

Summer Seminar for Young Leaders of the Western Balkans

Objectives

The adhesion of the Visegrad countries to the European Union has been helped by their partnership because the difficulties emerged within the countries were alike in a number of cases, and solutions could be found easier by trying to work together. With this project, the ICDT aims at identifying a *common agenda* for the participating parties in the first place. The European integration is not going to be the only topic in the seminar. We would like the courses to show the participants how (inter)regional cooperation contributes to the successful process on the path of joining the EU integration. The ICDT believes that by bringing together talented young students from Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia we can contribute to the development of the region. By introducing them the effectiveness of *regional cooperation* – through the examples of Central and Eastern European cooperation models – and the cooperation of these countries during the EU integration, we can share how cooperation is possible despite of political disputes among the parties.

Background

Since the 1999 war in Kosovo, the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia has been basically non-existing even on a grassroots level. The declaration of independence brought even decline in the relationship of the two parties. Following the 2001 events, Macedonia has successfully prevented an internal conflict with the Ohrid agreement. Many Macedonians blamed Kosovo and Albania for being responsible for the conflict as they were the main supporters of the UÇK. Although there is a higher level of dialogue, the relations are still very far from perfect between the two sides.

The project goal is to ameliorate the tension among these parties by bringing together young and ambitious university students from the three nations. The ICDT is well aware that this is only a little step towards regional coexistence and cooperation but we still consider it significant. On the other hand, the project seeks not only to assist the dialogue among the future leaders of Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia, but also to help them to obtain knowledge on topics in connection with the European integration. This kind of knowledge can be transferred the best way by sharing the experiences of countries that joined the European Union within the past couple of years.

Project

Participants will take part in a seminar starting in the last week of July 2010, in Hungary, where they will learn the practical knowledge on the EU and the accession process of the Central European countries. They will also have the possibility to learn the importance of regional cooperation, and accession to the NATO. During these training sessions, the role and history of the EU institutions will be shared, and brainstorming sessions will convene. The students will have the possibility to meet with the representatives of Hungarian political parties, some regional representatives of the European Parliament, political analysts, local representatives of international organizations, delegates of local authorities, and well-known international experts. We believe these experts, many of whom were involved in politics from the first democratic elections in the region 20 years ago, can share their experience and give advice on how to choose the best model for these countries to follow.