

VOICES

MAGAZINE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

august 2025





I was certainly aware that the European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF), held in Skopje from July 20-26, would teach me something as an Olympic volunteer, but it went beyond my expectations. I spent the entire week at the venue with competitions in taekwondo, which allowed me to see a world I hadn't previously been aware of. I witnessed the excitement, passion, and emotions experienced by the competitors firsthand. And not only that - I also learned how points are tallied and how one competitor can dominate another in this beautiful sport, a sport I'd never understood before without looking at the score. It was truly emotional. From the motivational speech the coaches gave to the athletes before the match to the roar of victory in the arena, I thought I could never truly experience such a profound experience at an event.

Furthermore, as a Turk, I was proud to witness Turkey take first place in the medal standings with a total of seven medals: three gold, two silver, and two bronze. I spoke with the medal-winning athletes and the Turkish delegation, sharing their excitement and joy.

Looking back on all this, I not only added a new sport to my experience, but I also learned how much emotion a sport can bring to a country's happiness.

Efe Özylçin

Секако бев свесен дека Европскиот Младински Олимписки Фестивал (EYOF), што се одржа во Скопје од 20 до 26 јули, ќе ме научи нешто како олимписки волонтер, но, настанот ги надмина моите очекувања. Целата недела ја поминав во салата каде што се одржуваа натпреварите во теквондо, што ми овозможи да видам свет за кој претходно не знаев дека постои. Од прва рака бев сведок на возбудата, страста и емоциите што ги доживеаа натпреварувачите. И не само тоа - научив и како се бројат поените и како еден натпреварувач може да доминира над друг во овој прекрасен спорт... спорт што никогаш порано не го разбирав и единствено ги следев резултатите. Беше навистина емотивно. Од мотивациониот говор што тренерите им го одржуваа на спортистите пред натпреварот до победничкиот викот во арената... мислев дека никогаш не би можел да доживеам толку длабоко искуство на еден настан.

Понатаму, како Турчин, бев горд што бев сведок на тоа како мојата земја го освои првото место по број на медали: три златни, два сребрени и два бронзени. Разговарав со медалистите и со членовите на турската делегација, споделувајќи го нивното возбудување и радост.

Гледајќи наназад на сето ова, не само што додадов нов спорт во моето мени, туку и научив колку емоции може да донесе спортот за среќата на една земја.

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A SUMMER OF SPORT, YOUTH, AND UNITY:

The 18th Summer European Youth Olympic Festival, known as EYOF Skopje 2025, delivered a week of unforgettable youth sport, unity, and cultural resonance in Macedonia's capital and surroundings. More than 4,000 athletes from 50 European delegations gathered for a celebration of excellence and friendship.



EYOF 2025: Sporting highlights and records set...

Italy topped the medal table for the third consecutive Summer EYOF with 19 golds, 19 silvers and 12 bronzes. Close behind, France claimed 15 golds, then, five nations: Spain, Türkiye, Great Britain, Poland, and Hungary, each with 10 gold medals. Impressively, 31 of 50 teams finished with at least one medal.

But, more than a country's performance, it's about athletes, and their own performances that count, and they succeeded, with so many personal bests, as well as world and European records broken.

WORLD RECORD

Allika Inkeri Moser (ESTONIA)

Estonian Allika Inkeri Moser cleared 4.52 metres in the women's pole vault, a new U18 world record. First day, first gold medal in athletics for the EYOF and first broken record of the week.

"I am really happy for this opportunity to first of all compete here, and I am really happy to bring home a gold medal. That world record also still seems so unreal to me!"
EOC Channel.

Elif Berfin Altun (TURKEY)

With a score of 421.2 in women's 10m air rifle, Elif Berfin Altun not only won the gold medal at the Partizan N.N. Borce Sports Hall, but also broke the U18 European record.

EUROPEAN RECORD

Kelly Doualla (ITALY)

Kelly Doualla set a European under 18 record by winning the women's 100 m in a brilliant 11.21 seconds.

While the sporting performances were red-hot, so was the weather. Throughout the week, Skopje and Kumanovo experienced a persistent heatwave, with daytime temperatures above 40°C. Athletes, volunteers, and spectators had to contend with intense sun and dry conditions, which added a layer of physical and mental challenge. Hydration stations were increased across all venues, competition schedules were adjusted where possible, to avoid peak afternoon heat, and medical teams remained on high alert. Despite the sweltering conditions, the resilience of the athletes stood out, especially in endurance events like cycling, athletics, and canoe slalom. "It was like competing in an oven," remarked one young French cyclist. The weather became further proof of the athletes' grit.

THE END.



Behind the scenes of these performances, there were volunteers. And it's more than 700 volunteers that helped make EYOF Skopje 2025 a success, working in transport, venues, NOC support, media, logistics, or medical teams... When small problems came up, like delays or changes in plans, the volunteers were quick to find solutions. Many gave more time and energy than expected, showing true dedication for the event. Thanks to them, the event ran smoothly and felt warm and welcoming.



EYOF 2025: Beyond sport, it's about youth and unity...

MACEDONIAN CULTURE

EYOF 2025 was also an opportunity to share about Macedonian culture and tradition. The opening ceremony on 20 July at Jane Sandanski Arena featured traditional music, dance, and the official anthem "Together, We Shine" performed by young Macedonian artists Lara Ivanova, Sarah Mace, Yang Daddi, and Aleksandar Tarabunov. The closing ceremony on 26 July was also symbolic, with a performance by electronic music icon Kiril Dzajkovski.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Skopje marked the 9th edition of the EYOA programme, with 27 ambassadors supported by 7 alumni hosting interactive cultural and educational initiatives in dormitories like Goce Delchev. The goal: reinforce Olympic values, forge cross-national friendships, and give athletes creative breaks between competition. Ambassadors such as Zarja Tavčar (Slovenia, judo 2017 medalist) shared their experiences. "I love sport, and this

was just an opportunity to give back to sport in a different way. I like meeting people and giving young athletes a new look at sport... Sport is not just a competition, and events like this can bring more people together." Zarja Tavčar, former judoka and EYOA Ambassador

MACEDONIAN EMPOWERMENT

EYOF Skopje 2025 is more than just results on a scoreboard, it's a catalyst for long-term transformation. It led to new investments in sports facilities, so young athletes in Macedonia can keep training in top-quality venues. It also encouraged more young people to get involved in sports, inspired by what they saw during the event. For many local athletes, it was their first time competing in front of a home crowd, a moment of pride that officials hope will lead to more success in the future. And, finally, the event improved Macedonia's image in Europe, showing that the country can host major international events with warmth, energy and professionalism. At the press briefing, Daniel Dimevski,

Skopje 2025 organisation head, spoke of the nation's pride:

"What we witnessed throughout EYOF Skopje 2025 was far more than just sports competitions. It was a celebration of youth, of sincere friendship, of mutual respect, and an inspiring spirit that brought us all together. These young athletes reminded us of the true Olympic values – unity, passion, and excellence", President Dimevski.

EYOF Skopje 2025 wasn't just an event. It was a statement: that youth sport can unite, uplift, and help shape a brighter, more inclusive Europe. As the EOC flag flies north to Italy for 2027, Skopje leaves a legacy of energy, ambition, and the promise that, truly, together we shine!

See you in Lignano Sabbiadoro, in 2027!

Youna Léauté-Guillet

I want TO YODEL

"I want to learn to yodel,"

said Natalia as she was walking out of the room.

I laughed. It's always just the crazy things you say you want to try, but you never actually do. I say it, you say it, Natalia says it too. You go to a concert of your favorite music band and think how great it would be if you could play guitar like the people on the stage. Or you see a magician perform a card trick and think how cool it would be to do it the next time you are playing card games with your friends. But it's just a thought. And thoughts are fluid; most of them never come back.

But Natalia's thought was not fluid. Three minutes later, she came back with a YouTube video playing on her phone. "To learn how to yodel, you just have to master two important sounds..."

And that is how Natalia started learning to yodel. Did she master it after that 5-minute video? Of course not. But she discovered that she can do the two important sounds. And then she found out that it's easy to put them together. And in a while, she could yodel. Not like a professional, but well enough for me to think how cool that is, and that I want to do the same.

That brought me to think about all the things in this world that we say we would want to know or do, but we never do them, nor even try. When somebody asks me what my hobbies are, I tend to blush, panic, and say something about reading books, and feel that I'm a lazy person because I don't do

anything. But I would like to play a musical instrument. Or know how to mix cocktails. Cook recipes that I invented. Make short movies. Play chess. Create latte art.

I could continue the list forever, but you get the idea. As the internet tends to motivate you, you can become anything you want. But not me because I have a couple of problems. I would never be able to play the guitar because I don't have the ears for music. I cannot mix cocktails because I need money first to buy the ingredients. How can I invent new recipes when it seems that everything in this world has already been invented? And there are so many short movies out there that nobody will be interested in seeing mine.

It's fair. All of the statements seem to be true. Except, they are not. Do I enjoy listening to music? Yes, so at least a part of my ear is, indeed, for music. Where is the nearest bar close to me? Could I start working there? If not, then I can sit there and learn the ingredients and preparation by watching. For the recipes – get my friends to buy random ingredients, cook from them without using the internet, and then enjoy my invention. Make the short movie, post it, play it during the next family visit, and share it with friends. Somebody has to see it.

All that I am trying to say with these lines is to enjoy life. And enjoy it fully, not just survive. Our hobbies and how we spend our days are responsibilities of each of us. We have free will; we should use it. It is simple – you want to do something, do it. Don't overthink and don't look for problems before you start the actual activity. If problems appear during it, solve them one step at a time. And as one of my favorite songs says: "If you don't have enough time, stop watching TV" (that applies to TikTok and Instagram as well).

Be like Natalia. Because you can, indeed, become anything you want.

Sára Holosová

A STAGE FOR WHAT WE CAN'T SAY



I've always been drawn to things that don't fit. To spaces that are too loud, too soft, too strange. To people who don't behave or who behave too much.

To art that doesn't apologize, **that's why I love cabaret.**

Not just a stage or a performance. But a way of being expressive, unapologetic, a little sideways. It's theatre, but looser. Music, but embodied. Dance, but charged with meaning.

It's a language of silhouettes, irony, and emotion.

