



The Balkan Peace and Integration Programme

1991 - present

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about European Dialogue

European Dialogue is an independent, not-for-profit organisation which was launched in 1990 as the UK representative of the **Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (hCa)** - a transnational network of activists and civic organisations which promotes **human rights, peace, democracy and sustainable development in an integrated Europe**. European Dialogue works in partnership with civil society organisations, primarily across Eastern Europe, to advance human rights and social justice.

European Dialogue has many years' experience in organising round-tables and conferences, training workshops, UK study visits and internships. It aims to facilitate the exchange of UK experience in NGO management and capacity building; promoting racial equality, minority rights and community development; and building democratic institutions. The organisation now has a strong base of support within the British and European NGO communities.

Other current projects include:

Ethnic Minorities and Access to Justice in Russia (2003-2005), funded by the European Commission and British Foreign Office, aims to improve human rights and police-ethnic minority relations by promoting a model of community policing which is based on the active involvement of ethnic minority communities in the policing process.

Traveller and Roma Action for the Implementation of Legal and Equality Rights (2004-2006), aims to raise awareness of, and improve implementation of, anti-discrimination legislation in line with EU race equality directive with regard to Roma communities in Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Ireland and the UK (England). Funded by EU - DG Social Affairs and Employment

Turkey and EU membership project (2004-2006) A Turkish-UK exchange of experience project offering models of good policy and practise to assist Turkey in satisfying the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership on the rule of law and treatment of minorities. Funded by EIDHR; partner Bosphorus University, Istanbul.

Roma Rights and Access to Justice in Europe (RrAJE) programme for the Department of International Development (2001-2004) The successful strategic RrAJE programme addressed anti-Roma discrimination and promoted Roma social inclusion in six pilot projects in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, with dissemination in Hungary and Poland. The RrAJE Practice Guidance manual will be available in December 2004. European Dialogue is now developing transnational projects based on RrAJE for implementation within the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 - 15.

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The former Yugoslavia

European Dialogue and the Balkans

...supporting multi-cultural, multi-faith and multi-ethnic communities in the former Yugoslavia

The eyes of the world have been drawn to the former Yugoslavia since its collapse in the early 1990s; a collapse characterised by the onslaught of war and ethnic cleansing, and driven by extreme ethno-nationalism. Despite the prevarications of the international political community in acting in the region, international civil society has been decisively and strongly involved in opposing ethnic divisiveness at all levels. As part of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly, European Dialogue has worked actively in the Balkans throughout and following the conflicts, in order to support multi-cultural, multi-faith and multi-ethnic communities in the former Yugoslavia.

The work of European Dialogue is strongly informed by the region's convoluted history. Although conflicts in the Balkans are not limited to the recent past, the events of the 1990s continue to play a central role in the formation of collective and individual identity and the resulting impact upon the social and political integration of different ethnic groups.

War in the Balkans

The death of Tito in 1980 ended 35 years of cohesive but repressive rule in the former Yugoslavia. Although the political floor was now open for a more democratic form of governance, the instability of the region after 1989 made it vulnerable to the potent alliance of nationalism and corrupted communism, in particular in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia. At a time of economic and political volatility, the strong political ideologies voiced by nationalists such as Milosevic, Tudjman and Izetbegovic received huge public support. Declarations of independence by Slovenia, Croatia and finally Bosnia in 1992 secured the collapse of political unity and established the framework for wars fuelled by politically manipulated ethnic intolerance.

The invasion of Slovenia and Croatia by Serbia in 1991 introduced war to the Balkans, for the first time since WWII, and was followed in 1992 by the Bosnian conflict, lasting until 1995 and involving offensives on all sides. The international political community, reluctant to intervene during the Bosnian war, pursued at length a negotiated peace agreement with the leaders involved. The targeting of the civilian population, often by both army and criminal gangs to induce fear and aid ethnic cleansing, led to increasing public pressure for the international community to intervene to stop the slaughter. However, although military action was taken by NATO in Bosnia in 1995 and, again, as a swift response to the 1998/9 ethnic cleansing of Muslims in Kosovo, these interventions were subject to local and international criticism on the grounds of legality. The relationship between the international community and the former Yugoslavia has therefore been strained at times, despite aspirations towards Balkan integration into the European Union.

