

# “Not only News”

strengthening civil society

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Fostering democratic, peaceful and pluralistic societies in Southeast Europe.

## ‘EMPLOYED, EMPOWERED’ : a successful start



**Employed  
Empowered**

Director of Programmes, Corinna Noack-Aetopoulos, with Danijela Korać-Mandić of the Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre.

### Meeting of the JHP editors in Belgrade

A meeting of the Joint History Project Workbook editors, from Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia and the FYR of Macedonia took place between March 31st and April 1st, in Belgrade, Serbia.

The meeting provided an opportunity for team members to discuss developments and present and future challenges for the Joint History Project.

Following the successful publication of the English, Serbian and Greek language editions, the Workbooks will be published in the Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, and Macedonian languages.

*“...celebrate the extraordinary courage and contributions of refugees past and present.”*

***Kofi Annan, Former UN Secretary General.***

With the underlying principle of recognising the skills, individuality and capacities of displaced persons, rather than the negative stereotypes, ‘Employed, Empowered’ aims to encourage and provide practical support to people in Serbia who have been affected by forced migration.

This unique ‘people centred’ and practical approach combines direct economic, legal and social support for displaced persons on the ground, as well as thorough labour market research and a series of cross-disciplinary working groups.

Read more about this on page 2

### New Chair of the Board of Directors

Take a look at page 11

Meet the CDRSEE Team! Take a look at page 11 To find out more about who we are.

## "Not only News"

200 million—the number of migrants globally.  
(Source UNHCR)



## Employed Empowered



Help desk staff in Šid: Ljubica Radišić and  
Nikolina Gagrica

30-35—the approximate percentage of Roma people  
currently in Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo who  
have never been registered as citizens, refugees or  
displaced persons.  
(Source-Norwegian Refugee Council)



Help desk staff in Novi Sad.

Continued from front page:

April saw the initiation of the groundbreaking project 'Employed, Empowered' in cooperation with the Centre for Peace and Democracy Development and the Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre.

On course to be carried out according to the project timetable, Professor Mihail Arandarenko and Dr. Goran Opacic have finalised the scope and methodology of the two pieces of research with the CDRSEE and the partners. The surveys will cover demographic issues, as well as the current state of the labour market in Serbia.

The results of these surveys will be presented to a round-table of experts from a variety of sectors, who will utilise the data over a period of 3 months, to formulate practical, feasible solutions on unemployment, training, access to services and options about integration and return.

On a visit to Serbia in March, the CDRSEE team met with partners and also toured some of the help-desk facilities.

These help desks (10 in all) will provide direct practical help to displaced and vulnerable persons on a variety of issues.

The project will be launched at a press conference on May 28th, 2007 in Belgrade, with speakers from the EU and Serbia.

For information on 'Employed, Empowered', please visit the website at

<http://www.employed-empowered.net/>

Or contact Corinna Noack-Aetopulos [corinna@cdsee.org](mailto:corinna@cdsee.org)

This project is a cooperation of



**This project is funded by the European Union.**

The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of CDRSEE and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

## The Joint History Project

The winter of 2006 and the start of 2007 have seen the JHP go from strength to strength: building partnerships, raising visibility and improving the processes and responsiveness of the project through democratic consensus building.

- Fostering democratic values in the next generation of SEE citizens
- Contributing to multi-perspective history education
- Empowering Teachers
- Capacity Building
- Supporting Advocacy
- Bolstering Democratic Processes and responsibility

### From front page:

Ensuring that the JHP process is collaborative, cumulative and democratic from the start, the editors and local managers of the upcoming new language versions of the Workbooks met in Belgrade to share ideas, offer suggestions and strengthen regional networking.

### JHP in Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina and FYR of Macedonia:

The translation, editing and production of the Workbooks all of these local languages is well underway, and on target for completion in Autumn, 2007

### JHP in Serbia:

The **Fourth Teacher Training Workshop** took place in **Novi Sad**, between **2-4 February 2007**, with attendance by the Deputy Education Secretary of Vojvodina at the welcome dinner.

### JHP in Croatia:

The CDRSEE presented its plans to implement the Joint History Project in Croatia, to an interested and motivated audience in Zagreb on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The press conference was opened with a presentation by the CDRSEE and the Partner Organisation, the Croatian-Helsinki Human Rights Committee.

