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## S.M.ART PROJECT

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The S.M.ART (Social Media & ART for intercultural dialogue) project is part of the Erasmus+ Programme and aims at promoting mutual learning and exchange of good practices among youth, looking for a common strategy to foster social inclusion of minorities. It consists of three phases:

- Sarajevo (BiH), April 2015: youth exchange and sharing of personal experiences in the field of intercultural dialogue. The final goal was to launch a social campaign for minorities' inclusion;
- Mannheim (DE), September 2015: training course on EU project management, EU strategies and funding opportunities. Transfer of know-how from EU members to candidate countries;
- Treviso (IT), April 2016: training course on the organisation of an international youth event.

The project has been promoted by the German non-profit organisation *Starkmacher* together with the Italian *Associazione bNET*. It has involved 40 young people, being members of NGOs from seven different countries: Italy and Germany, Albania (*RadioPulla Communication and Development*), Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Studio 128*), Kosovo (*Kosovo Artists for Peace*), Macedonia (*Mladinski Evropski Edukativen Centar*) and Montenegro (*Svijet Mira*).

I, as a political science student with a background in Politics and European Integration and a very deep interest in the Balkans, Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular, have taken part in the project. *Associazione bNET* launched, indeed, a collaboration with the Master of Arts "Interdisciplinary Research and Studies on Eastern Europe" (MIREES, University of Bologna – Forlì campus), which I am now attending and where I have the opportunity to deepen my knowledge of the area, also by learning the Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian language. In Sarajevo I could share with the other participants the key findings of my BA thesis "The political representation of minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina" and I contributed to the launching of the social campaign for what concerns the filming part.

Art has no borders, but rather a universal language. That is why, in an era in which coexistence seems far from the reachable and cultural differences have become obstacles rather than sources of mutual enrichment, intercultural dialogue should find a new energy, starting from what unites people and indiscriminately makes them all enraptured spectators.

What more suitable stage than Sarajevo? Sarajevo, namely a city that has found its added value, but also its pain, in its inherent multiculturalism, hosted the first phase of the project. Boys and girls discussed about and directly experienced intercultural dialogue, both among them and in the city. Our goal was to launch a social campaign for intercultural dialogue and social inclusion of minorities through painting, filming and photography. On April 30<sup>th</sup> the Academy of Fine Arts eventually hosted our works' exhibition.



*The face of society*

Close-minded people, who could have the key to freedom and to a better society, still choose ignorance. There is, however, a light which can reverse dynamics and make the world more inclusive, through openness and understanding (the ear), knowledge (the books), dialogue (the bridge), love and peace (the dove).

Bosnia and Herzegovina has not fully emancipated from the conflict's legacy yet. Its infrastructures, economy and industry need structural interventions which, however, are not likely to come in the short-run, as well as the needed political (national) compromise. Scars not only are those concrete visible marks left, but also, and more importantly, those invisible walls in the relationship among people. In Mostar the level of ethnic division is still unbelievably high. Relations with neighbouring countries are still poisoned by nationalism, too. The project's participants from Kosovo, for instance, well know the difficulty they had to get the permission to enter Bosnia and Herzegovina (something that young people in the EU can hardly imagine). But Sarajevo showed us all its vitality and its firm resolution to be revived. This is something palpable, something you can read in people's eyes and breathe in the city's streets. That's why our efforts for the promotion of intercultural dialogue and social inclusion started in Sarajevo...

...but they did not end there: promoting intercultural dialogue has become a mission for every participant. We will do this mainly through our Facebook page "Know your culture, enjoy others" (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Know-your-culture-enjoy-others/1626477320907835?fref=ts>), by

inviting friends and acquaintances to enter into contact and directly experience different cultures (posting pictures adding the hashtag #trycultures). The video we shot (being both directors, technicians and actors) was published on YouTube with the title "Sarajevo, make us one!" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLv2yje67p4&feature=youtu.be>). We all are now called to spread the message and to be committed to intercultural coexistence in our everyday life.

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