



UNITED SOCIETIES  
OF BALKANS GR

# Balkan Hotspot ESC Hosting Project



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# About USB

United Societies of Balkans (U.S.B.) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Thessaloniki, Greece, working in the field of youth mobility, participation and promoting youth awareness of social issues. It was founded in 2008 by the initiative of a group of active young people who wanted to address the social issues which affect the youngsters in the Balkans and Eastern Europe.



## Objectives

The goal of the organisation is the promotion of youth mobility, youth involvement and participation, voluntarism and human rights. We make it through:

- Promoting the values of non formal learning, voluntarism, active citizenship and democracy for the creation of a better future for the European youth;
- Involving minorities and immigrants into youth activities;
- Building healthy cooperation bridges between countries in the area of the Balkans and Eastern Europe with the rest of Europe;
- Using New Media and Citizens' Journalism methodologies to encourage youth expression, to raise awareness of Human Rights and to promote intercultural dialogue;
- Utilizing arts as a tool for the cultivation and expression of youth;
- Breaking down prejudices and stereotypes among the European countries and amongst youth.

In order to make more effective all our actions, USB is also member of several networks, such as Anna Lindh Foundation, Thess Diktio, Youth for Exchange and Understanding.

# Thessaloniki

Thessaloniki is the second biggest city in Greece, and it is located in the North-East part of the country. It is a coastal city full of life, with a lots of youngsters and students. In 2014 it has been the European Youth Capital. It is also a city with a long history and tradition. It has always been a crossroad between the West and the East and a trading harbour for many Balkan countries. It embraces many immigrants and cultural groups from many areas of the wider region of the Balkans, which renders it a colourful mosaic of cultures and trends. More information is available on the website of the municipality: [www.thessalonikicity.gr](http://www.thessalonikicity.gr)



## In the vicinity

Interesting cities and places nearby: Meteora's monasteries, Pozar thermal natural baths, Kavala city and lots of other historical and natural places. Travel to other countries: from Thessaloniki you will have the chance to get easily to the Balkan countries, well connected by plane, train or even bus. You can visit Serbia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, North Macedonia, Turkey, Albania.

# Balkan Hotspot

The 'Balkan Hotspot' Project deals with the service of volunteers coming from member-countries of the EVS Programme. This is a project which has been running since 2009, with more than 180 volunteers having been hosted by our organization. The main activities of the project are related to Web Media. On the website of the project ([www.balkanhotspot.org](http://www.balkanhotspot.org)) you can find the articles, the radio podcasts, the link to the videos and to the E-Magazine "Balkan Beats" made with the essential contribution of our volunteers. Through these tools, the volunteers, in cooperation with the youth of the local society and the other volunteers of our organization, will contribute to create and maintain a space of free expression and communication among young people, always within the context of the subjects, the principles and the goals of the ESC Programme. For the radio, we also collaborate with Infinity Greece (<http://infinitygreece.com>), a local youth organization that run also a radio and has the radio station inside our office. Our volunteers can collaborate with them for their live radio shows or with podcasts. We also organize events and activities for the youth in the city.

## Personal Project

We truly believe that for volunteers the European Volunteer Service is an opportunity to learn, to improve themselves and to discover and develop their personality and competences. For this reason we encourage our volunteers to develop a personal project besides the daily work for Balkan Hotspot project. With the support of their Mentor the volunteers will develop a concrete personal plan with the objective of creating a personal project based on their own interests and goals.



# Volunteer's profile

The selection of the participants is mostly based on their motivation and personal interest in the topics of the project. Our ideal volunteer candidate is an open minded person willing to learn, to improve her/himself and to help other people. It is important to be ready to work in a team and to share the daily life with people from different backgrounds. It is not necessary to have a previous technical knowledge of media. Although it is not required to have a high level of English, the volunteers need to have at least a basic knowledge of the language for their everyday communication with international and local people but also for their safety.