Cabaret doesn't pretend to be neutral. It reveals the cracks in a smile, in a lyric, in the way a gesture lingers.

It invites you to look closer.

And then, it dares you to feel something.

What fascinates me is how it balances lightness and depth: the sparkle and the silence.

The laughter that says more than the words.

I think about the musical "Cabaret" a lot, the 1972 film, with Liza Minnelli's trembling voice, set in Berlin right before everything falls apart. In the Kit Kat Klub, people sing, drink, and flirt. Outside, fascism grows. And no one stops dancing.

That's the point.



The Emcee, this strange, seductive, genderless host, tells us everything from the start. He mocks the world. He warns us.

And we laugh, we clap, we look away.

That's what cabaret is.

It shows us "us". How we ignore, how we distract ourselves, how we celebrate while injustice knocks on the door.

"Cabaret" is not only a musical, it shrieks at the people's frustration and pain of that time, all in a glamorous, comedic, and artistic way.

That's why I come back to it. Because it reminds me that art can seduce and scream at the same time.

That it's okay to be soft and furious, sensual and political. That beauty doesn't erase suffering, and it reveals it.

Cabaret is not just about lust. It's about liberation through excess, about laughing with tears stuck in your throat and singing the truth because saying it isn't enough.

Nowadays, Cabaret is used in a lot of industries, but we don't call it that way anymore.

Even today, the influence of cabaret can be felt in unexpected places: in fashion editorials that dare to be strange, in singers who refuse

to flatten their voices, in artists who perform vulnerability without apology. It's not just an art form. It's a lens. It shows us what's absurd in the world by embracing the absurd itself. And that's maybe the most honest way to live.

I always dreamed that perhaps, someday, I would be able to perform it, show a glimpse of the theatre that is my life. Not in grand gestures or perfect lines, but in the quiet elegance of a raised eyebrow, a whispered truth, a spotlight that finds me even when I'm unsure of my place on the stage. Maybe that day will come. Maybe it won't. But the art will always live inside me. Cabaret is not just a stage I admire from afar. It's a rhythm I carry in the way I move through the world, the way I feel things deeply but tell them softly, always with a touch of glitter.

Cassandra Journoud



Finistère, the temperate exception in overheated France



As temperatures soar past 40°C in many French cities, one department remains curiously out of sync with the rest of the country. On the far western edge of mainland France, in the coastal stretches of Finistère, café terraces are full, locals wear sweaters in the evening, and thermometers rarely climb above 25°C. Here, people don't talk about heatwaves but about when it's finally warm enough to take a dip in the Atlantic.

Long known for its Celtic traditions, granite cliffs, lighthouses, and bracing sea air, Finistère is quietly emerging as something else: a temperate haven in an overheating country. While Toulouse and Marseille endure record numbers of “tropical nights” and rising heat indexes, parts of coastal Brittany, especially in northern Finistère, seem to operate on a different meteorological rhythm.

France is heating up. According to Météo-France, the national meteorological institute, the number of annual heatwaves has doubled since the early 2000s. The summer of 2022 marked the longest heatwave in French history, with temperatures in some cities surpassing 42°C. In July 2025, the pattern repeated itself. Once again, a part of the country experienced long phases of punishing heat, prompting health alerts, changes in working hours, and a surge in emergency room visits due to dehydration and heat

stroke. Experts and health authorities now openly warn that these extremes are not anomalies, but symptoms of a new norm - a country where summers may become too hot for normal life in many regions.

In Brest, where I grew up, summer temperatures average just above 21 or 22°C, rarely exceeding 26°C, even during national heatwaves. Rain remains common, but not oppressive, light drizzles are part of the rhythm of life here. Meanwhile, cities like Paris or Bordeaux are now experiencing 28–32°C as a common summer norm, with spikes into the 40°C. The contrast is no longer just geographic. It's existential. The coastal areas of Brittany, especially in the northwest, benefit from the Atlantic's cooling effect, which slows rising temperatures. While southern France faces increasing risks of drought and desertification, Finistère maintains a mild, temperate climate, making it one of

the few areas seen as a potential refuge in a warming Europe. From the Bay of Morlaix to the Presqu'île de Crozon, with Brest at its center, North Finistère remains remarkably insulated from the country's extreme heat spikes. Oceanic inertia, the moderating influence of the North Atlantic Current, steady sea breezes and persistent cloud cover all contribute to what feels like natural air conditioning on a regional scale. But this stability may not last forever. Finistère is not immune to climate change, only temporarily shielded. As ocean temperatures continue to rise and global patterns shift, even this refuge could face new pressures in the years ahead.

And the public is catching on. In 2024 and again in 2025, Brittany launched a striking new tourism campaign: “*Partez touriste, revenez Breton.*” (Go tourist, come back Breton) Targeting not just beachgoers, but heat-fatigued urbanites,



the campaign embraces humor, self-deprecation, and immersive imagery. Posters in metro stations such as Paris or Rennes display slogans like: *"Ici, l'eau n'est pas froide. Elle est bonne une fois dedans."* (The water here isn't cold. It's good once you're in it.) Backed by strong digital outreach, the campaign marks a strategic pivot: positioning Finistère not as a fallback option, but as a deliberate escape, for those seeking authenticity, calm, and a break from climate anxiety. Though initially aimed at boosting off-season tourism in autumn, it now stands as a model of successful regional communication: smart, distinctive, and proudly local. It also speaks to the Bretons themselves, reigniting a connection to place.

As southern France becomes increasingly unlivable during the summer, the idea of seasonal or even permanent internal climate migration no longer feels far-fetched. Finistère may become a laboratory for how France, socially, economically, and ecologically, learns to adapt to life in a warmer world.

But to reduce Finistère to a meteorological exception would be to miss its deeper identity. This is a region of fierce cultural pride. The Breton language is still visible on street signs, taught in

bilingual schools, and heard during fest-noz gatherings, lively community dances with traditional music, now recognized by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage. The coastline is rugged and dramatic, scattered with lighthouses, seaweed farms, and white sand beaches that remain surprisingly uncrowded, even in midsummer. The GR34 coastal trail, once used by customs officers chasing smugglers, now stretches over 2,000 kilometers as one of France's most beloved hiking routes. In villages like Plouarzel or Carantec, life moves slowly. Neighbors greet each other. Crêpes made with buckwheat are a daily staple. Small harbors remain working, not just picturesque. If you decide to visit, I recommend some of my favorite spots: the Île de Batz, the Presqu'île de Crozon, or the wild beaches of Plouguerneau. But it's worth remembering: their charm lies in their tranquility. To preserve that, we must avoid turning them into overcrowded summer hotspots.

Finistère stands at a crossroads. It could become a model of sustainable tourism, slow, local, and deeply respectful of nature. But that future depends on choices made today: avoiding overdevelopment, preserving public access for residents, and protecting the delicate balance that makes this place

unique. For now, Finistère remains one of the few places in France where summer still feels bearable, even restorative. It won't promise sunburns or poolside mojitos, and you'll often need a sweater in the evening. But it offers something rarer: breathable air, rhythms shaped by tides rather than thermometers, and a way of life where slowness isn't a fad, it's tradition. Finistère is more than just a destination. It's a glimpse into the future, not a utopia, but a living experiment in adaptation. And perhaps that's why it's no longer just a refuge. It's becoming essential.

Camille Baudouin

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THE GLOBALIZATION OF HEARTS

It's well known that travelling from one country to another isn't always easy; depending on the agreement between the two countries or current qualifications, some countries may require passports and visas from others. However, while this situation may create physical barriers, it demonstrates that emotional bonds cannot be affected by these barriers.

Empathy and friendship do not require passports or visas

I'm involved in a volunteering project, which is one of the easiest ways to make sense of this, and I write this as a global volunteer. The globalization of hearts reveals the sense of responsibility people feel not only to their communities but also to people around the world. Saying "Hello" in a new language allows a person to step outside their comfort zone and culture and connect with someone perhaps thousands of kilometers away. Furthermore, wherever they go in the world, people carry only their good intentions and open hearts with them—or at least that's how it should be. When they make eye contact with a child, hold the hand of an elderly person, or respond to a natural disaster, it's not their identity documents that speak, but their humanity. Because empathy is innate and cannot be contained by identity documents. In this context, empathy is not a privilege; it's a responsibility, even a duty. We seek refuge in empathy to avoid remaining silent in the face of global crises. It's easy to ignore the world, but the people have to choose to share that responsibility, and this choice brings us together; it brings distant things closer.

As I mentioned, volunteering projects play a key role in sharing this kindness. Experiencing and learning about different cultures is a powerful tool for both personal growth and strengthening your connections with people from diverse backgrounds. For example, I'd like to tell you a little about my personal development during my time here. Thanks to my volunteering project, I've had the opportunity to reach people from countries nearly 10,000 km away. Isn't that cool? Meeting people from such distant places isn't easy in real life; there are so many cultures that may not even be aware of each other. This way, we can see that the friendship I'm talking about isn't just local; it can form all over the world, and we can find a place in their hearts.

What connects us to each other?

In my opinion, there's no clear answer to this question, because connecting with people doesn't have to be tied to any particular situation. However, there are various ways to strengthen it. During this heart-to-heart learning process, trying the food of different cultures and sometimes a song melody you hear from different cultures, can significantly enhance your ability to empathize with them. Sharing the joys and pains of another society not only helps you discover other people but also yourself, thus replacing prejudices with curiosity and distance with closeness. Because I have the experience to share these thoughts and easily connect with people who are geographically difficult to reach through empathy and friendship, I feel like I've broken through boundaries!

Efe Özyalçın





No matter how much my appearance changed, or how old I was or how many friends I have gotten over the years, there is something me and my inner child can both agree on: we are both excluded. Being excluded as a child hurts badly once you realise you will never be part of those groups you see on television. You are not part of the main group of friends, you are the kid they make fun of, in order for their bond to grow stronger since they have a common enemy. Growing up, it's exactly the same. This time, you no longer feel excluded, you actually feel alone. There's a difference between the two. You can be excluded from a certain group but others accept you with open arms. Being alone means that you're excluded from everyone.