The present

Although a great deal of progress has been made in promoting ethnic co-operation, tolerance and sustainable democratic structures in the Balkans since the 1990s,

The former Yugoslavia: continuation of ethnically defined social divisions presenting the ongoing challenge of overcoming disunity...

there remain impediments to long-term integration. Recent re-elections of nationalist leaders in late 2003 and early 2004 in Serbia, Croatia and the Bosnian coalition presidency indicate the continuation of ethnically defined social divisions and the ongoing challenge of overcoming disunity. In addition, problems of unequal political participation and low electoral turnouts characterise the political spheres in all countries. Minority rights, especially in Serbia and Bosnia, remain a crucial issue for civil society groups; in particular the Roma remain socially and politically disadvantaged throughout the Balkans region.

Many governmental organisations continue to operate in the Balkans, such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), in order to implement sustainable and integrative democratic structures. However, the work of non-government groups continues to be crucial to the establishment of an ethnically tolerant civil society in the region.

European Dialogue and the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly

European Dialogue is the British branch of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly (hCa), a civil society network aimed at developing co-operation between non-governmental organisations 'on the ground' across Europe. Brought together in 1990, the common goal of hCa members is the establishment of international links between individuals and organisations, the active democratic participation of citizens and the promotion of peaceful and productive dialogue at all levels. As a key member of the hCa, European Dialogue worked throughout the 1990s in order to progress civil society integration in the Balkans.

The work of the hCa in the Balkans began in anticipation of conflict in the region. In September 1991 the hCa organised an international peace caravan throughout the former Yugoslavia to give support to many peace initiatives. European Dialogue joined around 400 groups from across Europe to call for an unconditional ceasefire and peaceful negotiations throughout the region. As a final symbolic event, the peace caravan participants and local activists made a human chain around the Mosque, Orthodox and Christian churches in Sarajevo. This event established an important network of civil society organisations, many of whom now represent the hCa in the former Yugoslavia. In addition, by working at the local level to support municipalities and regions that were opposed to war and ethnic division, the hCa linked them into such established networks as the Council of Europe's Congress on Local and Regional Authorities in Europe and the Local Government International Bureau.

The hCa and European Dialogue: bringing together civil society groups across national, ethnic and religious divides...

Work at the local level continues today in the Citizens' Pact Initiative for SEE, which works across all borders in the Former Yugoslavia, bringing together civil society groups across national, ethnic and religious divides. Linking civil society organisations in Britain with those active in the Balkans has been central to the work of European Dialogue. The Balkans remains a primary concern of the organisation, and ideas for future projects are currently under discussion.

campaigns, lobbying and humanitarian aid

Throughout the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, the work of European Dialogue centred upon negotiation with British politicians and activists to encourage positive action through raising awareness.

Bosnia

Safe Havens Campaign - UN & EC Protectorates for Sarajevo & Mostar - 1992



A postcard sent to foreign ministers by citizens across Europe

Launched in response to the growing tide of refugees and the continual bombardment of Sarajevo and Mostar, the Safe Havens Campaign was established by European Dialogue and the hCa in 1992. National governments and the Geneva conference were pressed to declare Sarajevo and Tuzla EU and UN protectorates/safe havens, and for richer countries to open their doors to refugees. Almost 30,000 postcards were sent to David Owen and Cyrus Vance from all over Europe calling for EC and UN protection for multi-ethnic communities as a first step towards restoring a multi-ethnic BiH.

The Coalition for Peace in Bosnia - 1993

European Dialogue brought together the Coalition for Peace in Bosnia, in order to demand the end of the siege of Sarajevo, the rejection of the ethnic partition of Bosnia, the introduction of a democratic process of consultation and, crucially, the establishment of a UN Transitional Authority to restore law and order. It incorporated a wide range of national groups, including representatives from different ethnic and religious groups, political parties, women's groups, trade and student unions, peace and humanitarian organisations, and the media. Led by European Dialogue, the Coalition demonstrated in Trafalgar Square in order to bring public attention to the Bosnian war. The Coalition's policies and actions were part of the wider hCa programme - The Balkans Peace and Integration Programme.

