnesses. Journalists who report on sensitive issue are subject to political pressure and intimidation. This has been identified as the biggest threat to freedom of expression by the Kosovo Association of Professional Journalists. Particularly on the local level, there is a great need for independent reporting.



Charly Loufrani (right) manages the new project and is being supported by his project assistant Doruntina Basha.

radio networks and second, by supporting them in addressing issues related to DwP in a professional journalistic way. The idea is that any meaningful process of dealing with the past has to involve local journalists. This idea is not new, but the approach is somewhat different. Many Kosovar media are used to getting financed through media campaigns designed by international organizations. This has caused an 'international project fatigue': Local media are increasingly reluctant to get involved with projects that do not include any prospect of financial benefit.

Therefore, forumZFD is trying to draw their interest differently: The entire project is being designed in close cooperation with representatives from the Kosovo civil society and media. Local journalists are involved from the beginning. They contribute with their own strategies, methodologies and work-frames based on their assessment of what the au-

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Links

[forumZFD - Kosovo](#)
[DWP - Dealing with the Past - Portal](#)

With a new project, forumZFD tackles this situation with a dual approach: first, by strengthening local radio stations through existing



dience needs with respect to DwP issues. In this way, the project design is given directly into the hands of those local actors who can publicly raise questions concerning DwP in Kosovo.

So far, the project has been met with great interest and enthusiasm from the participating radio stations. By the end of September, a roundtable will bring together radio journalists and representatives from NGOs active in

DwP. Together they will analyze the shortcomings in reporting, particularly with respect to DwP, and develop alternative concepts of radio programs that cover challenging topics. In a next step, journalists from different radio networks will jointly produce regular radio programs on issues related to dealing with the past. Thereby *forumZFD* hopes to create more space for pluralism and free thinking in Kosovo.

United in the Search: Meeting of Albanian and Serbian Family Associations of Missing Persons

Many people from Kosovo are still considered to be missing. What is, twelve years after the war, the standpoint of Kosovo-Albanian and -Serbian Family Associations of Missing Persons on the issue? What are their plans for the coming months? What is expected from the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP)? These questions were at the core of the latest meeting of Family Associations, facilitated by *forumZFD*.

As a consequence of the Kosovo conflict, the fate of around 1.800 missing persons is still unknown. Family members of missing persons have established associations in order to find out together what happened to their beloved ones. One of their main tasks is lobbying for their cause. They are being assisted by the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), e.g. through capacity building, grants programs and the organization of joint meetings.

Investigating the fate of missing persons is an important component of dealing with the past (DwP) in Kosovo and is a focus of the work by *forumZFD*. This is why *forumZFD* has been cooperating with ICMP in a series of trainings on soft skills such as communication, advocacy, lobbying, negotiation, mediation and nonviolent conflict resolution. Furthermore, *forumZFD* has been facilitating joint meetings between representatives of Kosovo-Albanian and Kosovo-Serbian family associations since in 2009.

This kind of close cooperation of Serbian and Albanian actors is an exception in Kosovo. Normally the two groups live and work in separate



Wall of pictures in Pristina: Many families are trying on their own to clarify the fate of missing relatives.

worlds. Therefore, the facilitation of these meetings is a particular challenge requiring great trust from the participating organizations in *forumZFD*. Due to its long experience and special expertise in the field of civil conflict transformation in Kosovo, *forumZFD* was asked to act as facilitator. The ability to understand the needs and interests of the different groups and to use this knowledge within the projects has enabled *forumZFD* to successfully facilitate the meetings for several years now. This ability was developed through the organization of many intra- and interethnic events related to conflict transformation in Kosovo.

The latest meeting of the family associations took place in Miločer/Montenegro from 7th to 9th of June 2011. During the meeting which brought together eight Albanian and eight Serbian family association representatives the current situation as well as common plans for the future were discussed. Furthermore, the participants agreed on a joint plan of action until the end of the year.

The highlight will be a conference aimed at supporting on-going investigations into the issue. Compared to previous years, these inves-

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[forumZFD - Kosovo](#)

[ICMP - Kosovo](#)

[DWP - Dealing with the Past - Portal](#)

tigations have slowed-down recently. “The responsible institutions are not doing their jobs properly”, complained a participant of the meeting in Miločer. Therefore the conference intends to bring together relevant bodies active in the field, such as government commis-

sions, international institutions, family associations and NGOs. The aim is to inform each other of current developments and to develop a plan of necessary steps for the future.

