

INFOGUIDE TO YOUR PROJECT

# Volunteers Centre Skopje

a home, that over 8500 people passed by.



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# About Us

Volunteers Centre Skopje has existed over **17 years**. We are one of the leading NGOs in Macedonia, a recognizable brand and a trusted partner through which over 8500 Macedonian and foreign volunteers and youth activists have passed. Our key areas of work are **youth work, youth participation, voluntarism, activism, non-formal education** and **environmental protection**.

Our main goal as an organization is to give **non-formal educational opportunities** to young people, in different fields, both locally and internationally. **Voluntarism** is a big and important idea also promoted by us while connecting youngsters no matter their nationality, religion, gender, political, economic or social status. We aspire to contribute to a multicultural civil society, to reinforce existing democratic structures, to support young people in developing their individual abilities and skills and to foster closer cooperation among youngsters.



## CONTACT



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“Volunteers are not paid  
- not because they are  
worthless, but because  
they are priceless...”

...is the motto that we live by every day. And we say we are (as) a **family**, because, even though we are people of different nationalities, with different views on life, different ideologies and, of course, different characters, we are all driven by the same thought: how to change and make things **better** around us.

# Our Team



Nikola Stankoski  
Director

The brave one who started all of this over 17 years ago. Always offering solutions, great partnerships and new ideas.



Andrej Naumovski  
Project Manager

Our maestro behind writing, implementing, and evaluating projects, all while coordinating the volunteers. Seriously, he's everywhere, really busy bee.



Goran Adamovski  
Operational Manager

...and VOICES editor as he is a journalist, making sure our content is top-notch. Ready-to-go type of guy, no need to wait!



Goran Galabov  
VET & ESC Coordinator

Among many activities, coordinating new and current volunteers and VET students. Just ask anything, he'll help!



Ewelina Chańska  
Social Media Coordinator

Creating content and publications, our Polish power source keeps our profiles fresh and volunteers occupied!



Jolanta Ciopcińska  
Program Coordinator

Multitasking several topics at once, Jola can help you with almost anything.



# Enough about us...

## What is ESC?

European Solidarity Corps is programme funded by the European commission and aims to **improve the skills of young people**. You will have a supporting organization in your country, and receiving organization who will host you during the project.

ESC creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad which benefits communities and people around Europe. Project covers **accommodation, insurance, food money and pocket money**. Additionally for long term volunteers the project covers **language course and Visa costs**.

You can work in a wide range of fields such as culture, youth, sports, children, cultural heritage, arts, environment, and development cooperation. In the end of your project you will receive a certificate confirming your participation, **YouthPass**. Projects are for people between **18 - 30 years** old. Projects can last from few weeks **up to 12 months**. They are usually be located within the Erasmus+ partner countries, and you can make it only **twice in a lifetime**. (short term & long term)



## ...and what will you do in Macedonia? So many things!



During your project in Volunteers Centre Skopje, you will actively contribute to the creation of **VOICES magazine** and the **VOICES to Hear podcast**. You will be...

- researching topics
- writing articles
- conducting interviews
- coordinating translators
- designing the magazine
- managing social media
- making podcasts

# That's not all!



## Multimedia

Working on social media channels, creating content and graphic designs, making videos and other promo materials. Wanna create funny content on TikTok or quizzes on Instagram? Maybe design some of our info-packs and other publications?



## Events

Organizing different events for the local youth like karaoke parties, movie nights, pub quizzes, cultural nights... Because we must have fun on the way! Maybe you can organize language lessons with your mother language?



## Work with children

Projects in Daycare Centre for street children and in an elementary school for children with special needs. You'll be spending part of your project helping them out with their daily activities.



## Workshops

Non-formal education is one of the keywords in your project. We encourage youngsters to take active part in society, by organizing workshops in high schools and our office with the methods you'll learn, while promoting the importance of youth work and voluntarism.



## Projects

We write and implement multiple projects every year. Local projects, international fundings, sending people abroad... You name it! Sometimes we need different dissemination materials and help with ideas. You'll take part on implementation of projects, maybe you even want to write one?



## Your ideas

Maybe you have ideas for new activities or projects? We always have free space to brainstorm and work together on new things as well. Our multicultural team of staff and volunteers create a strong team which creates a perfect place for teamwork!

