

EVS call for short-term EVS in National Park Frushka gora, Serbia

Mountain spirit – Strategic EVS for Nature Conservation

About the project

Mountain spirit is a project involving several EVS short and long-term volunteer exchanges in Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia and Bulgaria. It aims at combining efforts of international volunteers and local people from mountainous/rural areas for nature conservation activities in protected areas or species.

*The idea is to uncover **invisible links** between places and their inhabitant creatures, to take our responsibilities as humans towards all forms of life without forgetting to listen and learn from nature within and around.*

*To discover the **spirits of mountains in the Balkans** with preserved nature where eagles and red deers roam through the wilderness, where there are still waters running freely, where people are resilient.*

The spirits of Velebit mountain, Croatia; Sharr mountain, Kosovo; Frushka gora, Serbia and Pirin mountain, Bulgaria.

Spirits which are also exposed to threats of destruction, exploitation and loss of the invisible connections that link all of us into one living system.

We believe that with small but consistent efforts another way is possible where people are not on the top, but rather live a peaceful co-existence with nature and themselves.

About the volunteer exchanges

Short-term volunteer exchanges in 2018:

- Croatia – Kuterevo Bear Refuge, Velebit Mountain (12 volunteers for 59 days) – July-September
- Kosovo – National Park Sharr Mountain (12 volunteers for 30 days) – July-August
- Kosovo – Prishtina Bear Sanctuary (14 volunteers for 15 days) – August – September
- Serbia – National Park Frushka Gora (12 volunteers for 15 days) - July
- Bulgaria – Nature School Vlahi, Pirin mountain (10 volunteers for 20 days) – June

Long-term volunteer exchanges in 2018 and 2019

- Croatia – Kuterevo Bear Refuge (3 volunteers for 8 months)
- Kosovo - National Park Sharr Mountain (2 volunteers for 6 months)
- Bulgaria – Nature School Vlahi, Pirin mountain (2 volunteers for 8 months in 2019)

About us

The project involves activities in mountains spread from West to East in the Balkans. [Velebit Association](#) [Kuterevo, Croatia](#); [GAIA Kosovo](#); [Vlahi Nature School](#) and [Cooperation for Voluntary Service](#) [Bulgaria](#) have been working together for some years now, aiming at making strong connections between people through learning from and acting for nature in the Balkans.

The Spirit of Kuterevo Refuge for Bears and People served as inspiration for the current project which involves new partners such as [Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia](#) and [Four Paws, Kosovo](#). For 40 years now Kuterevo has been a place where young people can learn and volunteer by being close to nature, bears, local people and their traditions. Thus experiencing and creating the [Kuterevo Spirit](#). We believe each place has its uniqueness and its messages to be listened to and respected, therefore exploring and developing its own spirit.



Sustainable Living Culture SUSLIC

Short-term EVS in National Park Frushka gora, Serbia

1 - 15 July 2018



About Frushka gora mountain, Serbia

Frushka Gora is the lonely island mountain in the Pannonian plain, bordered by the Danube river to the north while to the south it descends into loess flats that harbour last remains of typical steppe areas. It represents a real natural and cultural value of this region and in 1960 it was proclaimed as the first National Park of Serbia.

Due to numerous fossil remains of flora and fauna, this mountain is often called „mirror of the geological past“. Besides hidden archaeological localities from ancient times, there are 16 old orthodox monasteries that are under UNESCO protection. Pastures and fertile soils, vineyards and orchards cover slopes and lower lands, while higher altitudes are covered by old and dense linden, beech and oak forests.

A special charm to this area is given by its numerous endangered, rare and protected species of flora and fauna. In different nooks of this mountain you can find various interesting plants (around 1500 species) and fungi (around 400 species), and maybe even see some rare and interesting animals like fire salamanders, lesser mole-rats, sousliks, wild cats, or the magnificent red deer that has made a comeback to this mountain. Old forests as well as surrounding steppe pastures, stream valleys, groves and mosaic agricultural areas are home to a rich bird fauna, as more than 200 bird species can be found on the park's territory. Many rare birds of prey can also be seen here, like saker falcons or red kites or even, if lucky enough, spot the Imperial Eagle!