Signatories to the Appeal in the UK included: Paddy Ashdown MP; David Howells MP; Michael Meacher MP; David Martin MEP (Vice President European Parliament); Anthony Barnett, Charter 88; Colonel Ed Cowan, defence attaché former Yugoslavia 1987-90; civic leaders; Mary Kaldor, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly; Howard Clark, War Registers International; Indijana Harper, Bosnian Information Centre; Ivan Vevoda, member of Serbian Opposition from Belgrade; Rabbi Julia Neuberger; Mr Azhar Ali QC

*supporting an end
to the siege of
Sarajevo*

The Last Chance Appeal - 1993

Presented to the G7 summit in Tokyo and the European Community in Copenhagen, the petition organised by European Dialogue and the hCa carried many hundreds of signatures supporting an end to the Sarajevo siege and the establishment of an international civic authority in BiH.

Petition to the British Government - 1993

In the UK, European Dialogue organised a cross-party delegation of MPs, concerned activists and celebrities to hand in a petition to John Major, the then Prime Minister of the UK, highlighting the conditions of the people of Sarajevo under siege.

Let us open the cities of Bosnia Herzegovina - 1993

The Open Cities Campaign aimed to nurture non-nationalist civic values and to restore a multi-ethnic society in BiH through encouraging co-operation between cities and municipalities, NGOs, civic groups and individuals from all over Europe.

*nurturing non-
nationalistic
civic values in
BiH*

A Fresh Start - 1993

European Dialogue worked with the Local Government International Bureau, Feed the Children, the Association of County Councils and the Open Society to deliver 20,000 school packs for children starting the new school year in Central Bosnian schools. 'A Fresh Start' project raised over £4000 for Bosnian schools and a significant amount for Feed the Children.

Blankets for Bosnia - 1993

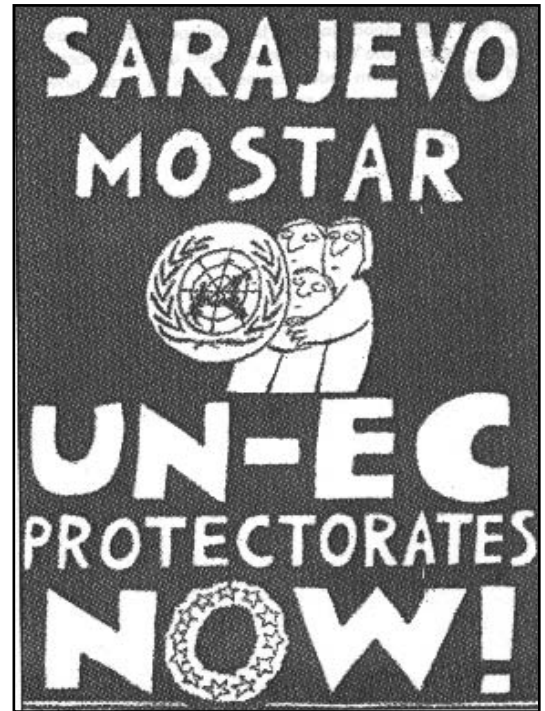
In order to raise money, equipment and 110,000 blankets to help Bosnians survive a second gruelling winter, European Dialogue campaigned alongside the charity War Child in Sarajevo. Gaining national media attention, the appeal's press launch was filmed by the BBC.



The Cosmopolitan Charter for Sarajevo - 1994

By the end of March 1994, the second anniversary of the siege of Sarajevo, European Dialogue supported the setting up of The Sarajevo Cosmopolitan Recovery Association (SACRA) in order to re-establish Sarajevo as a cosmopolitan city. The Cosmopolitan Charter, which set out a number of principles to ensure ethnic co-existence in Sarajevo, was sent to all main party candidates in the European Parliament elections. Sixty three signed the charter, eight of these then became elected Labour MEPs.

*re-establishing
a cosmopolitan
Sarajevo*



Kosovo

The British Albanian Parliamentary Group - 1999

Bringing critical debate about the Kosovo crisis into the public sphere, European Dialogue council member Alan Sealy organised a series of successful meetings on Kosovo held at the House of Commons. Chaired by John Austin MP, a wide variety of academics, politicians and representatives from humanitarian organisations were brought together in order to identify issues and solutions surrounding the crisis in Kosovo throughout the development of the Rambouillet peace talks and the NATO bombings.