## Provided Seminars

We provide three main seminars on Media (Radio, Journalism and Video-making) more two seminars about Creativity and Cultural Activities Coordination. Each seminar lasts 3 days and is organised with the support of professionals of each field. We will also provide a certification if requested. More seminars on specific objectives can be organised according to the needs of the participants.

# Volunteer's Role

The activities in which the volunteer will be involved are:

- Organisation and development of an e-radio (live or podcast).
- Organisation and development of a web-tv. Documentaries emphasised on social issues and cultural activities in Thessaloniki are highly recommended.
- Organisation and development of "Balkan Beats", an e-journal focused on youth and human rights.
- Management of the website of the project and its social networks
- Organisation and participation in special events and meetings organised by the project, especially during dates dedicated to EU or Human Rights.
- Workshops organised by USB. The three workshop on Media (mandatory) plus the Creativity and Cultural Activities Coordination Workshops (optional)
- Deliver workshops for the other volunteers as well as for locals based on their skills and knowledge
- Participation in some public events or festivals organized by the local authorities or other organizations, such as the International Film Festival of Thessaloniki.

## Daily work

The volunteers usually work in shift of 4 hours per day from Monday to Friday. The organisation can ask them to work more hours or during the weekends if needed, for a maximum of 35 hours per week. Every Monday there is a meeting with the Coordinator to check the working plan of the previous week and schedule the working plan for the next week. Individual or group meetings will be organised with the Mentor to talk about their personal project and development. The volunteers have the right to get two free days per month for which they must ask 3 weeks in advance to the Volunteer Coordinator except for very urgent reasons. They will have free days during Greek national holidays too.



# Language & Youthpass

Since the beginning of 2016, volunteers can take part in the online language courses through the online linguistic support platform created by the Erasmus+ programme: <http://erasmusplusols.eu/>

We provide extra Greek language courses and we try to encourage volunteers to learn the language through informal and non formal learning, participating in events and activities with Greek people:

- TANDEM meetings, where people from different countries help each other to learn and practice languages and
- assigning to each volunteer a local young "buddy"



## Youthpass

Youthpass is the official recognition tool for non-formal & informal learning in youth projects. Through it participants of Erasmus+ projects can describe what they have done and show what they have learnt.

Volunteers have to keep a diary of their activities and learning in order to fulfill it properly at the end of their project. The Mentor is the responsible for the Youthpass and will support the volunteers for it.

# Accommodation

Volunteers are going to be accommodated in a fully equipped building located in the city centre (Anagnostara, 13) near the main bus and train station of the city. It is an autonomous 5 floored building of 150 m2 per floor and a terrace on the 6th floor. There are two living rooms and a big kitchen, showers in the common floors and toilets in every floor.

In the building there are also accommodated the volunteers who participate in other projects in the city coordinated by our organisation.

Each volunteer will share their room with one or three more people (we have double and big quadruple rooms).

In the building are living up to 35 volunteers. More info about the rules are in the residence statute.





There are also single rooms for people with special needs or for interns. Wireless internet is available in the whole building. The House Manager coordinate the cleanings and the organisation of the spaces in the house and work every morning in the common spaces from Monday to Friday.



# Food Policy

We provide our volunteers with three meals per day through a catering service that prepares the food according to their preferences and allergies (also if they are vegan or vegetarian). Diamantis Catering (<http://www.catering.gr/>) is one of the biggest catering services in Northern Greece and has received multiple certifications of quality. In this way the volunteers will have the possibility to get in contact with the Greek cuisine and culture, but at the same time on Saturdays and Sundays they can cook and enjoy their own food. In the weekly days the House Tender will prepare the breakfast .

The kitchen is always available for the volunteers if they want to cook something more or add ingredients to their food.