When you're alone, there's no comfort of finding "your people" somewhere else; it's like the world quietly decided you don't fit anywhere. You stop waiting for an invitation and start rehearsing conversations in your head just to fill the silence. You try to convince yourself that you enjoy your own company, but deep down, you crave a connection that never comes. The inner child, once confused and hurt by exclusion, grows into an adult who is simply tired — tired of trying, tired of hoping, tired of watching life happen from the outside looking in.

And what's even more painful is the realization that the rules haven't changed since childhood: social circles still guard their borders, people still choose the familiar over the different, and you're still the odd one out. But

now you're old enough to know that it's not always your fault, and old enough to wonder if this loneliness is permanent. Because sometimes the deepest ache isn't in being disliked, but in feeling invisible.

Growing up, I sometimes felt alone even in my family home. I feel at times disapproving glances all over me. I pretend not to. What happened, I wonder sometimes? I have always been the type of child that did everything just right, studied hard, got good grades. Now why isn't anyone cheering for me? I still try hard. I still get good grades. I failed my driver's license and I almost feel crucified for it. Sometimes you want to find excuses for all the reasons you are alone. You try to blame it on others but you refuse to change.

You start to wonder if there's something wrong with you that you can't see, something everyone else quietly notices but no one says out loud. The silence of your family feels heavier than any words; it makes every small failure echo ten times louder. You tell yourself it's just one mistake, just one missed milestone, but their disappointment seeps into you until it feels like a flaw in your character, not just a bump in the road.

And then the self-blame begins. You replay every conversation, every look, every sigh, searching for proof that you're the problem. You think: maybe if I smiled more, spoke less, tried harder, things would be different. But the truth is, you've already given so much of yourself, bent over backward for approval that never comes. You don't

know how to stop needing it. You don't know how to be your own cheerleader when the people who should believe in you the most are the ones who make you feel like you'll never quite measure up.

So you drift between blaming them for never seeing your worth and blaming yourself for not being worthy enough. You keep pretending everything is fine because admitting you feel unloved would make it too real. And sometimes you think: maybe if I just disappear a little more, take up a little less space, they'll finally notice how empty the room feels without me.

You need to find a way to exist. For me, that was writing. No matter how alone I felt in a group of people, my phone and my Word App were seconds away. I took all of this pain and turned it into words. There is no remedy for loneliness but you have to keep living somehow. This is how I keep living and how I get my rush of adrenaline one gets from hanging out with friends. I pour myself in writing and I try to keep my head high. Dear reader, if you feel the same, you need to find your own release. And soon, you will not care that you are alone. Because with your passion, you are not.

Fotini Tzouveleki



THE HUMAN-FACED DESERT

I t's been a while since I wrote.
Deliberately I have refused
Every wave of inspiration.
I've been silent, hiding
From papers, pens,
Keyboards and everything,
Where one can write on.

I never wanted to dive
Into feelings I didn't want to want.
I am far too small
To withstand this wave,
Dressed in beads of salt,
That devours Tirana
Let alone me.

I couldn't admit to myself
That the wave existed, and I
Was a pipsqueak facing it.
I wanted to forget the wave,
And the fragility of my bones.
But here I am, writing...
I couldn't make it.

I am a chronic failure,
Stunned at the black keyboard
In a failed attempt
To ignore the soaked shirt,
Sleeping past dawn,
And the 100-kilogram heavy head:
Could thoughts weigh so heavily?

No one but words ever managed
To stand with me against this tide.
The city reeks of abandonment;
Feelings have turned cloying and stale.
In this summer heat,
Only the heavy scent of sweat remains,
Along with the droning hum of cicadas.

People have become like deserts.
Drought has draped their faces in her own.
The phantasmagoric stillness of heat can be read in their eyes.
They resemble dry stumps at the height of summer,
Dormant fires, until a cigarette,
Tossed by some passing stranger,
Destroys everything.

In these hopeless conditions,
I chose to let the wave swallow me.
And if it kills me,
At least it will cool me down.
I would have died either way.
Better to drown,
Smileward.
Oh wave, take me,
Today I call out to you.
When the sun falls,
Cradle me in your waters,
Cool, yet warmly filled
With tales and stories
Unknown to this impossible Saharan reality.

I want you to weave me a fairy tale
About a land far, far away,
Where heat is never so cruel
That even a smile feels like a burden,
And a greeting... an impossible mission,
Numbed by anger,
Blinded by the August sun.

Jona Cenameri

SHKRETËTIRA ME FYTYRË NJERIU

U bë kohë pa shkruar.
Qëllimisht kam refuzuar
Çdo valë frymëzimi.
Kam heshtur, u jam fshehur
Fletëve, stilolapsave,
Tastierave dhe gjithçkaje
Ku mund të shkruhet.

S'kam dashur të zhytem
Në ndjenja që s'dua t'i dua.
Unë jam shumë e vogël
Për ta përballuar këtë dallgë,
Veshur në pikla kripe,
Që përpin Tiranën
E jo më mua.

Nuk ia pranoja dot vetes
Se dallga ekzistonte, dhe unë
Isha një picirruke para saj.
Doja ta harroja dallgën,
Dhe brishtësinë e kockave të mia.
Por jam këtu, duke shkruar...
Nuk ia dola.

Jam një dështake kronike,
E hutuar para tastierës së zezë
Në një tentativë të dështuar
Për të injoruar bluzën e qullur,
Gjumin pas agimit
Dhe kokën e rëndë, 100-kilogramëshe:
A thua kaq shumë peshojnë mendimet?

Kurrkush veç fjalës nuk ia doli
T'më shoqëronte kundër kësaj vale.
Qyteti kundërmon nga braktisja,
Ndjenjat janë bërë të velshme, bajate.
Në këtë vapë verore
Vetëm era e rëndë e djersës mbetet,
Bashkë me zhukamën e gjinkallave.

Njerëzit janë bërë si shkretëtira.
Thatësira u ka mbuluar fytyrën me të sajën.
Qetësia fantazmagorike e zhegut u lexohet në sy.
Ngjajnë si cungje të thatë në kulmin e verës,
Zjarre të fjetura, derisa një cigare,
Hedhur nga një kalimtar i rastit,
Shkatërron gjithçka.

Në këto kushte disfate
Vendosa ta lë dallgën t'më përpijë.
E në më vraftë,
Të paktën do më freskoj.
Do kisha vdekur gjithsesi.
Më mirë të mbytem,
Buzëqeshurazi.

Më merr o dallgë.
Sot po të thërras ty.
Kur dielli të rrëzohet,
Përkundmë në ujërat e tua,
Të freskëta, por ngrohtësisht mbushur
Me përralla e rrëfenja që s'i njeh
Ky realitet i pamundur Saharaje.

Dua t'më thurësh një përrallë
Për një vend shumë të largët,
Ku vapa s'është kurrë kaq mizore,
Sa edhe një buzëqeshje duket barrë,
E një përshëndetje... mision i pamundur,
Mpirë nga zemërimi,
Verbuar nga dielli i gushtit.

When creating a plan, put the 6 hats on!

From June 28 to July 6, 2025, Filip and I were representing VCS and Macedonia at the "Leadership Goes Green" training course in Arroquelas, Rio Maior, Portugal. The project was hosted by H2O Associação de Jovens de Arroquelas, with one eco goal in mind – to gather young people from across Europe who are willing to make a positive change in their local environment.



Throughout the entire program, each participant had the opportunity to lead their group and gain experience in leading a diverse group of people from different backgrounds (social, financial, and religious). This is crucial for every one of us to see the burden that the leaders usually have to take to make their ideas/projects work and to make a meaningful impact in society.

We were learning through non-formal ways and different methods that gave us new ways of seeing things and realizing our strengths and flaws. The participants also got the chance to work on creating a digital campaign to raise awareness about the eco problem their communities are facing. Some activities were done in the local park, near the river bank, around the city and we were in direct contact with the locals who live there and showed interest in our

live campaign. Most of the Rio Maior citizens wanted to talk with us about the topic and shared their ways of thinking, working and managing the problem that their city and country is facing.

One of the best methods that I personally liked and will use in the future is the 6 hats method. This method helps me to see the real picture behind every idea – to really see how possible that idea is in the moment and to be clear on the exact vision that I have in my mind. With clear vision, you can easily create a better plan and get better results. This session helped me realize that I was always looking at my ideas only through the Yellow (positive) and Green (creative) hat, but in life you need the other 4 hats – Blue (control/organization), Black (critical judgment), Red (intuition), White (facts & data) – to get clear vision.



I am really thankful that we got the chance to participate in this TC and want to say a big thank you to the organization, partners and everyone who participated in the whole activity. This week motivated and equipped me with new ideas and skills to continue my journey in creating a more eco-friendly society in my lovely country, Macedonia. Muito Obrigado!

Petar Stevanovikj

Пред да планираш, смени 6 капи!

Од 28 јуни до 6 јули 2025 година, Јас и Филип ги претставувавме ВЦС и Македонија на обуката за проектот: „Leadership Goes Green“ во Арукелас, Рио Мајор, Португалија. Обуката беше организирана од H2O Associação de Jovens de Arroquelas, со една еколошка цел: да се соберат млади луѓе од цела Европа кои се подготвени да направат позитивна промена во нивната локална средина/заедница.

Во текот на целата програма, секој учесник доби можност да биде лидер во својата група и притоа стекна искуство како е да се води група луѓе, сите од различно потекло (социјално, финансиско, религиозно...). Ова е клучно за секој од нас да го види товарот што лидерите обично мора да го преземат за да ги остварат своите идеи/проекти и да направат значајно влијание во општеството.

За време на проектот учевме преку неформални начини и различни методи што ни дадоа нов начин на гледање на работите и осознавање на нашите силни и слаби страни. Учесниците, исто така, имаа можност да работат на креирање дигитална кампања за подигање на свеста за еколошкиот проблем со кој се соочува нивната заедница. Некои активности беа спроведени во најблискиот парк, во близина на брегот на реката, околу градот, а бевме и во директен контакт со жителите кои живеат таму и покажаа интерес за нашата кампања во живо. Повеќето од граѓаните на Рио Мајор сакаа да разговараат со нас за темата и ги споделија своите начини на размислување, работа и управување со проблемот со кој се соочува нивниот град и земја.