JHP presented in Brussels and in Zagreb: Read more about this on page 10

JHP Film! - Read more on page 10!

The translation, editing and production of the Workbooks in Croatian is well underway, and on target for completion in Autumn, 2007

### JHP in Cyprus:

The CDRSEE has just signed contracts with UNDP Cyprus to implement the JHP in cooperation with the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research.

The workbooks will be produced in Turkish, and Teacher Training will be multi-communal.

For information on the JHP, please contact Project Coordinator, George Georgoudis. [george@cdsee.org](mailto:george@cdsee.org)

**JHP continued:**

The current phases of the JHP are made possible through the kind financial assistance of the following organisations.

In Albania:



USIP

In Bosnia & Herzegovina and Croatia:



In Serbia:



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FUND FOR AN OPEN SOCIETY - SERBIA



Private Austrian Donors

In Cyprus:



In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:

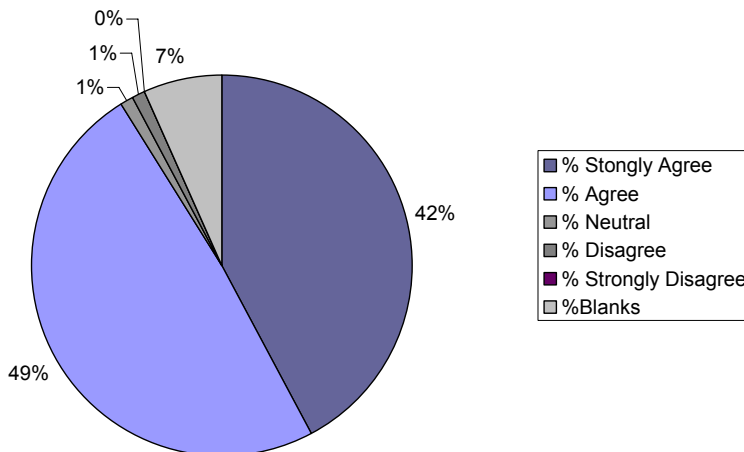


The Southeast European Joint History Project  
An EU-funded project managed by the European Agency for Reconstruction



The European Agency for Reconstruction is responsible for the management of the main EU assistance programmes in the Republic of Serbia (including UN-administered Kosovo), the Republic of Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

I would definitely use this material in my classes



The JHP's most valuable resource is its people, and without the teachers of the region, the JHP would not be possible. It is the CDRSEE's on-going commitment that the JHP is responsive, inclusive and continually improved. Following each of the Teacher Training Sessions, participants were asked to fill in evaluation forms about the workshops. The chart is a compilation of the data from the 4 workshops carried out so far in Serbia.

## New initiatives

### CDRSEE Contributes to the EC's '2008 Year of Intercultural Dialogue'



#### Culture

Following the DG Culture's call for proposals for the 2008 Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the CDRSEE submitted an idea, which has subsequently been published on the DG's website, as one of only 5 proposals from Greece.

#### MY FAITH AMONG OTHERS"

Religious beliefs have formed the basis for daily life, cultural norms and social interaction throughout history. The fundamentals of faiths and the ways in which they are interpreted, disseminated and adhered to, form an undeniable facet of social cohesion in any society, as well as potential for friction.

The underpinning notion of "My faith among others" is that religion, even when not practiced strictly is so deeply intertwined with culture, an individual's notion of self, a collective idea of identity and perspective, that 'inter-cultural dialogue' must necessarily involve some discussion about the cultures' religious influences.

It is not our contribution's aim to highlight differences or invoke conflict, but instead to open a sphere for the notion that a diverse and inclusive European Community is necessarily rooted in the recognition of a number of different traditions of belief systems.

Faith has provided humans with moral codes, common symbols and collective reference points through which to form the feelings of a community and belonging, as well as to invoke an emotional base for the practicalities of managing daily interaction and how to treat others and how to mark group and personal milestones. Social cohesion, and group survival has depended on a collective acceptance of agreed moral and behavioural norms and these norms, although human and day-to-day in nature and manifestation, have been upheld throughout the history of a faith, through an emotional imperative based on religion.

"My faith among others" is an initiative to allow the new generation to describe, in their own way, their feelings about their own faith and the other faiths around them, and through this, draw out the common threads.