What is going on in Frushka gora?

Frushka gora is a beautiful oasis amongst the majorly altered landscape of fertile Vojvodina plains but it is not safe from the negative human impact! Despite its protected status the pressure on nature is piling up and while some of the natural riches ask just to be left alone to prosper, others need our help.

The surface under steppe vegetation is reduced and limited to the southern mountain slopes, where it persisted so far on the valley pastures due to the grazing purpose. These steppe fragments are last remaining natural habitats for sousliks, the main pray of the Eastern Imperial Eagle, an endangered raptor that has only a single remaining breeding pair in Serbia!

Nowadays the pastures are succumbing to ecological succession due to lack of grazing, as traditional farming is being replaced with more intensive practices. Initiative of expanding and revitalization of abandoned pastures helps sustain suitable habitats with the hope for returning of the majestic bird of prey.



About the short-term group EVS

The volunteers will be removing bushes that are encroaching on the valuable grasslands. The task is mechanical removal of shrub vegetation. Bushes of roses and hawthorns are a little trickier to cut so these tasks will be performed only by those who are comfortable with an axe and with the support of the locals!

For those who are less prepared for such physical work there are still tasks of taking on a less formidable foe like the new young shoots that are easy to cut with a pair of gardening scissors, or collecting and piling up cut material. Additionally we will get to the areas where uncontrolled waste disposal sites are beginning to form and clear out that trash.

By helping revitalize these habitats we will be doing a huge service to the sousliks and eagles, but also many other endangered species like the rare flower pheasant's eye, saker falcon, steppe polecat etc.

The location of the camp will be Mala Remeta, a village situated on the southern slopes of the mountain. The large steppe valley outside the village is one of the largest remaining steppe fragments on Frushka

gora, and it is a site of significance for many endangered species. This area, and nearby pastures of Neradin and Krusedol will be the target sites for our activities.

Learning opportunities:

- About biodiversity, habitats and ecosystems (*and especially everything about shrubs* 😊)
- About protected areas, existing threats and direct conservation measures
- About sustainable and rural tourism
- Living in a small village community
- Living with international volunteers; learning from each other; sharing;
- Awareness about sustainability in everyday life

Practicalities:



Duration: 1 July –15 July 2018 (15 days)

Arrival day: 1 July 2018

Departure day: 15 July 2018

Age: between 18 and 30 years

Country of residence: [Erasmus+ program countries](#)

Accommodation: One house with a big yard in the village will be provided for accommodation purposes where tents will be set up, and rest of facilities (bathroom, kitchen, lounge) will be available in the house.

Food: Preparation of lunch meals will be provided, and the volunteers will be preparing the rest of their daily meals, and will be expected to be responsible for the hygiene of the camp.

Pocket money: 30 EUR (2 EUR per day), received in the first half of the service

Free time: For recreation, there is a rich sightseeing offer with nearby hiking trails, monasteries in a walking distance and a beautiful small lake within 2 km of the camp location. And of course socialization with the locals, who will be providing logistical support and are welcoming the camp idea enthusiastically!

Insurance: The volunteer will be insured by the CIGNA insurance plan

Travel to the EVS venue: Reimburse of the travel tickets will be done according to the rules of the Erasmus+ program based on distance calculation and at **receipt of original documents**. The environmental way of travelling (train, bus, etc.) is strongly encouraged.

(Distance band calculator: 100-499 km = 180 euro, 500-1999 km = 275 euro, 2000-2999 km = 360 euro, 3000-3999 km = 530 euro, 4000-7999 km = 820 euro)

Profile of the volunteer:

We need enthusiastic, hard-working people who are willing to roll up their sleeves and take on the bushes that are encroaching on these valuable grasslands. Birdwatchers and outdoor people would love the surroundings. You should be ready for camping conditions and hard work during the day, getting to know the locals in the free time. Energetic and initiative, open and a team player.



How to apply?

Fill in the google form ([link here](#)) choosing “2-week long group EVS in Frushka Gora (Serbia)” and send your CV and **specific motivation letter** to mdemajo91@gmail.com

Deadline: April 13th 2018