## Overwhelming?

Don't worry, you don't need to have previous experience. Your project is about learning and developing new skills, we will be with you all the way!



# Where will you live?

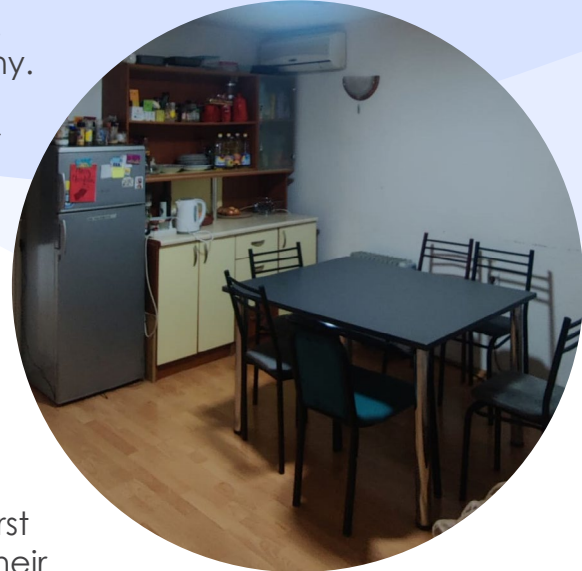
near our office, with other volunteers

VCS office and the apartments are located in **Kisela Voda**, one of the neighborhoods in Skopje, right under beautiful mountain Vodno.

We have two flats, one with 5 and other with 6 bedrooms. Both have 2 bathrooms, kitchen, living room and 1 balcony. Each volunteer will have a **personal room** (short term ESC volunteers might share a room), shared kitchen and other facilities. The apartments have WiFi, washing machines, all necessary kitchen supplies, blankets and bed sheets. We ask you to bring your **personal towel**.

City Center and Bus station are located only **15 minute walk** away from the flats. The markets Vero, Stokomak, Kam and Tinex are close by, as well as other shops, bakeries, restaurants, banks...

Sometimes volunteer might stay in a different flat for the first few weeks of their stay, until previous volunteers will end their project and free a room.





## Working hours and free time!

As a volunteer, your working time is going to be from **Monday to Friday, 09:00 - 16:00**. Sometimes we do events in the evenings or weekends, but those will be agreed in advance. You can have **half an hour lunch break** between 12:00 and 13:00.

You will gain **2 free days** on each month, which you can put together for a longer holiday during your project. From your national Holidays you are entitled to have free days on **Christmas and Easter**. Macedonia has several Holidays throughout the year, which will be free for you as well.

## Trainings for long term ESC

National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility, the institution in charge of accreditation of ESC organizations, will organize 2 trainings for you:

**On-arrival training** will take place at the beginning of your ESC project, or sometimes few months after your arrival.

**Mid-term training** around the half way of your project.

These two trainings will be the occasion for you to know more about the programme, your rights as a volunteer, to meet other volunteers and prepare yourself for ESC!



## Mentor like a first friend!

We will arrange a mentor for you, a **young local** who will be there for you throughout the project. We like to think of them a bit like a first friend, who will take you around the city and show the most important and interesting places. Your mentor will **be there for you** with any questions and providing support for the whole project period.



# Outdoor

It's hot hot hot...

**Summers** in Macedonia are **really warm**, starting from May, lasting till September. In June and July you can expect temperatures over **40 °C**. We have **3 natural lakes**, Ohrid, Prespa and Dojran. The whole country is full of **beautiful hidden spots**, hiking trails, waterfalls, smaller lakes and cute towns to explore local traditions!

**Winters** in Skopje are mostly without snow, and temperature is staying around **0 °C**. If you however love winter; **Macedonia is full of mountains!** Maybe you'll take a skiing trip to Mavrovo or Popova Shapka?

# Money

must be funny...

In Macedonia we use Macedonian denars (**1€ = 61.5 MKD.**) You can exchange euros and denars without any problems here. Most of the biggest shops and restaurants accept also **credit cards**.

**Long term** volunteers will have a personal bank account in NLB Bank, where they will receive their money monthly. **Short term** volunteers will receive their money in cash.

Macedonia is **relatively inexpensive country**. However, if you are planning to eat out in restaurants every day and travel a lot during your free days, we recommend you to take some **savings** with you.