The initiative will involve essays, art and a publication, prior to bringing young people together in a neutral, yet open-minded venue to share the joyous social aspects of their faiths and to learn about those aspects of other faiths, and to discover the shared religious bases of Europe's diverse cultural roots.

The CDRSEE, as a continuously self-reflective, participative and inclusive organisation that strives to uphold these principles in both its projects and internal practice, constantly generates, develops and implements new ideas and innovative programmes.

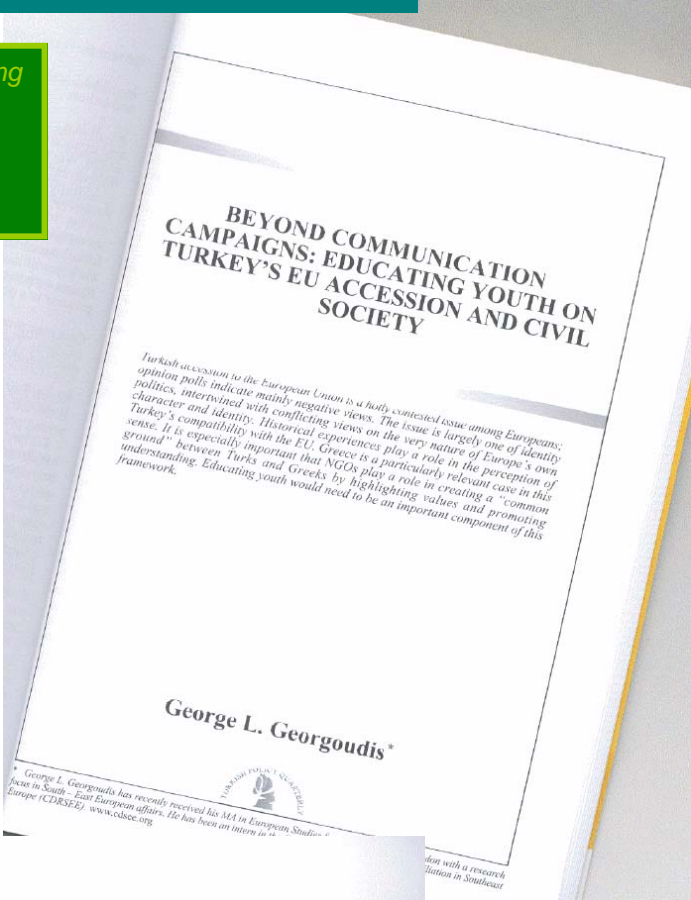
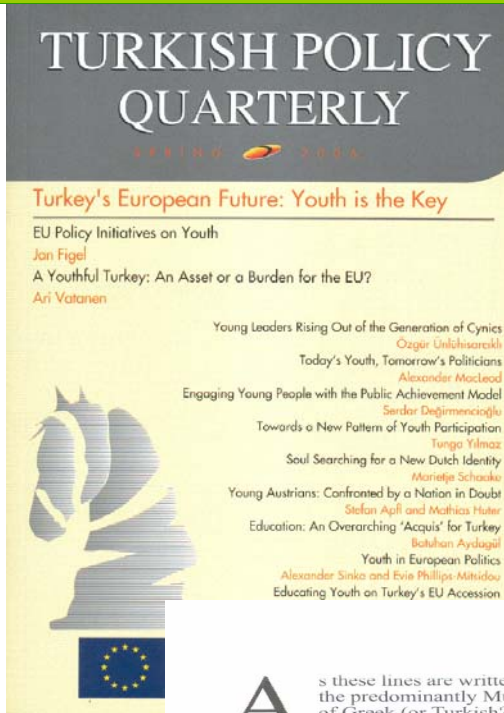
As a civil society organisation, the ideas are responsive, informed by the social changes as well as the perceived needs of the region: guided and motivated by the expertise, skills, knowledge and courage of the people of the region-working towards ownership and capacity building through all of our projects.

At this time of change and potential further change in the near future, the CDRSEE is working on ideas to engage with young people and also work with the peoples of Kosovo towards self determination and a peaceful future.