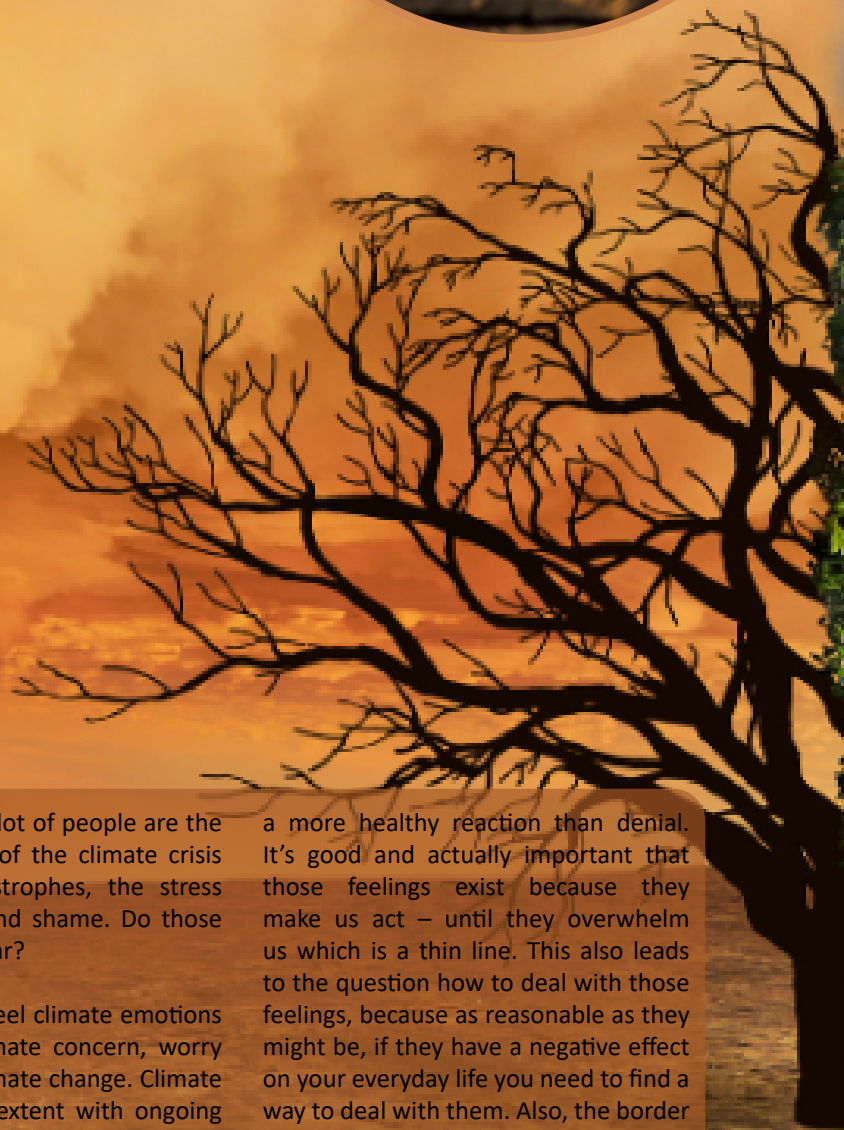
Еден од најдобрите методи што лично ми се допадна и ќе го користам во иднина е методот „6 капи“. Овој метод навистина ми помага да ја видам вистинската слика зад секоја идеја. Да видам колку е можна таа идеја во моментот и да ја согледам точната визија што ја имам на ум. Со јасна визија, лесно можеме да креираме подобар план и да добиеме подобри резултати. Оваа сесија ми помогна да сфатам дека секогаш ги гледав моите идеи само преку жолтата (позитивна) и зелената (креативна) капа, но во животот ви се потребни и другите 4 капи (сина (контрола/организација), црна (критичко расудување), црвена (интуиција), бела (факти и податоци)) за да добиете јасна визија.

Навистина сум благодарен што добив можност да учествувам во оваа обука и сакам да им се заблагодарам на организацијата, партнерите и сите што учествуваа во целата активност во текот на оваа една недела. Оваа недела ме мотивираше и ме опреми со нови идеи и вештини за да продолжам со моето работење во создавање поеколошко општество во мојата прекрасна земја Македонија. Muito Obrigado!

Петар Стевановиќ



Dealing with CLIMATE EMOTIONS



"Well, we are all gonna die anyway", this was an ironic sentence I said or at least thought sometimes when I was more involved in climate activism. It might sound very blunt and morbid, however, looking back I think it was a sentence to protect myself and not get fully consumed by the huge amount of things going wrong in this world. As many people, especially at a young age, I was and still am afraid of climate change. Consuming news, hearing about catastrophes, exceeding the 1.5 degree border, seeing people and the ecosystem die and on the other hand hearing politicians not acknowledge the climate crisis as the crisis that it is - all this builds up so many different (and mostly negative) emotions in you, which are all very valid. A few emotions I felt were anger, hopelessness and grief. Anger, at the simple fact of not enough action being taken. Hopelessness, because it is hard to stay optimistic for the crisis being solved. Grief, because of the people and nature we are losing to climate change. Other emotions

very present for a lot of people are the fundamental fear of the climate crisis and climate catastrophes, the stress because of that and shame. Do those feelings feel familiar?

Then, you also feel climate emotions also called climate concern, worry and fear about climate change. Climate fear to a greater extent with ongoing psychological distress because of the climate crisis is defined as climate anxiety or eco-anxiety by psychologists. The research about this topic is still at the beginning. The official definition of climate anxiety by the "The Handbook of Climate Psychology" is a *"heightened emotional, mental or somatic distress in response to dangerous changes in the climate system"*, but suggests that *"paying heed to what is happening...is a healthier response than turning away in denial or disavowal"*. In this aspect climate anxiety differs from other types of anxiety. The climate crisis is real and globally-threatening, so the fear of it is very reasonable and as described—it is

a more healthy reaction than denial. It's good and actually important that those feelings exist because they make us act – until they overwhelm us which is a thin line. This also leads to the question how to deal with those feelings, because as reasonable as they might be, if they have a negative effect on your everyday life you need to find a way to deal with them. Also, the border between worry and anxiety is fluent. So, there is a new challenge to find ways to deal with climate anxiety as well as climate worry, without diminishing the problem of the climate crisis. In the following article there are a few ideas that might be helpful to deal with climate worry and emotions. However, if climate anxiety has a negative impact on your everyday life maybe it is good to consider talking to a professional about it. Also it is important to see that everyone has their own set of emotions regarding climate change and deals with it differently.

First of all, one thing you can do, for sure, is get active. You can find a community or activist group about climate protection and engage yourself in the activities. Doing something against the crisis can make it feel less overwhelming. Working on the problem and having an impact together with others can feel like you are doing something to prevent it and give hope. You can also do things on your own and try to reduce your own footprint on the world. However, with activism research also found out that there is a risk for

burnout and when people in activism again don't see much results coming from it, it can lead to hopelessness.

Joining a group, you will see that you are not alone with your worries and feelings and a lot of people feel the same. Talking about those feelings with like-minded people or your friends and family can help a lot. And if there is a need for it, also talking about climate anxiety with a professional can be very helpful.

Taking time for yourself and doing what you like is very important too. Maybe feelings like shame or blame might arise then, because you don't have a completely climate friendly lifestyle, can't make it to the demonstration, or you have a nice weekend even though the climate crisis is existing. However, you need to also take time for yourself and find

a balance on where to go the extra mile for the climate and where not. Even though the climate crisis is happening, life goes on and we also need to take care of ourselves.

And sometimes... you just have to take the seriousness out of the situation and be humorous about it. It shouldn't get too much to not get completely numb about it, but a bit of humour to deal with feelings, even though it might be morbid, has never hurt. Also, formulating feelings about the climate crisis in songs or other forms of art helps dealing with those feelings. Listening to songs about depressiveness, anger, hope or hopelessness, was helping me perceive the feelings, and it can show you that you are not alone with them. Feeling those emotions and accepting them can be helpful in general.

However, there are niches, especially on the Internet, that are prophesying the world going down and spreading this kind of depressiveness a lot which is also called "doomism". Don't get me wrong – humanity has really destroyed the planet in a lot of ways and I myself have a hard time sometimes to stay hopeful and believe we can save the planet, but we can! And also, we at least should try it, just for our own sake. That's why mindful media consumption can be another helpful tool about managing climate emotions.

Who never "doomscored" for some time and afterwards felt completely depressed because of all the tragedies happening? Don't stop consuming news - it is also important to stay updated and to not look away - but be aware of yourself while doing so. Listen to yourself when you start feeling that it's too much for you and then put limits to your consumption. There are also positive spaces in social media for talking about climate emotions, which can be a great way to connect with others and not feel alone with your feelings.

Finally, it is important to understand that those psychological effects of climate change are a problem of society and not an individual one. However, unfortunately, first we have to deal with those emotions

individually. Those climate emotions are coming up because of the **human-made** climate crisis, and the psychological problem only arises because of it. Often, people that are more aware about the climate crisis feel the most emotions about them – and they feel isolated because in today's world there is also a climate of denial. However, there is also a big climate of action and communities uniting for a healthy planet and green future. This is where our hope needs to come from and which needs to grow bigger. So, take care of yourself and let's try to solve this problem as a society!

Maike Seuffert

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Can music define your personality?

Do you like karaoke, singing in the shower, or anywhere you can? Do you play any instruments or write lyrics? What if the songs you listen to could define your personality? Everyone likes music; there are no exceptions. We all react to music in some way: singing, humming, or tapping our feet to the rhythm. Some studies have found a connection between the types of songs you enjoy and your mindset, as well as how you are likely to behave.

The Big Five

Although "The Big Five" might sound like a secret intelligence agency, it describes five major dimensions of human personality. The groundwork for this model was laid in the 1930s by Gordon Allport and Henry Odbert, who identified around 18,000 words related to personality traits. Later researchers refined this list, and by the 1980s, psychologists Robert McCrae and Paul Costa developed the modern Five-Factor Model, better known as the Big Five. This theory outlines five key personality traits that vary across individuals:

Openness refers to a person's willingness to experience new things, creativity, adaptability, and curiosity for learning. It includes being open to new experiences.

Conscientiousness refers to thoughtfulness, self-control, goal-directed behaviors, planning, and consideration of one's actions. It also includes being mindful of deadlines and well-organized as opposed to procrastinating.

