

## **Report on the study trip to Prague with a review of the similarities and differences of civic activism of young people in the local community in the Czech Republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina**

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The goal of the organized study trip to Prague (in the period from September 30 to October 4, 2023) was to familiarize professors of Civic Education/Democracy and Human Rights and representatives of local authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina with local youth activism and the functioning of local authorities in Republica. to the Czech Republic.

UIZBiH implements the project "Young Heroes - Empowerment of youth in BiH at the community level", and its goal is to increase the participation of young people in public life as well as their contribution to the functionality of local government.

The study trip lasted five days. In that period, we had a meeting with the representatives of Agora Kristýna Fantova and Magda Podsedníková, visits to the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the Jířího Orten Gymnasium in Kutná Hora, socializing at the Lastavica Association and a meeting with representatives of local authorities in the Municipality of Prague 6.

On Sunday, October 1, 2023, accompanied by Kristýna Fanotova, we got acquainted with the sights of the capital of the Czech Republic and discussed the planned visits included in this study trip.

On Monday, October 2, 2023, together with Magda Podsedníková and Frantisek Havlin, we visited the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Czech Republic. The representative of Agora, Mrs. Magda Podsedníková pointed out to the representatives of the Embassy Agora's cooperation with UIZBiH.

Ernes Jusović, acting Directorate of UIZBiH presented the work of the Association and the project "Young heroes - empowering youth in BiH at the community level".

After the aforementioned visit, we visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic in the same composition, where we discussed youth activism with representatives of the Ministry.

The representatives of the Ministry were interested in how young people are interested in participating in public and political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina and how educational authorities promote such participation. They were also interested in the education system in our country (divided into 12 ministries of education, 10 of which are in the FBiH cantons, 1 in the Republika Srpska, and the Education Department in the Brčko District).

Namely, in Republika Srpska, many projects that various associations tried to implement have not been allowed for a long period of time, even the subject of Civic Education in primary schools in this entity has unfortunately been canceled from this school year.

Young people are very interested in projects like these, but unfortunately the educational authorities do not give them the opportunity and opportunity to participate in them and express their creativity and potential. That's why I think that the project "Young Heroes - Empowerment of young people in BiH at the local community level" is very useful and important, because it contributes to the development of a healthy democratic society.

It is important that young people in projects like this realize that they themselves can change a lot of things in their local community for the better through their participation and action and thus create a more pleasant and beautiful environment for life.

I would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and Agora for recognizing the importance of such projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After talking with representatives of the Ministry, accompanied by a guide who told us about the history of the palace, we visited the premises of the palace and the apartment of Jan Masaryk, the son of Tomas Masaryk, who was the first president of Czechoslovakia. Jan Masaryk was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia.

On Tuesday, 3.10. we visited Jirího Orten Gymnasium in Kutna Hora, where we attended a meeting of the Student Parliament. Students presented their school problems for which they sought solutions together with representatives of the school and the local community.

Unfortunately, this approach to solving students' problems is not present in schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In our schools, there are Student Councils that consist of 1 representative from each department in the school.

Students in the Student Council strive to improve the position and working conditions of students at school, but government representatives never participate in these meetings.

I think that the introduction of the Student Parliament in our local communities would be of great importance for students and schools. In this way, students could solve their problems faster and more efficiently.

After the Student Parliament, we spoke with the president of the Parliament, a representative of the local authorities and the deputy director of the school. The representative of the local authorities spoke about the relationship between the local authorities and the Student Parliament, as well as about the projects initiated by the students.

Ernes Jusović, representative of UIZBiH, presented the goals of the project "Young Heroes - Empowerment of youth in BiH at the community level." The project aims at greater engagement and participation of young people in public life in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the Jiřího Orten Gymnasium, we spoke with the school director and his deputy, who together with us went through the important premises of the school (library, gymnasium, offices, botanical garden... This school left a special impression on me. Namely, the students have much more freedom than in schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the very way of dressing,... the way of solving your problems... The atmosphere for work, study and socializing is much more relaxed and stress-free than in schools in our country. I got the impression that teaching is more focused on acquiring practical knowledge and skills, and not on theory as is the case in our schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It seems that in this school there is exceptional cooperation, communication and tolerance between students and teachers.

After the visit to the Gymnasium, on the same day in the afternoon, a meeting was organized in the "Lastavica" Association, which brings together people from the Balkans in the Czech Republic. On that occasion, we spoke with members of the Association and the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Czech Republic, Martina Mlinarević-Sopta.

The representative of the Lastavica Association introduced us to the activities of the said Association and the projects implemented in the past period. Also on this occasion, Ernes Jusović, a representative of UIZBiH, presented the goals of the

project "Young Heroes - Empowerment of young people in BiH at the community level, as well as earlier implemented projects.

On Wednesday, 4 October 2023. we visited the Municipality of Prague 6. We spoke with the representatives of the local government, who presented the projects to which young people applied during the competition, presenting their ideas. The three best ideas of young people received the support of the municipality for implementation.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, unfortunately, students do not have the opportunity and opportunity to participate in such projects. Unfortunately, representatives of local authorities do not want to hear their voice. Therefore, all praise for this attitude of the representatives of the Municipality of Prague 6 towards the students.

I want to thank again Agora and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic for organizing this extremely useful study trip. We were able to meet and learn a lot, and I hope that we will be able to implement some ideas in our local communities and schools.