Should you have any ideas about future projects for the CDRSEE, or have any comments about this newsletter, we would welcome your thoughts. [ruth@cdsee.org](mailto:ruth@cdsee.org)

PUBLISHED ARTICLES

'Beyond communication campaigns: educating youth on Turkey's EU accession and civil society', an article by Project Coordinator, George Georgoudis, was published in the prestigious ' Turkish Policy Quarterly'.



"National histories have so far placed emphasis on separation; on creating stereotypes that played on the need to clearly demarcate the nation-state from its neighbours to ensure survival and continuation....."

As these lines are written, in an office very near Thessaloniki's old town, the predominantly Muslim quarter of the city prior to the 1920s, a cup of Greek (or Turkish?) coffee on the side, the music of Stereo Total is coming through the speakers. This being a journal on foreign policy, the reader is not expected to be familiar with alternative rock except that Stereo Total is the side effect of a major shift in European politics. The band is a joint project of German and French musicians. As the lyrics are almost evenly divided into French and German, one can only wonder if the same band could have existed if the European Union had not come into being. Indeed the fruits of Franco-German cooperation, after many years of conflict and war, are not just political but touch even on the very central element of the culture: pop music.

"...It is not a question of using NGOs and civil society to 'manipulate' public opinion [ ] but rather to inform the public and especially the younger generations..."

Looking at the Greek/Turkish relationship under the prism of eventual Turkish accession would lead to going beyond the standard economic gains, and devoting more time to the issues that would take place as a result of the demarcated lines of separation and both sides when Turkey joins the EU, the perceptions will change. More should be done to "bring her" (in this case, of the Greeks and Turks) into the EU. Civil society can play a very proactive role in educating the people.

Turkey and the Debate About the Future of the EU

The policy elite and political leaders often consider EU issues as off-limits to public scrutiny. EU bureaucracy and the very nature of European Union policy making, with the structure of the Commission and the European parliament largely too complicated for the general public to understand, make Brussels seem distant and mostly detached from the problems of the everyday European. For years major decisions over the future of the European Union such as regarding enlargement or closer integration were met with a very clear yawn by the average citizen. However recent developments such as the rejection of the constitutional treaty indicate that public opinion plays an increasingly important role. In fact, with the referenda, it appeared that the public was involved but seems to be in disagreement with the EU bureaucrats are seen to be promoting enlargement, integration, and expanding the EU to 25 members.

"Young people of all walks of life, and not just those involved in academic, have views and want to be heard. .... Dialogue and interaction should be encouraged and promoted.'

The European constitution demonstrated how important the European electorate, with politicians and voters often using the possibility of Turkey becoming an EU member as a rallying point.

'Slobodan Milosevic and the Heroic Quest for the Truth, by Nenad Sebek, Executive Director, was published in 'The European Voice' a weekly independent print and online newspaper dedicated to EU issues.

## Slobodan Milosevic and the heroic quest for the 'truth'

[return to site](#)

[email this to me](#)

By Nenad Sebek

**The death last week of former Serbian and Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic before the end of his trial at the Hague War Crimes Tribunal is bound to add yet another controversy to the plethora of historical perspectives in the Balkans.**

Without a definite verdict by a court of law, Milosevic and his legacy will remain an issue of dispute. But while the verdict in Croatia or among Kosovar Albanians is bound to be clear - devil incarnate - among Bosnian Serbs and in Serbia proper, the jury will be out for decades to come: saint or sinner? Defender of Serbs or their own worst enemy? Nationalist hero or a communist opportunist? Martyr or butcher?

The controversy of a past which is too close for comfort to be history is not surprising. More surprising is that people, events and processes which have been dead for more than a hundred years can still be controversial and viewed from completely opposite sides. For example, was the Ottoman Empire really the greatest evil that befell the Balkans, as it is perceived in the history books of Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria? Or was it an enlightened era during which the Ottoman Turks showed generosity and tolerance for their Christian subjects - as is being taught in Turkey or among the Muslims of Bosnia?

*"Surely, investing in reconciliation is a part of post-conflict efforts and, surely, prevention is cheaper than peacekeeping."*

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rather than one

"acknowledged truth" the textbooks present points of view that exist in different countries, respecting the facts that can be securely established but also exposing the relativism of what is often thought of as historical "truth" and establishing multi-perspectivity in history teaching. Instead of presenting one consensual view, the workbooks show the perspective of the 'other' by comparing different versions of the same event. It is no small feat considering that they have been compiled by a team of more than 60 historians from 11 countries.