Extraversion refers to sociability, assertiveness, and emotional expressiveness, whereas introversion is associated with being more reserved and preferring solitude.

Agreeableness refers to traits such as trust, altruism, kindness, and affection.

Neuroticism refers to emotional instability, including tendencies toward stress, moodiness, and getting upset easily.

These traits exist on a spectrum. Imagine a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 indicates the absence of a trait and 10 represents its maximum expression. This is an example of how we can scale the characteristics. Personality can change over time and may be influenced by various factors such as economic conditions, social environment, and education. You are not stuck to one personality for your entire life.

Personality test

Openness 	I like learning new things. I travel a lot. I want to learn about other cultures. I enjoy doing manual activities.
Conscientiousness 	I think before acting. I like having a schedule. I procrastinate a lot. I feel responsible during group tasks.
Extraversion 	I am talkative. I am usually the first to speak in a conversation. I express my emotions easily. I prefer being surrounded by people.
Agreeableness 	I can keep secrets. I am willing to help others. I will always support my friends.
Neuroticism 	I often feel anxious. I get stressed easily. I worry about things even when they're small. I have mood swings sometimes.

Rate each statement from 0 to 5 where 0 = Not at all true for me and 5 = Completely true for me. For each trait, total your scores. If your average score is above 2.5, you are likely to show that trait. If your average is 2.5 or below, you likely lean toward the opposite.

Music genre

Let's begin with some definitions: have you ever wondered what the difference between music and noise is. Can noise be music? What are different genres of music? Music is an ordered sound often associated with the following adjectives: pleasing, harmonious, emotional. For instance, you can make music with instruments such as guitar solos in rock music, the voice of Ariana Grande, etc. On the other hand, noise is disordered sound, which is usually unpleasant, disruptive or annoying. For example, traffic noise can be disturbing. The frequency of music is different during the melody whereas noise is constant and regular.

Some research counts around 1,300 music genres, others 6,000. The point is that each website takes into account different parameters such as rhythm, tempo, place, melody, time, etc. This will be a short list of the possible music genres. However, what we can highlight are the main categories with examples of subcategories and singers as you can see some of them in the following table.

Pop	Pop rock	Imagine Dragons
Rock	Classic rock	Sting
Metal	Rap metal	Linkin park
Hip hop	Rap	Eminem
R&B	Afrobeat	CKay
Latin	Salsa	Luis Enrique
Reggae	Ska	Bob Marley
Country	Country road	John Denver
Blues	Boogie-woogie	Albert Ammons
Jazz	Jazz	Dave Brubeck

There are more categories such as traditional music or other instrumentals but in this article, it is impossible to list all the music. If you want more information, this website offers examples of music genres: chasic.com/list-of-music-genres/

Music and personality

There is no accounting for taste: everyone has their own. What if we could detect who you are and how you are thanks to music? Indeed, research suggests that each music genre is associated with specific personality traits, but studies warn about the association because it does not always represent reality. However, these associations should be taken with caution, as they don't always reflect the full picture. In fact, people tend to enjoy a wide range of musical styles, sometimes shifting genres dramatically within a single day. Several factors can influence musical preferences, including age, gender, social class, income, and cultural background.

The following paragraphs will associate personality traits adjectives with some music genre.

*People who enjoy pop music tend to be extroverted, honest, and conventional, often displaying a strong work ethic and high self-esteem, though they might be less creative and more prone to feeling uneasy.

*Rap and hip hop fans often have high self-esteem and a bold, outgoing nature, but they typically show less openness to new experiences while embracing risk-taking behaviors.

*Country music lovers are usually hardworking, conventional, and emotionally stable, with an outgoing and conservative personality that resists change and new experiences.

*Fans of rock and heavy metal are often gentle and creative, though more introverted and likely to struggle with lower self-esteem. Indie music enthusiasts are typically introverted, intellectual, and highly creative, but they may be less hardworking, more passive, anxious, and have lower self-esteem.

*Those who prefer dance music are generally outgoing, assertive, and open to new experiences, although they might score lower in gentleness.

My theory is that there is music for every situation. Our musical choices depend on many factors: our background, where we grew up, the environments we've been exposed to, and the people around us.

Personal tastes evolve over time, shaped by age where we are in the life cycle and influenced by emotions, moods, and daily activities. Whether we're working, studying, exercising, or relaxing, music adapts to fit the moment. It becomes a soundtrack to our lives, shifting with our circumstances, needs, and inner states.

After all, each person reacts differently to the music they listen to, what might sound intense to one and could feel comforting or energizing to another. And nowadays, with tools like AI-powered platforms (like Suno), it's even possible to turn those lyrics into full songs, melodies, instruments, and all. Technology is opening new doors for creativity, making music-making more accessible to anyone with a voice, an idea, or just a feeling they want to share.

So what is your favorite music genre?

Loline Thomas

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How one YES changed everything

Picture this: you're sitting at home, staring at an opportunity, thinking: *Should I go for it? Is this a crazy idea or the start of something amazing?* If only we had a crystal ball back then! Knowing what we know now, we wouldn't have wasted a second doubting ourselves. We would've jumped in headfirst.

And that's exactly what Sanja and I did.

We took a leap and joined an incredible journey into sustainability and nature conservation, hopping on a bus that carried us straight into an unforgettable adventure. Four months later, we can confidently say that joining the ESC project with Sunce has been one of the best decisions we've ever made.

This project has opened our eyes to how the city of Split is nurturing its environment and how we can be part of it. We've been involved in so many cool workshops, like Šišika, where we learned how to sew and breathe new life into old clothes (who knew upcycling could be this fun?). We've also helped prepare for the Sustainability Fest, and took part in the Fashion Swap Fair, which spreads the message: swap it, don't shop it!

But that's just a glimpse of what we do and honestly, I'm already feeling the impact. It's not just about learning, it's about living sustainably, with purpose and joy.

Of course, we'd be lying if we said we weren't soaking up every second of the Adriatic magic too. The sea, the sun, and the beach? Absolute bliss. And it's even more special knowing how important it is to protect this paradise.

One of the best parts? The people. Locals who welcomed us like old friends, volunteers from across Europe with amazing stories to share, and, of course, our wild and wonderful roommate life that made us a tight little crew. Split has wrapped us in its warm "pomalo" vibe: easygoing days, music-filled nights, and spontaneous laughter around every corner. This isn't just a project; it's a full-on experience, and we're loving every second of it.

Martina Cekova & Sanja Mirceva
our long-term ESC volunteers in Split, Croatia



Како едно ДА НИ ГО СМЕНИ ЖИВОТОТ

Замислете си: седите дома, гледате една интересна понуда и размислувате: *Да се впуштам ли? Дали вреди или е премногу ризично?* Да можевме тогаш да го знаеме сето она што го знаеме денес – немаше ни момент да се мислиме. Веднаш ќе прифативме!

И точно тоа го направивме јас и Сања.

Одлучивме да научиме повеќе за природата, заштитата на животната средина и одржливиот начин на живот, па се качивме во автобус кој не' одведе кон вистинска авантура. Изминаа веќе четири месеци, а учеството во ЕСС проектот преку HBO Sunce се покажа како една од најдобрите одлуки што сме ги донеле.

Преку проектот дознавме многу за тоа како градот Сплит се грижи за својата околина и како и ние можеме да бидеме дел од таа промена. Дел од нашите активности беа едукативни и практични работилници, како „Шишика“, каде што учевме како преку шиене и креативна повторна употреба може да се намали отпадот од текстил. Помагавме и во подготовки за Фестивалот за одржливост, и учествувавме на Саемот за размена на облека, кој ја шири пораката: разменувај, не купувај!

И ова е само мал дел од нашето секојдневие! Искрено, веќе ја чувствуваме разликата водејќи одржлив начин на живеење. Не само што учиме - живееме со смисла!

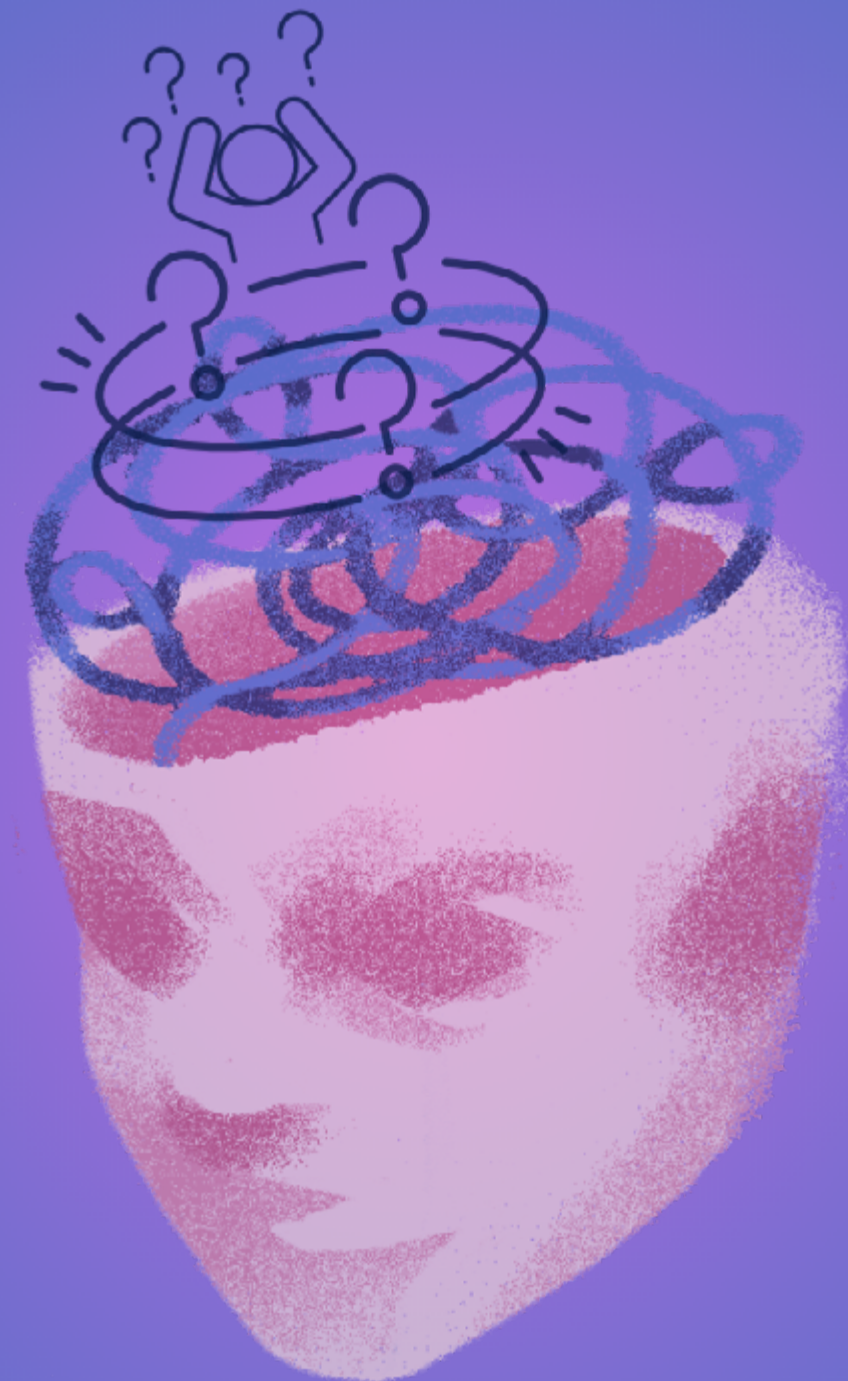
Секако, не заборавивме да уживаме и во убавините на Јадранското море. Морето, сонцето, плажите – сето тоа е дел од искуството. Но ова патување нè научи дека тие убавини треба и да се заштитат, не само да се уживаат.

