



GPKT Phase II - Youth Council Report No. 23

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GPKT Youth exchange experience with Greek NGO on youth participation



GPKT Youth Council members, alongside representatives of the newly established Youth Council Kumanovo, met in January for a two-day workshop on youth participation. Supported by EWI, the workshop was organised by the youth NGO Centre for Intercultural Dialogue (CID), whose president is Stefan Manevski, one of the founders of the GPKT Youth Council. The initiative had been presented at the December 2006 Congress of the GPKT Youth Council and was seen as an opportunity for exchange of knowledge and experience on local and regional youth councils, youth participation and funding opportunities for youth projects.

External participants engaged in the workshop included a member of the Greek NGO Cultural Triangle of Prespes and two volunteers from France and the Netherlands currently working for the organisation joined discussions. The focus was on different modes of youth participation and the role of youth councils. The guests shared how youth councils are organised in their countries and the levels at which they are active, namely in schools, and at the local, regional, national and international levels. Dimitris Soufidis from the Greek Youthnet presented their national network, which has expanded from 30 to 200 local youth councils over the past ten years.

The second workshop day started with a presentation of the *Youth in Action* programme of the European Commission and continued with the drafting of youth project proposals. The participants identified youth councils' needs and planned youth exchanges in four thematic areas: motivation of young people; European awareness and tolerance; cultural exchange; and intercultural learning between Balkan and EU countries.



This workshop was the first activity to build upon the relationships established during the GPKT Youth Summer Internships: the Cultural Triangle of Prespes had hosted Stefan Manevski for a month-long internship over June and July 2007. The Greek NGO presented the upcoming international youth exchange that will bring youth from GPKT to the Prespa region in Greece along with young activists from the Prespa-Ohrid cross-border region - an area where EWI also works on strengthening cross-border co-operation.