So far, the books have been translated from English into Greek and Serbian and with the support of the Serbian Ministry of Education they will enter schools this year. Beyond the wildest dreams of the authors, a Japanese version will be launched as a commercial venture later this year as an official history of Southeast Europe. While delighted and encouraged by this development, the CDRSEE is pushing for translations into other regional languages: Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Macedonian. Initial responses from the education authorities in these countries have been encouraging, but funding this endeavour is a major problem.

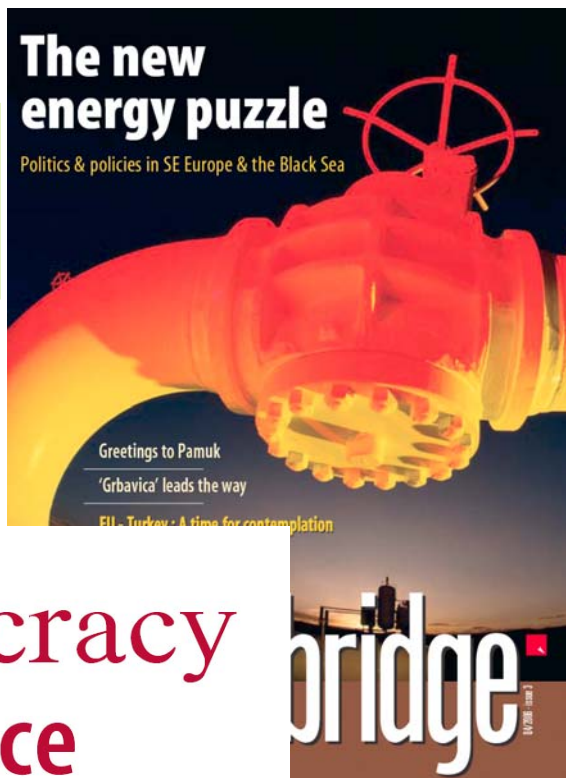
So far, the project has benefited from funding from the US, UK, Germany, Norway, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the Open Society Institute and a number of private foundations and companies including the Leventis Foundation, the Hellenic Bottling Company, the National Bank of Greece, Titan.

Disappointingly, not a single cent has been received from the European Union even though the project embodies all the values and goals of the EU. It costs about €130,000 to translate, print, distribute and train a group of teachers for every language. That is roughly one thousand times less than the cost of a single Eurofighter airplane. Or 13% of a second-hand German-made Leopard II battle tank. Billions of euros have gone into post-war reconstruction in the Balkans. Hundreds of millions go into peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Kosovo today. Surely, investing in reconciliation is a part of post-conflict efforts and, surely, prevention is cheaper than peacekeeping.

• *Nenad Sebek is executive director of the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE)*

*"It costs about €130,000 to translate, print, distribute and train a group of teachers [ ] That is roughly one thousand times less than the cost of a single Eurofighter airplane"*

'True democracy in practice' by Ruth Sutton, Development Officer, was published in 'The Bridge' a quarterly politics and economics magazine that is distributed to 12 countries in the Mediterranean and Southeast Europe



# True democracy in practice

By Ruth Sutton

Without the free expression of opinions, exchange of ideas and access to independent information, the wheels of democracy grind to a halt as voices are silenced and civil society stagnates.

Without the opportunity to discuss issues with people from the other side of an ethnic or religious divide, there is little hope of resolving problems.

Without a secure and open forum for debate, there is no support for cultivating individual and group participation in, or responsibility for the democratic process.

The Albanian-Serb Information Exchange Forum provided all of the above in Kosovo for 18 months; a safe, yet open space offering the only independent news service for Kosovo in three languages simultaneously, as well as a debate forum. It was implemented as an on-line endeavor and during its 18-month pilot run (2004-2006)

pean Agency for Reconstruction), among others, all congratulated the work of this initiative and highlighted its critical and unique role in the region.

However, due to a lack of funding this sphere for democracy has now all but closed down. Currently operating as only a news website, the potential for the peoples' voices to be heard has faded, and with it, hope.

A dialogue forum  
The Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE, based in

nership with Beta Media and KosovoLive News created, implemented news and dialogue forums equals-professionals of the communities as a cooperative endeavor.