# Insurance and Health

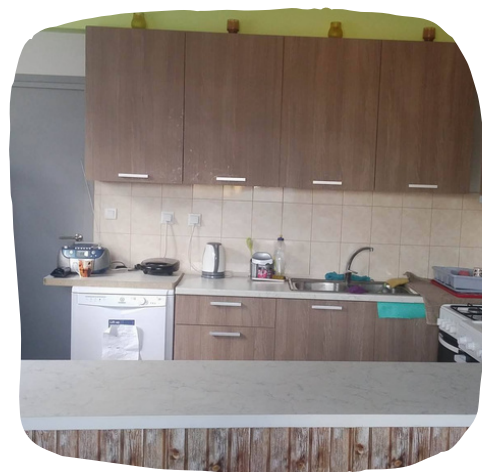
The participants will have a private insurance by CIGNA, which covers all their needs for the whole duration of their project and even after that (for a few months). The registration to the insurance is made by the Sending organisation. A network of doctors and hospitals is already available in order to meet all their needs, even the most urgent. The Mentor is responsible for all the issues connected with health and insurance.

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# Cooperation with the SO

A strong cooperation between the sending and the hosting organisation is very important for the good progress of the project. The sending organisation has to communicate with the volunteers and keep a report of their educational process and their daily life. The Volunteer Coordinator provides feedback to the sending organisation about the fulfilled tasks and the Mentor will communicate about personal issues of the volunteer.



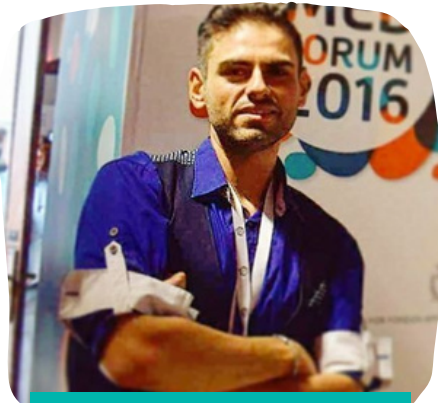
## USB Network

United Societies of Balkans is also coordinating other EVS project in the city.

The volunteers hosted by other organisations are accommodated at the same building of our volunteers. There might be several activities where the volunteers of the network will participate all together. This network also help the volunteers to know more about what is going on in the city and about other issues faced by the other organisations. The Network's Coordinator support the other coordinators' project and is the responsible for the common activities and events.



# Our Team



**Aris**

## President

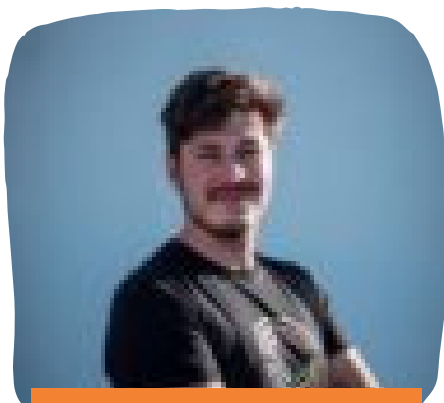
Supervise the project and support the team.



**Christian**

## ESC Manager

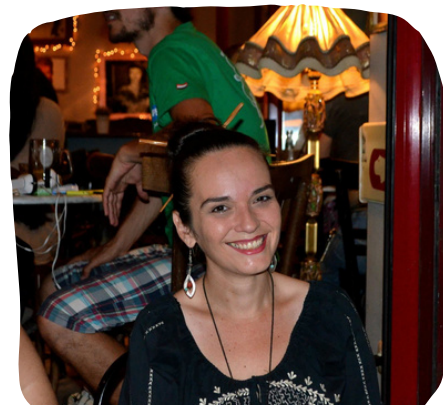
General Coordination, practical arrangements, monthly budget



**Alex**

## Coordinator Assistant

Daily support Volunteers' team leading



**Rania**

## Mentor

Personal development, Personal project Health and social issues, Youthpass.



**Dionisis**

## House Tender

House cleaning, all house issues, meals.



**Kristina**

## Accountant

Ticket reimbursement Financial issues



## Useful Links

European Youth Portal : [https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en)

Project website: [www.balkanhotspot.org](http://www.balkanhotspot.org)

Thessaloniki's info: [www.thessalonikicity.gr](http://www.thessalonikicity.gr)



**EUROPEAN  
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CORPS**

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