Keep in mind that you cannot exchange MKD outside Macedonia.



# Transport

take me somewhere...

**Taxi** in Skopje is **cheap**, for one ride in the city you should pay from 100 MKD to 200 MKD. Few reliable companies:

Global Taxi - 02 151 80

Riba Taxi - 02 151 61

Vodno Taxi - 02 151 91

[Cammeo](#) - Order with an app

[Vikni Taxi](#) - An app with all the taxi numbers

**Bus** for places more far, one trip is **35 MKD**. There's also regular transport to cities and countries near by. Transport will be provided to volunteer in **necessary situations** like events outside of Skopje or workshops from bus ride away.





## Insurance

don't worry, be healthy

During your ESC you are insured by **Henner**, which covers all the expenses for visits to doctors, operations, medicines with doctor's prescription, etc. Henner will insure you in your **home country** and **Macedonia**, therefore keep in mind to take care of other personal insurance if you will travel during your project. Most case you pay your doctor's visit and apply for reimbursement after.

If you have any health problems, **inform us** and take your medicine with you. Let us know if you have a specific condition that might need specific treatment or behavior. Be sure to leave correct emergency contact information to us and to your sending organization.



## Documents

for long term ESC

As a long term volunteer you will need a **Visa** to stay in Macedonia. Cost of it will be **covered** and **we will help** you throughout the whole Visa application.

After you start your project with us, you will get Macedonian temporary residence card in here. Everything will be done together with us!



# Important

- 1** Check that your passport is valid at least **three months after** your project will be finished
- 2** Pack important **medications** that you are using
- 3** You will receive Macedonian **sim card** from us, so you can discharge the deal with your operator from your own country
- 4** Take your **computer / tablet** with you if you have one as our work happens a lot online
- 5** Get ready for **project activities!** Brainstorm ideas for inter-cultural nights as for your workshops and share your ideas with us
- 6** Keep in mind that you can stay in Macedonia in total of **90 days straight without Visa**, in case you are planning to travel here after your short term project

# A 支 Language

## Зборуваме Македонски!

The official language of Macedonia is **Macedonian**, and it uses the Cyrillic alphabet. You will have language lessons to learn the basics and to feel more comfortable in daily life situations (only for long term ESC).

Most of the younger generation in Macedonia knows English, but sometimes especially elderly might struggle with understanding you. Here are some basics:

**Hello** - Здраво (Zdravo)

**Thank you** - Фала (Fala)

**Bye** - Чао (Tchao)

**Okay/Good** - Добро (Dobro)

**Wait** - Чекај (Tchekaj)

**See you later** - Се гледаме (Se gledame)

**How are you?** - Како си? (Kako si?)

**What is your name?** - Како се викаш? (Kako se vikash?)

**My name is...** - Јас се викам ... (Jas se vikam...)

**Where are you from?** - Од каде си? (Od kade si?)

**I'm from...** - Јас сум од... (Jas sum od...)

**Please** - Те молам (Te molam)

**Cheers / Bon appetit!** - На здравје! (Na zdravje!)

**Let's go!** - Ајде! (Ajde!)

**I know** - Знам (Znam)

**I don't know** - Не знам (Ne znam)

**I don't understand** - Не разбирам (Ne razbiram)

**No problem** - Нема проблем (Nema problem)

А	Б	В	Г	Д
А	В	В	Г	Д
Ѓ	Е	Ж	З	С
GJ	E	ZH	Z	DZ
И	Ј	К	Л	Љ
І	J	K	L	LJ
М	Н	Њ	О	П
М	N	NJ	O	P
Р	С	Т	Ќ	У
R	S	T	KJ	U
Ф	Х	Ц	Ч	
F	H	C	CH	
		Џ	Ш	
		DJ	SH	