*"Without the free expression of opinions, exchange of ideas and access to information, the wheels of democracy grind to a halt as voices are silenced and civil society stagnates."*

The forum made an essential contribution to the democratic process in Kosovo, which in turn contributed to the stability of the region of Southeast Europe. In addition, it served as a morale booster as it provided a positive, proactive model of how communities divided by recent conflict, ethnic and religious hatred can and do work together in peace and cooperation toward a shared goal.

At this time of transition, uncertainty and insecurity in Kosovo, the need for this public arena is greater than ever.

As talks continue about the final status of the province, the issues, hopes, fears and

*"However many treaties are signed, however many presidential or ministerial handshakes are delivered and however rigidly systems of governance are constructed, without true communication and understanding between the peoples of Kosovo, there can be no durable solution, no true self-determination and no proper stability in Southeast Europe".*

# frontlines



**CDRSEE at the forefront of defending civil society**

1. Citizens
  2. CDRSEE, Centre for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, Thessaloniki
  3. Helsinki Committee
  4. NGO Future, Prist
  5. Fund for an Open
  6. Balkan Trust for D
  7. The Peace Institut
  8. EDA Developmen
  9. FOSIM,
  10. Kosovo
  11. Open Soc
  12. Liga Pro
  13. FORUM
  14. Belgrade
  15. Centre f
  16. Centre f
  17. Center for Civic In
  18. MJAFT! Movemer
  19. The Journalistic A magazine, Sofia
  20. Center for Develop (CRNVO), Podgo
  21. Civitas Foundatio
  22. Association of Mu for Regionalism, M
  23. EXIT Association,
  29. Vojvodjanka - Regional women's initiative, Novi Sad
  30. Association FORMA F, Mostar
  31. Foundation - Women's Initiative Foundation, Sarajevo
  32. news agency, Belgrade
  33. "Jelena Anzujska" Kosovska Mitrovica
  34. nunity Building, Mitrovica
  35. e Ho
  36. World
  37. enica
  38. Helsinki C
  39. ORC, Tuz
  40. Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), Athens
- With the Stability Pact due for dissolution, and replacement with a regionally owned organisation, the CDRSEE spearheaded a campaign aimed at ensuring that the new organisation, recognises, respects and defends the civil society organisations of the region who have not only contributed so much to peace, democratic change and reconciliation, but have often been the sole catalyst.
- A letter (excerpts below) signed by 40 Civil Society Organisations, was sent to the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe as well as Southeast European Heads of State.
- “Over the past two decades, it was Civil Society that protested against wars, was the first to help refugees, was the first to look into war crimes, was the first to offer a hand to the other”.
- “Without the support and momentum of the Civil Society, the pacts, treaties and handshakes will be little more than gestures.
- It is the Civil Society which has, and will make the difference on the ground”.**
- “Civil societies of the SEE countries were pioneers in regional cooperation even before the formation of the Stability Pact and the launching of the SEE CP. In many cases the bottom up civic initiatives resulted with the first contacts between the SEE national governments.
- They gave, and continue to give heart and soul to the processes of reconciliation and regional cooperation.”**

MEDIA, SPEECHES AND CONFERENCES

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The Vice-Chair of the CDRSEE Board of Directors, Nikos Efthymiadis was a speaker at the prestigious Berlin Process conference 'A Soul for Europe' under the auspices of EC President, Manuel Barroso. His speech covered the importance of culture to Europe's economy and spoke of the need to recognise that Europe's strength lies in its diversity.

As part of a dialogue on history teaching in the Balkans, the JHP was enthusiastically received at the European Policy Centre in Brussels on May 3rd. On the same day, CDRSEE Director, Nenad Sebek presented the JHP to an audience of EU officials, diplomats and representatives of international organisations at an event at DG Enlargement.

JHP participation at French-German history event in Skopje:

Echoing the themes, ideas and goals of the Joint History Project, the French and German Ambassadors to the FYR of Macedonia held a joint press conference to present France and Germany's work towards reconciliation through multi-perspective history teaching.