*facilitating
critical debate
about the Kosovo
crisis*

Speakers over the course of the talks included *Jonathan Steel, the Guardian; Pleurat Seydiu, the KLA's London press officer; Bianca Jagger; Roger Sainsbur; the Bishop of Barking; Lyndall Sachs of the UNHCR; Tony Borden of the Institute of War and Peace Reporting; and Jane Sharpe of the Centre for Defence Studies.*

reconstruction: working with municipalities

Through the establishment of conferences, seminars and study visits, European Dialogue has worked with local municipalities to facilitate communication and local economic development

*drawing together
communities in
order to
encourage joint
enterprises*

Citizens' and Municipal Peace Conference - Ohrid, Macedonia - 1992

This conference sought to draw together a network of municipalities in the former Yugoslavia, creating links with civil society groups and international networks of municipalities. By encouraging dialogue between the citizens and municipalities of the Balkan region, the conference aimed to draw an end to the war and prevent future ethnic conflicts through the creation of joint projects and initiatives intended to nurture sustainable peace and co-operative democratic development.

During the conference the hCa proposed the creation of two types of protectorates in Bosnia - European Community and UN sponsored transitional authorities - which would in addition involve international networks of municipalities and civic groups.

Local Democracy in Bosnia Herzegovina and Europe seminar in Tuzla - 11-13 November 1994

Tuzla municipality in northern Bosnia was the only local authority in Bosnia with a council majority made up of non-ethnic parties. European Dialogue helped to organise the 'Local Democracy in Bosnia Herzegovina and Europe' seminar, a central part of the Open Cities Campaign. In order to promote pan-European involvement in Bosnian municipal affairs, the project examined the ways in which local municipalities establish links with counterparts throughout Europe. Encouraging municipalities and NGOs across Europe to commit to assisting Bosnian enterprises was also an intention of the seminar.

The seminar involved around 120 participants with representatives from the municipalities of London, Stockholm, Bologna, Barcelona and Nantes; NGOs; and the Bosnia-Herzegovina Presidency.

Tuzla Association for Local Development Initiatives (TALDi) - 1994 - 1996

aiding sustainable local development in Bosnia

The Tuzla Association for Local Development Initiative (TALDi) was established in 1995 as an outcome of the 'Local Democracy in Bosnia Herzegovina and Europe seminar'. Under the World Bank's reconstruction programme for BiH and as part of the Dayton Agreement, TALDi was appointed as the economic implementing partner for micro-enterprises in the Tuzla region. The aim of TALDi was to establish small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Tuzla which would reduce unemployment and hence social conflict.

The TALDi project demonstrated a high degree of awareness of the latest thinking on economic development in local and regional government, by recognising the importance of community participation in economic/reconstruction decision-making and the need to take account of ecological issues. TALDi provided support to refugees/displaced persons and demobilised soldiers via local NGO projects, capacity building support to local NGOs, and developed co-operation with international donor organisations to finance the reconstruction of the region.

TALDi UK Study Visits

In March 1995, the Mayor of Tuzla, Selim Besalgic, visited Britain, at the invitation of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and attended a programme arranged by European Dialogue involving visits to governmental and non-governmental initiatives.

During April 1996, European Dialogue organised a week long training visit for TALDi to gain valuable expertise and to make connections with future economic partners from the UK. CAFOD and the Centre for Local Economic Strategies

(CLES) were among a variety of organisations which assisted TALDi in the following areas: long-term local economic strategy; accessing European and other sources of funding; training in management and financial planning; skills-building in the areas of new technology; and building partnerships and exchanges with development agencies, small-medium businesses and community initiatives. TALDi established a number of new partnerships with development agencies in the UK as a result of the visit.



Mirza Kusljagic and Mary Kaldor visit Northern Ireland Community Enterprise

democratic structures

The protection of legal and political rights throughout society has been a key concern of European Dialogue in the Balkans.