Најдрагиот дел? Луѓето. Локалци кои ни станаа пријатели, волонтери од цела Европа со кои разменивме искуства, и, се разбира - животот со цимерите кој ни го разбуди тимскиот дух.

Сплит не' прегрна со својот “romalo” начин на живот - опуштени денови, бескрајни ноќи со музика и забава. Ова не е само проект- ова е вистинско доживување и ние уживаме во секоја секунда од него.

Мартина Цекова и Сања Мирчева
нашите долгорочни ЕСС-волонтерки
во Сплит, Хрватска





Through the Echoes of my Mind

As I'm trying to figure out what I will do with my life in 4 months, once my year of volunteering in VCS will be over, I find myself doing a lot of self-reflections.

What am I supposed to do with my life? Why is life so confusing? What is my place in the world? Where do I want to live? Do I see my future in France, or abroad?

Probably at least one of you already had such thoughts, especially nowadays, as we are exposed to so many options but at the same time confronted with the realities of the current world. And while having so many options for what you can do with your life is nice, it can create a "choice overload", that is how having too many options can make it harder to make one.

For me, these questions about my future come up quite regularly and they're rather anxiety-inducing. Unfortunately, I never was one of those kids that always had a clear idea of what they want to do in life. I remember already being confused about this in primary school, for example. I wish I had evolved to be like one of those kids that have clear life goals, or at least that I would have overcome this struggle of mine by now, sadly for me I'm still at a similar level of uncertainty at almost 23 yo.

Growing up, I always just went with the flow, seeing the deadline for settling for something new, changing or getting closer each year, always waiting for some kind of revelation. For example, I was really indecisive about what I wanted to study at university. When I finally made up my mind about what I wanted to study, I thought "Okay, now I have a bit more time to figure out what I want to do". And suddenly I found myself at the end of my bachelor's still being confused.

I would say I feel a bit ashamed and insecure about knowing that I'm so unsure and conflicted about what I want my future to be like and what I want to do with my life. Whilst I do know that it is normal and that it is most likely a very common feeling that even people who seem sure of their life plan have felt or continue to feel like that. However, I cannot help but feel a bit of shame around this, as if it made me childish.

I thought that going away for one year and getting out of my comfort zone would be my revelation. Well, now the fact of the matter is that, once again, I find myself not knowing what to do with my life. In some ways, I feel even more confused now, after this year of being abroad.

Not that I don't enjoy what I'm doing here, it's quite the contrary, actually. Indeed, I really do enjoy my current life in Skopje. From being a child with very few friends, who was terrified of speaking with new people, I find myself having a quite large social circle here. And now that I only have a few months left here, I find myself being scared. Scared of what my life is going to be once I'll have to go back home. I'm already used to having most of my friends abroad due to my past experiences in taking part in international summer seminars. But the situation now is different, I never stayed that long in a foreign country, so obviously now I got to develop a closer relationship with people. So, how will it be to go from being in a city in which you know a lot of people, to another one that despite being your "native" one doesn't contain that many people you're looking forward to seeing again?

That being said, I have set some goals for myself for these last few months here. The most evident one being to stop stressing myself out about my future. I obviously want to make the most of my remaining time and I don't want it to be ruined due to me being stuck in my head. While I cannot mention here this saying that we have with the other volunteers, I can mention another one: Life is brutal. Some of you may think that this is too pessimistic, however it is true, life can be brutal at moments, and we can just accept that not everything that we will experience in our lifetime will be pleasant or enjoyable.

In case any of you relate in any way to my self doubts and reflections, remember exactly this, stuff happens and will happen, and it's okay.

Chloe Gaschy

Postcards from a life

I didn't know I needed



If you told me a few months ago I'd be here - teaching English in a Turkish coastal town, sipping tea stronger than my willpower, laughing with students and teachers around campfires - I probably would've laughed.

But here I am. And it's the best decision I've made all summer.

The gig? Volunteering in a city that feels like it was carved from sunlight and salt water. Teaching English in youth centers, running speaking clubs that sometimes turn into therapy sessions or laughter riots. At camp, the students remind me why I started doing this professionally in the first place - to connect, not to lecture.

Every day feels like a postcard from a life I didn't know I needed. The beaches here aren't just scenic - they're soul medicine. The old town and bazaar, chaotic and comforting. The food? Let's just say

I now measure happiness in spoonfuls of lentil soup, mouth watering pide and the crunch of gozleme that will make you believe in God.

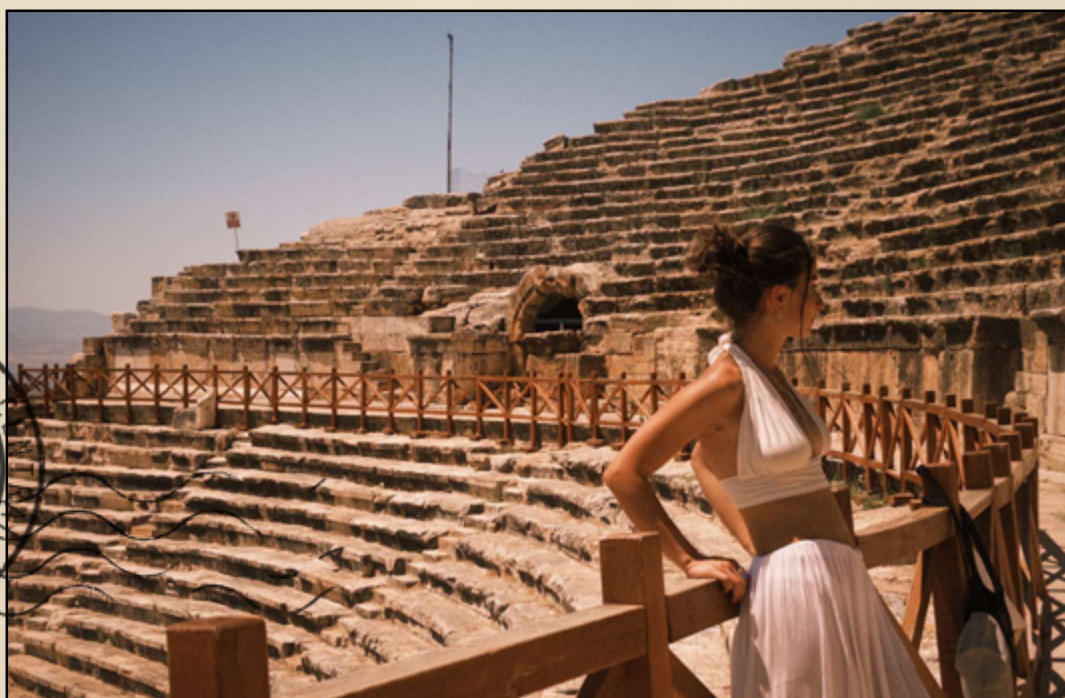
Weekends are a blur of wonder. Cappadocia's dreamscape. Pamukkale's alien-white terraces and the pool where Cleopatra swam. Green canyon. Duden. Dusty roads, shared buses, and conversations that bridge cultures and accents.

And LIDOSK? They don't just host you. They fold you into something bigger. Something warm and generous.

Three weeks. That's all it took to shift the lens.

Came to teach. Stayed to learn. Will surely leave with more than I packed.

Jasna Talevska





Разгледници од живот за кој не знаев дека ми треба

Ако ми кажеше пред неколку месеци дека ќе бидам тука - да предавам англиски јазик во турски крајбрежен град, да пијам чај и јадам симит, смеејќи се со ученици и наставници околу логорски огнови и шатори и патувајќи насекаде - веројатно ќе се насмеев.

Но, еве ме. И ова е најдобрата одлука што ја донесов за ова лето.

Задолженијата? Волонтирање во град кој се чувствува како да е издигнат од сончева светлина и солена вода. Предавање англиски јазик во младински центри и водење на клубови за развивање на комуникациски вештини кои понекогаш се претвораат во терапевтски сесии или испади на смеа. Во кампот, учениците ме потсетуваат зошто започнав да го правам ова професионално - да се поврзам, а не само да предавам.

Секој ден е како разгледница од живот за која не знаев дека ми е потребна. Плажите тука не се само живописни - тие се лек за душата. Стариот град

и чаршијата, хаотични и восхитувачки. Храната? Да речеме дека сега ја мерам среќата во лажици полни со супа од лека, највкусното пиде и крцкаво ѓомлезо што ќе ве натера да верувате во Бог.

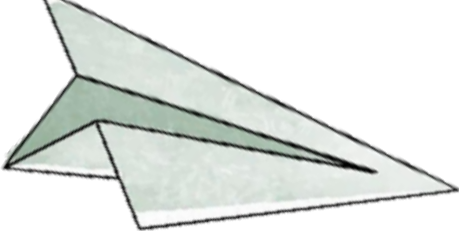
Викендите се мал милион чуда. Летање со балон во Кападокија. Капење во вонземски бели кади на Памуккале и базенот каде се капела Клеопатра. Зелениот кањон. Дуден. Прашливи патишта, преполни автобуси и разговори што поврзуваат култури и акценти.