Held at the National Library in Skopje, on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the event presented France and Germany's cooperative work on reconciliation through history teaching, and highlighted the work of the CDRSEE. Speakers included the French Ambassador, M. Bernard Valero, the German Ambassador, Ralph Bret, the Minister of Education of FYR of Macedonia, Sulejman Rushiti, the Director of the National Institute of History, Mr. Cepreganov and the Executive Director of the CDRSEE, Mr Nenad Sebek.

"Teaching History: the path towards reconciliation in South-Eastern Europe",

Brussels - 3 May 2007.

Under the framework of the core objective Fostering and Building Human Capital - WTI, the Stability Pact continues its active engagement in support of the promotion, translation and publishing of the Joint History Workbooks of the CDRSEE. After the publishing and distribution of the English, Serbian and Greek version of the workbooks, the Albanian version of the books is due to be published by mid 2007. The Stability Pact will continue to support the CDRSEE in its efforts to produce the language version of the books covering other SEE states.

Stability Pact Press release  
The importance of the JHP

At an EU event, organised by DG Enlargement in Zagreb on May 10th, Nenad Sebek presented the JHP to an audience including the EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Integration, Ollie Rehn, Dr Erhard Busek and other prominent figures.

The Regional Youth Conference, entitled 'Generation Europe' was attended by students from all over the Western Balkans and Turkey. Other participants included academics who are directing similar initiatives between France-Germany and Germany-Poland.

JHP Documentary planned.

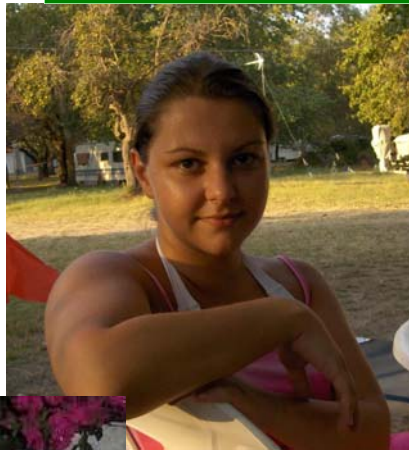
In cooperation with a Belgian based TV production company, the CDRSEE is currently working on a documentary about the JHP

**MEET THE TEAM**



**Corinna Noack-Aetopulos**  
Director of Programmes  
[corinna@cdsee.org](mailto:corinna@cdsee.org)

**Maria Tzelepoglou**  
Financial Officer  
[mtzel@cdsee.org](mailto:mtzel@cdsee.org)



Congratulations to **Albert Koenders**, former Board Member, who has just accepted a position as **Minister for Development Cooperation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**.

We wish him all the best in his new post.



**Nenad Sebek-Director**  
[nsebek@cdsee.org](mailto:nsebek@cdsee.org)

The CDRSEE is delighted to announce that as of November, 2006, **Dr Erhard Busek, Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact** accepted the unanimous election of the Board of Directors to be the **Chair of the Board**.



**Ruth Sutton**  
Development Officer  
[ruth@cdsee.org](mailto:ruth@cdsee.org)



**George Georgoudis**  
Project Coordinator  
[george@cdsee.org](mailto:george@cdsee.org)



**Meri Gjorgjievska**  
Project Coordinator  
[meri@cdsee.org](mailto:meri@cdsee.org)

**CDRSEE Interns: Spring / Summer 2007**



L-R: Grégoire Caye (France), Antonis Hadjiyanakis (Greece) and Gabriella Csanádi (Hungary)

The CDRSEE supports regionally owned civil society initiatives in the Western Balkans as part of a long-term process of reconciliation. The challenge is the fact that there is a lack of genuine peace in the region, despite the huge amount of resources that have been channeled into the former Yugoslavia by the International Community. In order to change attitudes, mindsets and patterns of hostility, the CDRSEE aims to empower citizens from various walks of life in the region who have the hope and optimism necessary, but not necessarily the opportunities, to build a better future for themselves and for their children. All participants in CDRSEE projects serve as nuclei in their own communities to generate a critical mass of people who will sign up to a shared set of civic values that will replace the old paradigms based on ethnicity and nationalism.

**The CDRSEE would like to thank its core sponsors for their continued support.**

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9 Krispou Street  
Ano Poli  
Thessaloniki 54634  
Greece

Tel: + 30 2310 960820/1  
Fax: + 30 2310 960822  
Email: [info@cdsee.org](mailto:info@cdsee.org)

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