JOB 22 - 1994-1997

During the Bosnian war the legal system in BiH was almost entirely destroyed, precluding access to the means of due process by the majority of citizens. JOB 22, established in Sarajevo in 1993 by High Court Judge, Ms Zdravka Grebo, offered free legal advice to refugees and displaced people. In addition JOB22 took part in the Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Persons and Refugees, as well as working with the UNHCR in order to assist specific legal problems related to the repatriation process.

enabling greater awareness of legal rights among refugees and IDPs

From July 1996, in partnership with national hCa branches, JOB22 distributed questionnaires to displaced persons and refugees in Croatia, Slovenia, Former Yugoslavia, Italy, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Norway, Sweden, France and the UK to gather information about their feelings about the impact of the war. JOB 22 also received questions in letters from Canada, USA, Australia, Austria, Macedonia, Russia, Switzerland and Denmark.

In 1995 European Dialogue organised a study visit for JOB 22 to Oxford and Essex Universities in the UK to learn about human rights law, in particular refugee law. In addition, visits were made to law centres and citizens advice bureaus in order to demonstrate the possibility of free legal advice. Meetings were also held with human rights lawyers and academics.

Delegation to UK of Political Opposition Parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina - 1995

In September 1995, the Labour Party, European Dialogue and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy co-operated to bring to Britain members of the opposition parties in BiH, with the aim of promoting a democratic alternative for the whole of Bosnia. The delegation held meetings with Robin Cook MP and Baroness Chalker at the Foreign Office. NGO, media and strategy meetings were held with Labour Friends of Bosnia, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, the Dutch Embassy, and the Labour Party International Unit.

Previously, Western governments and the media had focused their attention on warring nationalist leaders. This was the first time that such a group had come together and been publicly received by senior politicians. All delegation members agreed that existing political structures needed to change in order to achieve lasting peace, despite their differing views on several issues. In addition they agreed that only those political parties with a non-nationalist viewpoint would be able to gain the trust of all communities in Bosnia; the importance of investing in democracy was emphasised.

providing training...
strengthening
contacts...
encouraging ideas...

Members of the delegation included: *Mr Milorad Dodik, leader of the group of independent deputies in the Pale Assembly; Mr Sejfudin Tokic, Vice President of the Union of Bosnian Social Democrats and President of the parliamentary group; Mr Curo Vinko, member of the Presidency of the Liberal Party; Prof. Zlato Lagumdžija, Vice-President of the Social Democratic Party; and Mr Vehid Šehić, President of the Forum of Tuzla Citizens.*

Future of Europe Trust - UK Training Visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina - 1996

A Parliamentary delegation to Bihac, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Sarajevo and Mostar (organised in co-operation with European Dialogue), took place in anticipation of the first post war elections in BiH. The delegation aimed to positively contribute to the difficult and hazardous process of democratisation in post-Dayton BiH by:

- providing training for the non-nationalist and opposition parties in areas of political campaigning, fund-raising, and publicity for smaller, essentially democratic and plural parties; and
- strengthening contacts between Bosnian and UK political parties.

The trainings were split into a number of separate sessions covering party political formulation, campaigning, winning elections, leaflet production, fund-raising and polling day tips. They provided the local parties with new ideas as well as encouragement for their future work. The delegation included MPs such as Edwina Currie and Calum McDonald, and representatives from the national media including The Guardian.

Bosnian Women's Political Study Tour - 1998

encouraging
greater political
participation by
women in Bosnian
public life

The Bosnian Women's Political Study Tour, initiated by Marsha Walsh and Richard Black of Sussex University, was organised by European Dialogue. The delegation of Bosnian women wanted to look at a range of institutions concerned with political democracy and representation, and human rights education. More specifically, they were keen to learn more about integrating women's issues into mainstream political processes, and how to encourage greater participation of women in political life. The delegation took part in a seminar on Bosnia and gender issues organised by Mary Kaldor and Richard Black, Sussex University.