А организацијата ЛИДОСК? Тие не само што те угостуваат, те вклопуваат во нешто многу поголемо. Нешто топло и великодушно.

Три недели. Толку беше доволно да ми се смени перспективата. Дојдов да предавам. Останав да учам. Сигурно ќе си заминам со повеќе отколку што спакував.

Јасна Талевска





Team Volunteering "Bridging Generations" hosted by Wolontariat Gdańsk



Being a volunteer has been a goal of mine for a very long time. I've heard some stories that make the idea intriguing. So I thought, what kind of experiences will I bring home?

This project took me to Gdańsk, Poland, a city I've wanted to visit for years. However, as I had no experience prior to this one the whole process was a bit intimidating. I was fortunate enough however, to be accompanied by extremely kind, helpful and smart individuals who helped me through every challenging part of the process.

Before arriving at my destination, I pondered about all the exciting opportunities that awaited me once I was settled, as well as how I would handle the challenges ahead. Our group was first to arrive at the dormitory, and after receiving the keys to our temporary accommodation, we started gathering items that were graciously given to us, like cooking pans, pots and tableware. Soon after, we met some of our colleagues and quickly started discussing what to expect on our first day of work, something I was eagerly anticipating. That first day, we spent the morning getting to know one another through icebreaker games. After that, we had a light snack, then went out together for dinner at an inexpensive local restaurant. Later, we took a walk through the beautiful historic part of the city.

Over the next few days, we followed a routine schedule: going to the office, discussing various topics, getting to know each other better, and preparing for our upcoming projects. I quickly formed a group with a few of the guys, and we began brainstorming ways to make our project stand out from the rest. At this point, the days felt like minutes, they were passing by as quickly and I hardly ever missed being back home. I have to be also honest and say that waking up early to go to work was challenging at first but I grew to like the feeling of doing something new and productive every day.

My first volunteering experience was at the Velo-city Conference, an impressive expo held over several days at Amber Expo. From a volunteer's perspective, this was my favorite event, mainly because I had the chance to meet and talk with people from all over the world. They told me of their countries and cultures, wishes and goals, and I too shared stories from my homeland. I can only hope they enjoyed hearing them as much as I enjoyed telling them.

After the conference we had the school project. Even before we began, I had already started thinking about how we would approach the task. My team and I gathered to discuss plans and with the help of our coordinators the task seemed to go without any obstacles. The first school we visited was close to our dormitory. I had initially imagined a much larger setting, but the class turned out to have only about 15 students. We presented our topic, which was "food waste" with 2 separate classes, and I was surprised to see the level of English mastery from the students. We later visited another school, this one a lot further away. The presentation was similar to the first, with a few improvements. The classes this time were bigger, and it was a really unique experience getting to visit a school like that, if only because it was so different from the schools I've attended throughout my life.

The third assignment, the senior parade, took place in the city center. We were each given various tasks for the day, including handing out flags, giving directions, and generally assisting the elderly. Since I was helping with directions and managing the queue, I had the chance to speak with some of them. The parade soon began and made its way to a nearby park, where my colleagues and I continued to assist by distributing food and drinks. I once again had the opportunity to talk with some of the seniors, even though the language barrier sometimes made communication

a bit difficult. At the end of the day, we had some of the food and drinks for ourselves. A few of my friends even went out on the dance floor, but since I'm not much of a dancer, I chose to take one last walk through the city. The next day, my roommate and I were planning to take a train to Warsaw.

I had my bag packed and was eagerly looking forward to seeing the capital, even if only for a day. The sheer size of the city was unimaginable at first and I knew from the start that I would not be able to visit everything I wanted to. My friend Konstantin and I decided to head to the old town immediately upon arriving. I had my camera out at every step, documenting as much as I could of this lovely city.

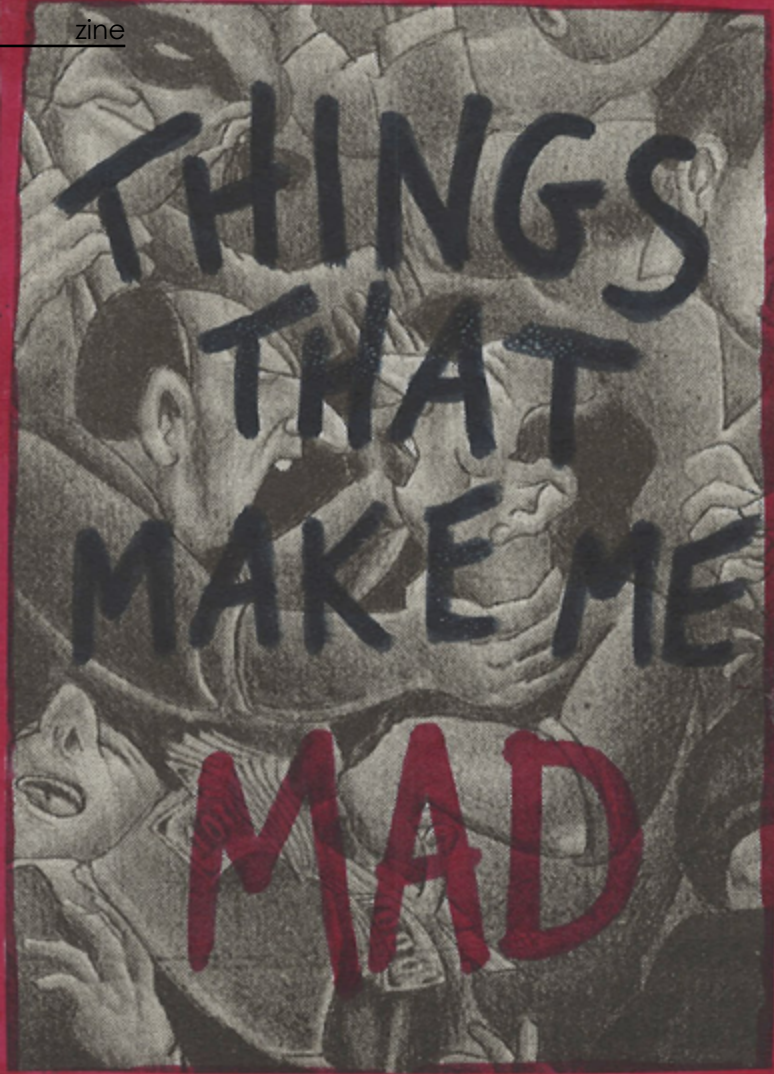
Upon buying some souvenirs, I decided to visit the offices of CD Projekt Red, a place I had wanted to see for many years. Since there wasn't much time left afterward, all we could do was wait for the train back to Gdańsk. I had a coffee near the old square, and then we boarded the train.

The last few days were a chance to reflect on the memories I had made for the past few weeks. I visited the beach often, walking along the sand at every opportunity I got, sometimes alone, sometimes not.

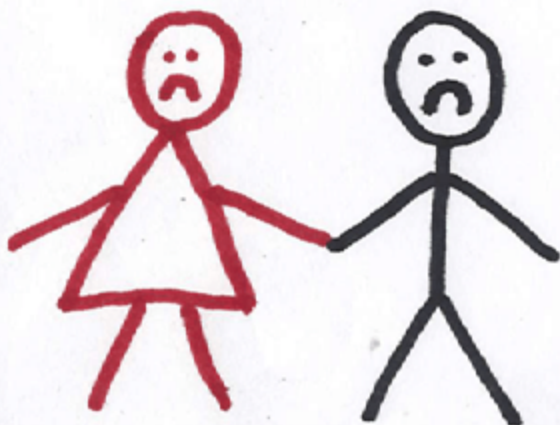
As I'm writing this I look back at the hundreds of moments I never managed to write down, but that I'll always carry in my mind.

Gorazd Trimparevski





GENDER
- NORMS & -
STEREOTYPES



DIRTY
DISHES
IN THE
SINK



BEAUTY STANDARDS

people are saying

LESS beautiful

thin ER

TOO tiny TOO BIG

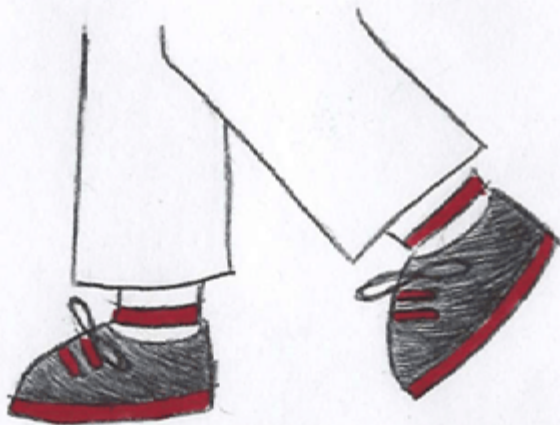
NOT good ENOUGH

YOU ARE NOT hot.



AT THE
MOST
INCONVENIENT
TIME

SLOW WALKERS

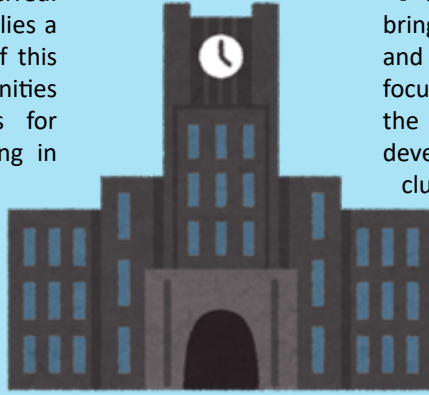


(when you can't
pass them)

silence

A CAREER BEGINS IN A UNIVERSITY CLUB ROOM

University campuses are not just spaces where academic knowledge is transferred. Beyond course schedules and lecture halls lies a world full of opportunities. At the heart of this world are student clubs. These communities offer students meaningful opportunities for personal development and social belonging in a wide range of areas including social responsibility, culture, arts, sports and entrepreneurship. Within a club, students can organize events, work in teams, meet new people and even take their first steps into the professional world. Today dozens of different clubs active on campuses create unique spaces for young people to discover and improve themselves.