Macedonia

Tetovo – City of Peace

Why do people smile so tellingly when they hear that Tetovo wants to become a city of peace? Tetovo of all places! This is the city where, in 2001, the violent clashes between Albanians and Macedonian security forces began. “Yes”, says the mayor of Tetovo, Dr. Sadi Bexheti, “we have to improve our image, otherwise we are not attractive for investors.” *forumZFD* is consulting the city in the process.

With almost 60.000 inhabitants, Tetovo is the fourth largest city in Macedonia. With 23%, Macedonians are a minority here, 70% of the population is Albanian, alongside Roma and Turks. As in other cities, the ethnic groups in Tetovo rather live next to than with each other. The fans of the Albanian and Macedonian football teams regularly put up fierce fights, the pupils from the five secondary schools are taught in segregated shifts, the Albanian children by now speak only rarely Macedonian; in short, it is the ‘usual’ segregated daily life in Macedonia.

Can support for improving the image of a city be a field of action for *forumZFD*? Yes, if it is about improving the coexistence between the ethnic groups. The beginning of the cooperation between *forumZFD* and the city of Tetovo is by itself already a success story. The contact was established by Ylber Jahija, responsible for public relations in the mayor’s office of Tetovo. He attended a Youth Leadership Training in the past. “The training helped me to get this job”, he says. There he met with

people now working for *forumZFD* in Skopje. It was Ylber’s idea to contact them.

Together with Ylber, *forumZFD* reached out to

very diverse organizations in Tetovo: women’s groups, Roma organizations as well as Macedonian and Alba-



Traditional dance and music: In May 2011, the initiative „Tetovo – City of Peace“ was officially presented.

nian groups because even the NGOs, except for few exceptions, are segregated. Ylber presented the idea and then had the organizations tell him about their projects. For many of them it was the first time to meet with a representative from the city. Everyone was willing to support the initiative to let Tetovo become a city of peace.

During a work lunch in early 2011, representatives from all of the NGOs sat together for the first time to share experiences from their projects. They put together a list of activities that could be done as part of the peace initiative. This successful meeting was only overshadowed by the lack of interest from the mayor: Despite an invitation he did not show up.

In May 2011, the initiative “Tetovo – City of Peace” was officially presented during a meeting of women’s groups. The only downside was that two of the most important NGOs refused to attend the event due to their irritation felt towards the mayor.

The first official action of the initiative was a training for Macedonian and Albanian pupils on nonviolent communication – organized together with the city administration. The city financed the transport and all participants received a t-shirt saying:



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[forumZFD - Macedonia](#)

“Tetovo – City of Peace”. The mayor himself handed out participation certificates. Of course the press had been invited as well.

Equally successful was a joint training for directors and teachers from the five secondary schools in Tetovo. At the core of the workshop was the question of how education can contribute to a better interethnic climate.

The continued success of the peace initiative depends on the commitment of everyone involved to actually wanting to change something. The two NGOs have already signaled their willingness to meet with the mayor. Now it is also about convincing him that his very personal commitment is necessary to really – and not only *pro forma* – improve the coexistence of ethnic groups in Tetovo.

Western Balkans - Regional

Youth Workshop: Challenging Identity Concepts with Street Art

What is identity? It offers a feeling of security and belonging, yet it can also exclude when used to stir up differences. The most recent border conflict between Serbia and Kosovo in late July 2011 highlighted the topicality of this debate. At the same time, youths from the Western Balkans and Germany met in southern Kosovo to make a public contribution to the identity debate through street art.

The international youth workshop “DE/ CONSTRUCTING Identities” took place at the invitation of the Forum Civil Peace Service (*forumZFD*) and pax christi Aachen with support from the German embassy in Pristina. From 23 July to 1 August, 2011, 25 young people from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and Germany met in the southern Kosovo city of Prizren. The workshop’s focus was on the question of what makes up one’s own identity. The young people used street art to come up with creative solutions.

In the Western Balkans, the question of identity is omnipresent and all too often a source of conflict. Exclusive identities dominate following the war and violence that shattered the social ties within the multiethnic communities. Affiliation to an ethnic group is defined in clear distinction from the ‘others’. This situation makes it

difficult for people to live together and prevents non-violent resolution of many conflicts. For this reason, *forumZFD* is committed to promoting inclusive identities and a peaceful coexistence. This requires that exclusive identity



A permanent mark: The young participants explore Prizren and put up their identity collages.

concepts are questioned and broken down publicly.