# Eat, drink & dance!

Some cool places in Skopje



## Restaurants & Bakeries

**Kruna, Kaiser and Kalinka** - Bakeries close by with good Macedonian pastries

**Freshii Food & Coffee** - healthy sandwiches, smoothies and sweets in the neighborhood

**Kalabalak** - Kafana with good food and rakija, not too expensive!

**Fontana** - Restaurant close by with good meat and fresh shopska salad

**Jakomo** - Pizza place close by, smells to the streets!

**Burgerslut & Fresh Burger House** - The best burgers few min from the flats

**Kolektiv** - In the center at the square, a bit more expensive but good food!

**Engin çiğköfte** - Turkish food in old bazaar, so worth to try!

**Bratski Merak** - Traditional Macedonian restaurant near the apartments

**Paradise Food** - Paradise for vegetarians and vegans



## Coffee & Sweets

**Joy Cafe** - Special coffees and cool staff, in the center

**Cafeteria Vlez** - Offers vegan-friendly coffee options

**Буква/Bookva** - Café and bookstore with live gigs and poetry readings

**Teeny Tajni** - Small and cute coffee place in Debar Maalo

**Caffe Mola** - Small café in the Old bazaar, serving freshly squeezed juices and coffee in coconut



## Bars & Clubs

**Beertija Pub** - Located in GTC, pub with good music and awesome staff!

**Rakija Bar Kaldma** - In the old bazaar, different rakijas, live music, international mood

**Wine Bar Kaldma** - Younger sibling of Rakija Bar with live music and delicious wine

**Marakana** - Nightclub with live rock/pop music everyday in Gradski park

**Stanica 26** - Nightclub with techno, near by the flats

**Shortbus** - LGBT friendly bar with the best hot tea with rum

**Gluvo Kuche** - Chill, good live music, different beers & food

**Saloon** - Nice place with different types of music every night

**Bajka 2D bar** - Unique interior and karaoke nights

# Explore Skopje!

## Outdoor

**Gradski park** - City park, nice place for a walk and hang out on a sunny day.

**Gazi Baba park** - Bigger natural park, perfect for picnic and walks!

**Čaršija (Old Bazaar)** - Part of old Skopje in the center. Beautiful streets, cheap restaurants, shops and souvenirs, Bit Bazar where they have everything!

**Mountain Vodno** - You'll be living right under Vodno, where you can go for a hike. There's also a regular bus and cable car all the way up to the Millennium Cross.

**Matka Canyon** - Beautiful place in nature with canyon and hiking trails. You can hike from Vodno to Matka, but you need one day and good preparation!

**Kozjak** - A beautiful mountain top with a view to Kozjak lake, perfect for picnic.

## Culture

**MKC** - (Mladinski Kulturen Centar) - Youth Cultural Center. They have events, movies, concerts, exhibitions, performances, restaurant, bar... And awesome vibe!

**Kino Millenium** - In GTC, a cheap cinema, around 120-180 MKD for one ticket.

**Cineplexx** - Cinema at Skopje City Mall. Tickets 180-280 MKD.

**Opera and Ballet of Skopje** - Good program and the concert room has a really good acoustic. Between 300-800 MKD/ticket.

## Sightseeing

**Fortress Kale** - 6th century fortress on top of Skopje. Great view to the city!

**Skopje Zoo** - Next to Gradski park.

**Museum of Contemporary Art** - Next to Kale fortress.

**Museum of Macedonia** - In Old Bazaar.

**Museum of the city of Skopje** - In the old railway station.

**Macedonian museum of Uprising** - After the Stone Bridge.

## Shopping

**GTC** - (Gradski Trgovski Centar) - A mall in the center that's a bit of a landmark of Skopje!

**Skopje City Mall** - Big mall with many international brands. Bus 4 goes there straight from the flats.

**East Gate Mall** - One of the biggest shopping centers in the region with international brands. 20 minutes walk from the apartments.

**Diamond Mall** - Newest mall in the city centre with international brands.







# Travel in Macedonia

## Tetovo

1 hour away from Skopje. Many historical attractions to see, like Paint Mosque, Monastery of Dervishes, The Baltepes Fortress and a ski resort Popova Šapka.

## Mavrovo

The biggest national park in Macedonia, 2 hours from Skopje. Great place for hiking trips in the forest or around the lake. Also, in winter you can go skiing!

## Bitola

One of the oldest cities, located in south of Macedonia, surrounded by the Baba, Nidže and Kajmakčalan mountain ranges. Several attractions to visit!

## Kruševo

The highest town in Macedonia with a beautiful architecture and monuments.