The clubs operating at universities appeal to a wide variety of interests. Cultural clubs bring art to campus through activities like theater and cinema while social responsibility clubs focus on raising awareness and giving back to the community. Sports clubs promote physical development and team spirit whereas academic clubs concentrate on specific departments or disciplines. Some clubs focus entirely on hobbies such as photography, dance, music or literature. Each club becomes a world of its own and through them every student finds their place.

One of the most impactful and lasting types of clubs are career-oriented ones which continue to benefit students even after graduation. These communities are more than extracurricular activities. They are networking environments that provide early exposure to the professional world and can lead to opportunities far beyond university.



One of the most transformative experiences during my university years has been with a career-oriented club that I currently serve as the Vice President of the Board at TOBB ETU Industry and Productivity Society EVT where I study University, Ankara . Founded in 2005 EVT is one of the most active and established career clubs at the university. Each year it organizes various events, seminars and national-scale organizations reaching hundreds of students from both within and outside our university.



Being part of EVT has helped me develop not only organizational skills but also essential competencies like teamwork, time management, leadership and communication. During our events, I had the opportunity to listen to the stories of many professionals, learn from their journeys and reflect on my own. Most importantly, I was able to build a strong and valuable network with people who could potentially play a role in my future career path.

University is not complete with academic knowledge alone. It is shaped by the experiences that surround it. Student clubs are the places where dreams turn into plans, ideas become projects and friendships grow through shared responsibility. The time spent in a student organization is not just a line on a resume. It is a journey of growth where skills are gained, values are learned and futures begin to form. Regardless of your field or profession, the experiences gained in these communities often leave the most lasting impressions. After all, sometimes a career begins in a university club room.

Furkan Ögüt

Hangul, **MORE THAN** an alphabet

Hangul, the Korean alphabet, is often cited as one of the most logical and accessible writing systems in the world. Yet few people know that it was not the result of a slow evolution over centuries, but rather the outcome of an enlightened political decision driven by a concern for social justice. Let's look back at the history of an invention that was as revolutionary as it was humanistic.

Until the 15th century, Korea did not have its own alphabet. The spoken language of the people was Korean, but official and scholarly texts were written using Chinese characters (hanja). Only the intellectual and aristocratic elite, known as the yangban, mastered these complex characters. As a result, the majority of the population was excluded from reading, writing, and, more broadly, access to knowledge.

In this rigid society, education was a privilege reserved for the few. While the people had a rich oral tradition, they had no way to express their thoughts in writing using their own language. It was in this context that a major historical figure emerged: King Sejong the Great.

Ascending the throne in 1418, King Sejong is now considered one of the greatest rulers in Korean history. A man of letters with a deep passion for science and the arts, he also cared deeply about the well-being of his people. Recognizing that illiteracy was holding back social and cultural development, he decided in 1443

to create a new Korean alphabet simple, logical, and accessible to all. (Korean Cultural Center, Paris)

This project was not only political but also a linguistic masterpiece. Hangul, originally named "Hunminjeongeum", meaning "the correct sounds for the instruction of the people," was designed to accurately reflect the Korean language while being easy to learn and use, even by the lower classes. (Wikipédia)

Unlike Western alphabets or Chinese ideograms, Hangul was scientifically designed. Its original principle was unique: the shapes of the letters are based on the position of the vocal organs used to pronounce them. For example, the consonant ㄱ represents the shape of the tongue when pronouncing the [k] sound. (Korean Cultural Center, Paris)

Initially, the system included 28 letters: 17 consonants and 11 vowels. Today, 24 are still in use (14 consonants and 10 vowels). These letters are combined into square-shaped syllabic blocks, each representing a full syllable. This visual format makes reading intuitive once the sounds are learned.

When it was first introduced, Hangul was harshly criticized by the aristocracy. The yangban saw it as a threat to their intellectual authority, since making writing accessible meant challenging the established social order. For centuries, Hangul

was mostly used by women, children, and the common people, while official documents continued to be written in classical Chinese.

It wasn't until the 20th century through Korea's independence and movements toward modernization and democratization that Hangul was fully adopted as the official alphabet of South Korea (and in a modified form in North Korea).

Today, Hangul is much more than an alphabet, it is a symbol of Korean identity and sovereignty. Every October 9 in South Korea (and January 15 in North Korea), a national holiday known as "Hangul Day" celebrates this unique invention. Many linguists consider Hangul to be one of the most rational writing systems ever created.

In a world where illiteracy remains a global issue, the story of Hangul reminds us that a well-designed linguistic tool, supported by political will, can deeply transform a society. By making reading and writing accessible to all, King Sejong not only achieved a technical innovation but also made a profoundly democratic gesture.

Narjesse Ahrrouq

Sources:

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Voices of the European Youth Olympic Festival 2025

The European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF) is the leading multisport event for the European youth (athletes between 14 to 18 years old) from 50 European delegations. In 2025 Skopje became one of the 25 cities hosting this international competition.

Before a first medal was won at EYOF 2025, there were hundreds of warm smiles greeting athletes, helping hands guiding crowds, and quiet heroes running from venue to venue. Over 700 volunteers from Macedonia and beyond became the beating heart of this extraordinary week. Now, as the stadiums and sport halls quiet down and the athletes go home, we turn to those volunteers to ask: *What did it feel like to help make history?*

Julius (Germany) remembers the intensity of his role during the opening ceremony. Tasked with distributing national flags in the correct order, he and his Latvian teammate had to adapt quickly to last-minute changes. *"Finally I could use my flag knowledge for something useful,"* he jokes. But behind the humor was a deep sense of pride: *"Beside the stress I felt proud to be part of this event. It's nice to see so many young people together. It helps with cultural understanding, which is so important these days."*

For Leni (Germany), EYOF 2025 offered a whole new appreciation of a sport she once played. *"I played volleyball in a team before,"* she explains, *"but when I watched a match at EYOF I realised it's not only the technique that counts. The most important thing is the communication and timing."* This experience changed her perspective and deepened her admiration for the game. *"Volunteering gave me a whole new point of view."*

For Fabiana (Aruba), two occasions stood out during the festival. *"One gold medalist broke a world record, which is so inspirational and impressive to witness,"* she shares. But it wasn't just about the records. When a fourth-place athlete was later upgraded to bronze after reevaluating the footage, Fabiana saw something even more powerful: *"It was amazing to see the team effort and support that's behind every athlete. Sports are never just about the individual."*

Sara's (Slovakia) journey through EYOF was more personal. It motivated her to start playing volleyball again and offered life lessons far beyond the court. *"It helped me realise that sometimes perfectionism is not the best road to take,"* she says. *"Sometimes it's enough to smile and let the universe solve the rest."* Most of all, she was moved by the sense of purpose that came from contributing to something greater. *"This event proved to me how nice it is to work with people you know nothing about."*

For Natalia (Poland), one small gesture left a lasting impression. Working at the judo victory ceremonies, she remembers a presenter who shook hands with every volunteer before and after the ceremony. *"Usually, volunteers are not visible to other people,"* she reflects. *"It was really nice to be noticed and appreciated."*

Stefan's (Macedonia) journey was very spur of the moment kind of thing. He came back from his holiday and the next

day found himself on the field. Stepping into the role of Volunteer Supervisor, with full enthusiasm, and support from his colleagues, he managed to welcome hundreds of volunteers. *"Greeting the delegations on opening night, in their own languages, literally gave me goosebumps,"* he shares. *"It was a moment of pure fulfilment and pride, a powerful reminder of what this whole experience is truly about."*

For Nikola, director of Volunteers Centre Skopje, EYOF 2025 was both a personal and professional milestone. *"It was a unique experience and a great challenge,"* he says. *"The size and importance of the event required serious attention and preparation of the largest number of volunteers ever, which Volunteers Centre Skopje had the obligation to coordinate. We are talking about 200 volunteers over a period of 10 days and about 50 volunteers who were on a short-term ESC project. We are immensely grateful for their contribution, motivation and desire to be part of this event. Without them, it would not have been possible."*

While the festival may be over, the spirit of EYOF 2025 lives on in the stories, friendships, and shared purpose that united so many young people. For the volunteers, this project wasn't just about supporting an event, it was also about witnessing history and creating it.

Jolanta Ciopcińska

HOW TO WRITE ARTICLES FOR VOICES



TOPIC

- Anything, except politics or hate speech
- Think of topics that would interest **our audience** (youth)
- Maybe a **current event or trend** that you could write about?

RESEARCH

- Use **credible sources** when researching your topic
- Double-check** any information you include in your article to ensure **accuracy**
- Don't plagiarize**
- Link the sources** at the end of your article

STRUCTURE

- Use **short**, attention-grabbing **headline**
- Write an **introduction** at the beginning (what, who, when, why, how)
- Include **body** and **conclusion** in your article, maintain a logical flow
- Write your **full name** at the end

WRITING

- Use **clear and concise language** that your audience will understand
- Avoid** too technical terms and **hard language** unless necessary
- Be engaging** and try to make your article interesting to read

FEW RULES

- The article should be around 500 - 1000 words
- Don't** include images or illustrations in the document
- Send possible **photos separately** (with sources and assured they're **free of copyrights**)
- Edit and revise** (clarity, grammar, and spelling error)

WHAT ELSE?

- You can write in English, Macedonian and Albanian
- You don't need to be pro, VOICES is **open for everyone!**
- Writing to the magazine is **voluntary**
- We can provide you with a **certificate** if you become a writer for VOICES magazine





Our monthly magazine has a very simple, yet powerful, mission - to be the voice of youth. And how do we do that?

We encourage young people to take an active part in today's society through journalism and designing by giving them a platform to express themselves. VOICES is produced in Skopje, Macedonia, and published online every month and four times per year as a printed edition.

Join VOICES team!

Contact us in our social media pages or write us an e-mail. What would you be interested in doing?



Writing articles

VOICES accepts articles about anything, except politics or hate speech. Brainstorm your ideas with us and write articles once, twice, or every month!



Translating articles

VOICES is published in three languages: English, Macedonian and Albanian. If you are a native speaker or fluent in these languages, join our translation team!



Featuring your work

If you are an artist, photographer, designer or other, your work can be presented in the magazine. Send us your method of art and a short bio of yourself!



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