Within the scope of the workshop, the young people were encouraged to consider their own identity and to reflect on it creatively. They first developed the necessary theoretical and practical tools for this: with the support of a professional trainer, they familiarized themselves with different identity concepts and were encouraged to enter into constructive debates on the subject of their own perception of identity. Berlin street artist duo *Various & Gould* then shared the basics and techniques of street art with them, along with the importance of the public in this art form.

In the main part of the workshop, the young people combined theory and practice: they painted self-portraits and created posters featuring key words that described their identity through personal messages and interests. They then cut these posters into strips and rearranged them. These identity collages were then put up in public places in Prizren, leaving a permanent mark on the cityscape. Through the collages, viewers gain an impression of what con-

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Links

[Workshop - Website](#)
[Various & Gould](#)



cerns the young people, and are at the same time encouraged to reflect on their own identity.

“The workshop showed that innovative, artistic methods such as Street Art are very well suitable to break open rigid ways of thinking, stimulating discussions and

positive social energy as a consequence,” summarizes Jane Felber, project manager in the *forumZFD* office in Pristina. “Art is not only entertainment. People perceive the world, conflicts and even themselves differently through art. This change of perspective is still applied way too little in peace work.”

***forumZFD* focuses on European Networking and Cooperation**

The influence which the prospect of EU accession exerts on the developments within the countries of the Western Balkans is obvious. Apart from promoting political and socioeconomic reforms, several initiatives have been launched to strengthen the topic ‘peacebuilding by civil society’ within the EU framework. *forumZFD* and its partners follow and actively join these processes.

The European Union’s ‘carrot and stick’ policy to induce reforms within the countries of the Western Balkans is viewed with mixed feelings by many people in the region. At the same time, the prospects associated with an EU accession – material wealth, constitutional standards, freedom to travel etc. – are met with broad support from within the population.

The participation of civil society in the discussions about the prospects of an EU accession is necessary not only for critically accompanying the actions by the EU and the implementation of reforms. Through the direct connection of NGOs to the living situation on the ground, it is possible to include different perspectives and to highlight needs.



Networking in Brussels: The participants exchange views with representatives from other EPLO members.

Office (EPLO). EPLO combines the expertise of its members, follows the day-to-day EU politics and promotes the dialogue with representatives from EU institutions, e.g. through the organization of discussion rounds.

In September 2010, representatives from *forumZFD* participated in an EPLO seminar in Belgrade on ‘EU Enlargement and Peacebuilding’ organized together with the Serbian member organization Fraktal. In July 2011, *forumZFD* participated in a similar event organized by EPLO in cooperation with the EN.CPS partner Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR) in Bucharest.

The collaboration in these networks helped to intensify the exchange with other European organizations involved in peacebuilding in the Western Balkans. These include the EPLO partner organizations Nansen Dialogue Network, IKV Pax Christi, Kvinna till Kvinna and Saferworld.

The largest event so far has happened in May 2011 in Brussels. For four days, 33 representatives from peace organizations in the Western Balkans visited EU institutions in Brussels as well as the International Criminal Tribunal for Ex-Yugoslavia in The Hague. The participants were mainly chosen from organizations that, in the past, had only little access to the EU. The study trip was organized as part of the

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Links

[European Network for Civil Peace Services \(EN.CPS\)](#)

[European Peacebuilding Liaison Office \(EPLO\)](#)

[Fraktal](#)

[Nansen Dialogue Network](#)

[IKV Pax Christi](#)

[Kvinna till Kvinna](#)

[Saferworld](#)

Regarding the EU, *forumZFD* is involved in several ways. Over the course of the last few months, contacts have been established with representatives from the EU delegations in the project countries. Furthermore, *forumZFD* is part of the European Network for Civil Peace Services (EN.CPS) which is member of the Brussels-based NGO-platform European Peacebuilding Liaison

People2People program by the European Commission (EC). *forumZFD* was the official co-organizer.

During the trip, the group met with various representatives from the EC and the European parliament. Through this they became more familiar with the EU institutions in Brussels and the EU Enlargement policy. A special highlight was the visit of a court session with the defendant Vojislav Šešelj during the day trip to the Criminal Court in The Hague.

Germany

Evaluation of Civil Peace Service highlights its positive impact

The Civil Peace Service (ZFD) is an effective and important instrument of the German peace and development policy. This is certified by a broad evaluation of the ZFD which was recently presented by the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ). The evaluation was conducted by an independent Swiss research institute. One out of eight selected case study countries was Serbia.