The delegation included representatives from regional political parties and civil society groups, including *the Serb Peasants Party of the Republic of Srbska; the Youth Centre, Mostar BiH; the Democratic Circle, Bihac BiH; Women to Women, Sarajevo BiH; hCa Banja Luka Republica Srbska; Legal Centre for Women, Zenica; The Republican Party, BiH; Centre for Civic Co-operation, Livno, BiH; Citizens' Forum, Tuzla, BiH; Int. Council for Voluntary Agencies; Social Democratic Party; Sarajevo BiH.* The delegation met with *British MPs, such as Margaret Hodge MP (Barking) and Hilary Armstrong MP (Minster for Local Government and Housing), and representatives from The Guardian, TUC Equal Rights Department, the Maternity Alliance and Emily's List among others.*

other initiatives

enabling international co-operation through building a 'civic parliament'

The Citizens' Pact for South Eastern Europe - ongoing

Following the Kosovo crisis the international community created the Stability Pact for the SEE region which aimed to create an international mechanism for building peace and democracy in the Balkans. Civic activists within that region realised that civil societies must equally be in co-operation with one another.

European Dialogue worked alongside the Association for Peace and Democracy (ZID), a Montenegrin youth group, and the Inter-Church Peace Council (IKV), the Dutch hCa, to draw up a structure for a parallel civil society 'Stability Pact', the Citizen's Pact for South Eastern Europe. The result is a tripartite 'civic parliament', which includes representatives from youth groups, NGOs and municipalities.

ED, with funding from the British Foreign Office, helped to organise a preparatory meeting for the CPSEE in Bar, Montenegro, which brought together 40 activists from 15 countries including Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Northern Ireland. In July 1999 a more wide-reaching founding session was convened in Kerceg Novi by ZID which issued an inaugural statement of intent. 100 delegates signed up to the Citizens' Pact and since then many locally based initiatives have been organised in all former Republics and in other Stability Pact countries. A key campaign, for example, aims to abolish visa control throughout SEE to enable citizens from the region to move freely without suffering discrimination.

For information about the Citizens Pact visit their website: www.citizenspact.org.yu

ADI Association for Development Initiatives - ongoing

supporting Slovenian NGOs and encouraging CSR

Since 1995, European Dialogue has worked with the Slovenian NGO, the Agency for Development Initiatives (ADI), which aims to help the extensive non-governmental sector in Slovenia to exert more influence on the governmental and business sectors, through consolidation of cohesive goals and practice.

European Dialogue has organised several study visits for ADI to the UK to investigate aspects of the UK voluntary sector, including participating in a training course on local community planning. In addition the ED facilitated ADI's joint project with the UK-based Voluntary Organisations Network for European Funding, which aims to build links between voluntary organisations in Slovenia and Northern England and provide Slovenian NGOs with practical advice on how to access European Union funding. ADI, with support from European Dialogue, produced a directory of NGOs in Slovenia, published in 2000, which lists and classifies approximately 12,000 organisations. In June 2003, ED gave presentations on building international partnerships in three regions of Slovenia. ED is currently working with ADI to develop a project to promote the practice of cor-



Paddy Ashdown MP launching European Dialogue's Safe Havens postcard campaign in 1992

acknowledgements

Thanks to all the members, workers and volunteers of ED and the hCa who helped us to implement the projects and campaigns outlined above, including the many members of the international hCa, in particular Mary Kaldor and Mient Jan Faber, without whom nothing would have been possible; and all the brave citizens of the former Yugoslavia who risked personal safety in defending tolerance, human rights and democracy.

We would also like to thank our former ED employees Eileen Stewart, Tony Bloomfield, Shona Pollock, Davorca Grgic, and Julia Glyn Pickett (who went on to work with Radio B 92 in Belgrade - which played a significant role in the downfall of Milosevic) - and our long term supporters from the European Dialogue Council, Michael Smart, Alan Sealy and Marija Anteric. Thanks to Predrag Finci, Miroslav Jancic and Neven Andrić and other refugees from the former Yugoslavia who gave us the benefit of their experience and expert-

ise. This is, of course, an incomplete list which cannot do justice to the time and energy that many people gave freely in response to the horrors and complexity of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

Finally, many thanks to European Dialogue volunteer Ms Vivienne Nwabuzo, who ploughed through filing cabinets full of papers, isolated the key documents and who wrote the bulk of this report. Thanks too to Elizabeth Campling of ED and volunteer Ruth Grove-White who edited the report and worked wonders in Quark Express. This report is the proverbial 'tip of the iceberg' of the work of ED and the hCa in the former Yugoslavia; there is yet a great deal to be done.

Please note that the positions of the people listed in this report are from the time when the projects took place; they may not be their current position.



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