## Ohrid & Ohrid Lake

3 hours from Skopje, Ohrid is known for once having 365 churches, one for each day of the year. Ohrid Lake is part of UNESCO's World Heritage, and offers beautiful spots in the summer to explore and swim from regular beaches to wild ones...

## Dojran

Nice small town near Greek border with a Dojran lake. On the summer there's 3 day D-festival, make sure to check that out!

## Prespa lake

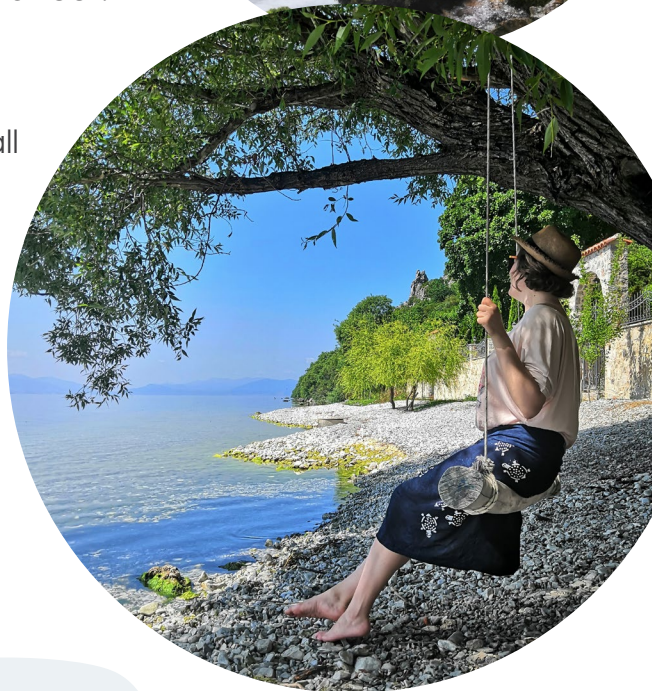
A beautiful lake surrounded by mountains, sandy beaches and clear water! Surrounded by multiple small villages worth to visit.

## Galičica

Natural park between Lake Ohrid and Prespa.

## Pelister

Natural park with two mountain lakes just a hike away!



Macedonia has a **beautiful nature** and multiple **hiking trails** all over the country. Pack a **tent**, take **friends** and go for an **adventure!**

# Welcome to Balkans!

You're gonna love it...

Macedonia is in a perfect center of other Balkan countries: **Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania and Kosovo**. Travel connections are good to the neighboring countries and beyond!

Balkan **culture is interesting** and the whole area is **worth to visit**, especially if it's your first time in the Balkans!





# Advices to survive in Macedonia!



## Take it easy!

Take your time to adapt to a new environment. There will be a lot of new information and people to meet, but no need to hurry.

## Curiosity is essential

Be curious and prepared for surprises! The culture might surprise you in many different ways.

## Don't judge

Forget about stereotypes and stay open-minded. You will meet a lot of people from different backgrounds on your work and free-time.

## Watch out on the streets

Be careful when crossing the streets, the traffic is a bit crazy. Wait for the green light to turn on and always check the road.

## Learn Macedonian

Helps you communicate with locals and explore more. Lot of people speak English, but will love when you speak Macedonian!

## Keep cash with you

Even tho most places accept credit cards, cash is essential and eases your daily life, when you are paying taxi, sharing restaurant bill or having drinks with friends.

## Why are you here?

...you will hear this question a lot. You are coming to a small country and the locals will be interested to hear why and what are you doing here.

## Illegal taxis exists

Don't get into just any taxi and be careful about the prices they charge you with. Legal taxis have a number sticker outside on the car, which makes it official.

## Try local food, drinks and music!

Enjoy Macedonian foods like burek, ajvar and Tavce Gravce (beans). They'll taste even better with homemade rakija or wine, while you jam along Macedonian songs!

## Hot summer, cold winters

Swimming and beaches in the summer, skiing in the winter? Welcome to Macedonia! Be prepared for amazingly hot summer but also cold winters.

## Shop in local markets

You can buy fresh vegetables, fruits and local specialties in local stores and bazaars. They're incredibly tasty and cheap.

## The most important: ENJOY!

Enjoy every moment you have in Macedonia. Some things will surprise you, some will make you wonder, some will make you pleased or sad. Respect the new culture you're in and cherish those moments. We bet that you'll love it.