“The evaluation confirms that the ZFD successfully supports civil society within crisis regions in non-violent conflict transformation and promoting peace”, says German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Dirk Niebel. “In the now following reform process, the strengths as shown by the evaluation will be further developed and the weaknesses addressed. It is especially important to increase the impact and sustainability of the measures as well as the effectiveness of the ZFD program management, so as to develop the ZFD as an instrument that effectively complements other German and International instruments for promoting peace.” The case study regarding Serbia confirms that the activities by the ZFD and its projects in the country have been “very relevant to the promotion of peace within Serbia.” Important recommendations to the ZFD actors active in Serbia, *forumZFD* and Kurve Wustrow, include strengthening regional cross-border

The events over the last few months were a successful impulse for the promotion of an intensified exchange between peace workers from the region. In the future, *forumZFD* will continue to actively shape the European networking and cooperation. By working together with our European partners, we can further increase the impact of our work – the more so as the role of Europe for the further developments in the region is likely to increase within the next years.



activities, systematically including gender-relevant topics as well as a stronger focus on the sustainable development of organizational structure of local partner organizations.

The first implementing measures will, however, be carried

out on the level of the KonsortiumZFD (see info box). Four workgroups have been established which will develop concrete proposals for reform regarding the topics ‘Strategy/Profile’, ‘Procedures’, ‘Public Relations’ and ‘Increasing Impact’. In order to implement these proposals, additional financial resources are necessary. The crucial point will be, as pointed out by Tilman Evers, member of the Executive Board of *forumZFD*, whether “the political will exists to take the evaluation seriously and to implement it.”

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INFO - The KonsortiumZFD

The **Civil Peace Service Group** (KonsortiumZFD) is an association of the executive agencies of the Civil Peace Service (ZFD). The group's tasks include the continuous development of the ZFD, the exchange of experiences, the improvement of the administrative conditions as well as the representation of common objectives towards the BMZ and the public.

Website: www.ziviler-friedensdienst.org

zfd Ziviler Friedensdienst
Wir scheuen keine Konflikte.



News & Events

News in brief

Albanian language course for Macedonian youths in Struga meets great demand

About 30 Macedonian youths took part in a three-week Albanian Summer Course in the Struga youth center, co-founded by *forumZFD* – more than twice as many than expected. After the basics of the language and culture were covered, the course finished with a visit of an Albanian café, where the youths could order confidently in Albanian. This is no everyday occurrence in a city where students are taught in segregated schools and where many circles of friends and even cafés are mono-ethnic.

“The great interest in the course shows that the openness of young Macedonians to the Albanian language and culture is increasing”, says lecturer Jeta Hani. “They wish to be able to better communicate with their Albanian schoolmates and neighbours.” Thus a window opened: Not only did the participants put Albanian ring-tones onto their cell phones and keep visiting Albanian cafés, they also want to continue with the course. They enjoy learning the language and they know that Albanian will gain in importance regarding their chances for the future in a multilingual Macedonia.

The *forumZFD* experts’ council for the Western Balkans convened for its second session

In 2010, the *forumZFD* project department established an experts’ council for the Western Balkans. In September 2011, the council convened for its second yearly session.

The main topics for discussion were the current state of conflict transformation and peace consolidation in the region, the further strategic focusing of the *forumZFD*, an internal evaluation of the work in Kosovo as well as the evaluation of the ZFD by the BMZ. The members of the experts’ council are Dr. Lutz Schrader (FernUniversität Hagen), Dr. Martina Fischer (Berghof Conflict Research), Dr. Dušan Reljić (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik), Dr. Martin Quack (former *forumZFD* peace consultant), Miriam Schroer-Hippel (diploma psychologist), Oliver Knabe, member of the Executive Board (*forumZFD*), Carsten Montag, Head of Department Projects and Programmes (*forumZFD*), Karen Siebert, representa-

tive of the cooperation partner pax christi Aachen and Dragoslav Dedović, consultant for the Western Balkans (*forumZFD*).

For the next issue of the Fokus.Westbalkan a detailed article about the background, composition and work structure of the experts’ council is in preparation.

Upcoming Public Events

Macedonia

1. 10. 2011 | Peace Run | Skopje

The fourth peace run in Skopje will this year for the first time be organized independently by the municipality of Gazi Baba. Representatives and children from all neighboring municipalities will take part in the event.

Contact: Silke Maier-Witt (maier-witt@forumzfd.de)

27. 10. 2011 | Opening of *forumZFD* office | Struga

After the arrival of our new peace consultant Kirsten Schönefeld, the official opening of the *forumZFD* office in Struga can now be celebrated. Besides a reception, there will be a presentation of the various activities in Struga – theatre, music, mediation and more.

