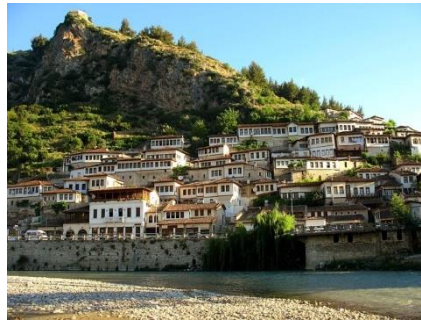


Youth Exchange

“Ecotourism: Developing an attitude that respects the environment and the cultural heritage”



Venue: Berat (Albania)

Period: 18 - 23 October 2016 (travel days excluded)

Applying organization: IPSIA Acli

<http://www.ipsia-acli.it/>

<https://web.facebook.com/ipsia.acli/?fref=ts>

Hosting Organization: Institute for Environmental Policy IEP

<http://iep-al.org/>

<https://web.facebook.com/Institute.for.Environmental.Policy/?fref=ts>

Participants: 38 from Albania (7), Italy (7), Spain (7), Belgium (5), Latvia (6), Kosovo (6)

Language: English

Background and theme of the youth exchange:

Tourism is an inestimable resource for the local communities and should contribute to the protection of the natural and cultural heritage. Instead, it often happens that tourism becomes one of the main causes of the ecosystems' deterioration and has therefore a negative impact on the habitats and landscape, through the pollution of air and waters and the scattering of hardly-biodegradable waste. In this way, despite representing an important economic resource, tourism compromises the bequest we will pass to future generations in terms of richness of the flora and fauna and preservation of the environment.

It is then fundamental for tourism to become 'green' and worry about preserving the natural and cultural capital instead of damaging it. For this reason, ecotourism is a concept that is widely spread nowadays.

By ecotourism it is meant a responsible attitude of the traveller, aiming at the preservation of the environment in the respect of the local populations. Ecotourism is then first of all a philosophy, a way of life that arises from the traveller's consciousness of his/her impact on the environment. The aim of this youth exchange is then exactly to stimulate reflection and come to the consciousness that our behaviour has an impact on what surrounds us, impact that can be reduced with a more responsible attitude.

The youth exchange will be held in Berat, recognised as UNESCO's cultural heritage.

Many activities will take place in the open air and foresee the interaction with the local people. Simulations will also be done to calculate the participant's ecological footprint on the environment. In this way, the participants will acquire a deeper consciousness of the consequences of their behaviour on the environment. Through the interaction with the locals, participants will also be lead to reflect about the weight of their cultural patterns when approaching a new culture and develop a more open and tolerant attitude.

Overall aim:

The main goal of this exchange is to foster reflection on a lifestyle that is aware and respectful of the ecosystem we step in, by meaning both the environment and the culture that occupies that environment.

Objectives:

- Understand the meaning of ecotourism (a philosophy, an attitude towards life)
- Acquire a deeper consciousness of the footprint of our behaviour on the environment through games and simulations
- Develop a more open and tolerant attitude by becoming more conscious of our own cultural patterns when approaching 'the other'
- Experience a low-carbon and respectful way of life throughout all the youth exchange

Target group:

The participants selected will be youngsters having an interest in the themes of the exchange, willing to know more about ecotourism, sustainable lifestyles and intercultural learning. Also, the participant associations will select youngsters willing to involve themselves in associationism and play an active role in the promotion of the exchange's themes of ecotourism and sustainable lifestyle at the local level, in their own communities, as their contribution will be essential during the dissemination activities after the exchange. Therefore, motivation will be the main selection criteria.

In the selection procedure, it will not be taken into consideration the ethnicity, the religion, the sexual and political orientation, the social background or the level of education. No previous experience or knowledge in the field of ecotourism will be required. The youth exchange addresses also youngsters with fewer opportunities: indeed, this youth exchange is meant to be a good learning occasion even for those youngsters who are unemployed or outside the education system.

The exchange also targets people facing economic and geographical obstacles, like, for example, youngsters from islands and countryside. It will be up to the partner associations to ensure the involvement of this target group through their daily activities in youth centres and schools and also through the promotion of the exchange online.

Then, as the determining factor in the selection will be the participants' motivation in taking part in a multicultural experience, their willingness to put themselves to the test and to learn, their curiosity towards new cultures and places, the selection will be carried out by taking into account the motivation letter and also through an interview online or at the associations.

Financial conditions:

Food and accommodation are covered by the programme.

Travel costs will be reimbursed after the Youth Exchange within the budget foreseen by the distance calculator of the European Commission. In detail:

Italy: up to 170 €

Spain: up to 170 €

Albania: up to 20 €

Kosovo: up to 80 €

Latvia: up to 170 €

Belgium: up to 170 €

Please keep in mind that, in order to be reimbursed, you have to save all travel receipts (plane tickets, bus tickets, train tickets, etc.). Without the receipts, the costs can not be reimbursed.

Meals:

Breakfast, lunch, coffee and dinner will be provided. Because one of the aims of the exchange is to lower the participants' footprint on the environment, the meals will follow the vegetarian diet (no meat and fish). Special food will also be prepared for those who will inform us in advance concerning particular allergies or diets.

Insurance:

Insurance is each participants responsibility. We strongly suggest you to have a travel insurance and/or the European Health Card.

Venue

The exchange will take place at the Berat Backpacker Hostel, situated in the historical centre of Berat, recognized by UNESCO's as world heritage. The whole structure will be available for our activities as we booked the whole hostel for the days of the exchange.

You can check here for more detailed information and pictures: <http://beratbackpackers.com/>

Address: 295, Gorica, Berat, Albania

Travel to Berat

The only way to get to Berat is to get a bus from Tirana's Southern-West Bus station (Dogana Square). The travel lasts about two hours and costs around 3-4 euros. You can buy the tickets on the bus in Lekes (the local currency). Busses leave every 30 minutes (more or less) and the last one is around 5 pm.

In order to arrive to Tirana, the easiest way is to travel by plane and land at Tirana's international airport, which is called 'Nene Teresa', Mother Teresa (for those from Kosovo check bus connections from all main Kosovar cities: Prishtina, Prizren, Gjakova, etc.).

Other solutions are to land in other nearby airports: Kukes (Albania) and Prishtina (Kosovo). There are direct bus connections to Tirana from both cities. Keep in mind that the last busses are usually in the afternoon (around 4-5 pm). The price varies: around 5 € Kukes-Tirana/ 10 € Prishtina-Tirana.

For any problem you can contact us and we can suggest you the best solutions.