Contact: Kirsten Schönefeld (schoenefeld@forumzfd.de)

11. 11. 2011 | Open Days of Schools | Struga

For one whole day, the vocational, secondary and elementary schools in Struga will open their doors with a full program. They will, among other things, present the activities which have been carried out in cooperation with *forumZFD* and UNICEF. These include workshops on mediation and democratic participation.

Contact: Kirsten Schönefeld (schoenefeld@forumzfd.de)

Bosnia and Herzegovina

18.10.11 | Youth visits houses of God | Derventa

Youths from the region Doboj-Brod-Derventa visit houses of God of the local Serbian-Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim and Jewish congregations. The focus is on inter-religious dialogue and getting to know other religions. The event is supported by the GIZ office in Sarajevo.

Contact: Michele Parente (pc.derventa@teol.net)



Staff News

Kirsten Schönefeld, our new peace consultant in Struga and Kičevo, introduces herself



In August, I joined the *forumZFD* Macedonia team as project manager in Struga and Kičevo.

The project was launched in order to ease the situation in the schools of the Albanian-Macedonian municipalities. In previous years, these were marked by interethnic quarrels between the students.

My task is to coordinate the activities by local partners aimed at promoting multiethnic dialogue in schools as well as within the multiethnic youth centers which are supported by us *forumZFD* in cooperation with UNICEF.

Before I joined *forumZFD*, I worked as a social scientist and head of office within the German Parliament regarding the topic integration and Islam policies. After that I worked for the GIZ in Uganda as a counselor in conflict transformation for local governments. During my studies, I focused on interethnic conflicts and extreme right-wing parties in the post-socialist Central Eastern Europe and worked for the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Warsaw and the German Marshall Fund in Bratislava. Furthermore, I worked in Poland in the context of a one-year volunteer program and was active in the working group on Russia at amnesty international. I am looking forward to my work in Macedonia and the collaboration with my colleagues of *forumZFD* as well as to strengthening the interethnic dialogue in Macedonia with our local partners.

Our colleague Doruntina Basha (Kosovo) wins Belgrade Theatre Award

Our colleague Doruntina Basha from the *forumZFD* office in Pristina was awarded the first prize in a competition for socially engaged theatre plays. The prize is presented by the Belgrade Heartefact Foundation which is devoted to the European integration of the countries in the Western Balkans and to overcome the regional consequences of war.

With her play 'Gishti' (The Finger), Doruntina won against 120 co-competitors. The play focuses on the lives of an elderly woman and her daughter-in-law ten years after the disappearance of her son during the Kosovo war. The play covers sensitive topics such as commemorative culture, dealing with the loss of relatives as well as the role of women within families bereft of men due to the war.

The jury praised especially the dramatic potential and the high artistic and literary level of how the play explores difficult topics: "The piece stands out also for its unique style which avoids any type of pathetism, its sharp use of humour and irony, and poetic approach to the consequences of the newest history of our region."

We congratulate Doruntina and are happy about her success.

Staff developments within the *forumZFD* | Western Balkans

+++ Doruntina Basha supports Charly Loufrani as project assistant in our new Journalism project in Kosovo

+++ Asmir Coković and Zorka Matijević leave our project in Novi Pazar/Serbia. We wish them every success in the future.

+++ Ballsor Hoxha finished his work for the *forumZFD* office in Pristina/Kosovo. We also wish him every success in the future.

Imprint

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Throughout the issue, the male form has been used so as to ensure a better readability of the text. This, of course, encompasses the female form of the words.

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The *forumZFD* is an umbrella organization of 38 member organizations and recognized by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development as a sending organization. It is committed to develop civil methods for conflict management and for the Civil Peace Service. Peace consultants by *forumZFD* work in projects in the Western Balkans, the Middle East and the Philippines. In its Academy for Conflict Transformation, *forumZFD* trains peace consultants who work worldwide for the prevention of violence and the promotion of peace.



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pax christi im Bistum Aachen

The peace of Christ was a sign of hope for many people in the destroyed Europe at the end of the Second World War. Out of this hope people of formerly hostile nations, mainly Germans, French and Polish, reconciled with each other. This was the beginning of the pax christi movement which by now is active for peace and justice in more than 60 countries. pax christi in the diocese of Aachen is part of the world wide pax christi movement. As founding-member of Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst pax christi Aachen carries out projects of the Civil Peace Service in the Western Balkans in cooperation with *forumZFD*.



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