



GAMCON

GAGAUZIAN MODERNIZATION CONVENTION

Study trip of Moldovan civil society to Slovakia

Another event aimed at supporting civil society in Gagauzia was a two-week study tour organized for 20 representatives of civil society, as well as representatives of public authorities and representatives of education from Gagauzia. The study tour was divided into two parts. From 11 to 16 June, the participants had the opportunity to visit Slovakia, get acquainted with Bratislava and other important settlements. During the next week, from 17 to 22 June, the participants of the program visited a number of European institutions in the EU capital – Brussels. The study tour began with the meeting of participants with Alexander Duleba, Director of [SFPA \(Slovak Foreign Policy Association\)](#), who spoke in detail about the activities of the organization and how all the democratic institutions of the EU interact with each other. The EU governance system, legislative processes, and decision-making processes, in my opinion, show the whole world what democracy should be and what democratic institutions should be. What I remember most is that all laws are adopted on the basis of professional expertise, not for political reasons, as is the case in many countries of the world. Each EU country has its own rights and of course its obligations to other countries, but the most important thing is that all are equal, despite the size of the country, the number of people living in its territory or financial component, all have the same opportunities. All countries are different and have the right to preserve their culture and customs, develop the economy and adopt their laws. Therefore, we were very impressed with the maps of Europe, which Alexander showed us. First, a map showing how the European Union has strengthened and in what years other countries have joined it. Then the EU map with a single market, which includes a lot of countries, including the Republic of Moldova and Turkey. Or, for example, the map of the Schengen area is very different from the Eurozone! And then we all realized that we have a lot of stereotypes about the European Union and it was just the beginning. Our entire trip and all the meetings we have attended have created a new opinion about the EU and the European Union as a whole.

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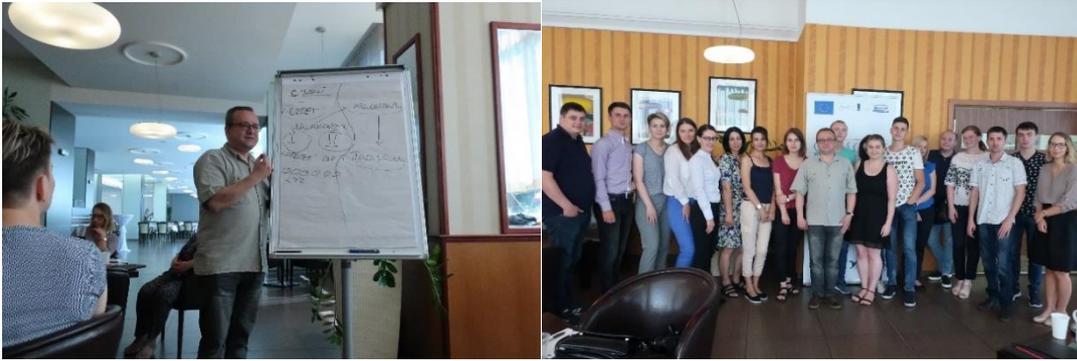
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On the same day, the participants got acquainted with the civil initiative [Nadacia Zastavme korupciu](#) and met with its Director Pavel Sibyla, where he told us about the activities of this organization and what ways they are fighting corruption in Slovakia. Of course, we had a lot of questions, because the problem of corruption in the Republic of Moldova is very urgent and such an initiative is very necessary for our country. When we talked to this man, we realized that these people are very fond of their country. They have challenged corruption and are successfully fighting it. They have a very high percentage of cases that are brought to court. Most importantly, they help those people who are not afraid to talk about corruption and provide them with legal assistance. We were impressed by this meeting and probably each of us felt that it is necessary to change in our country.

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The next day, on June 12, a meeting was held with Samuel Arbe, Director of the [Operational Program Effective Public Administration](#) at the [Ministry of the interior of the Slovak Republic](#). Participants from Gagauzia had the opportunity to talk with representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Slovakia and learn more about the activities of this institution. Samuel told us about the program that the Ministry is implementing in Slovakia with the funds of European Funds, the program of Effective

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Public administration, which is headed by Samuel Arbe, is designed for 2014-2020 and the total budget is 335 million. euro. This programme is aimed at improving the quality of public services.

The Ministry of the interior of Slovakia is one of the largest ministries. Its duties include both the protection of law and order, and the protection of state borders, as the issuance of documents for the right to drive vehicles, and the assignment of citizenship or civil defense and fire safety. It is a fantastic Ministry that performs a huge number of functions, and for us, it was not easy to understand, because all these functions in the Republic of Moldova are performed by different structures and departments.



Following a civil initiative like all participants of our group – **Institut SGI – [Odkaz pre starostu](#)**. The project coordinator is Martin Kollarik. He told us about this idea, which they have been implementing for more than eight years. It consists in the fact that a mobile application has been created, where all residents can upload photos with problems in the city and the exact place where it is. All these photos administrators of this site (by the way they work on a volunteer basis) process and send to the city hall in order that about them knew and as soon as possible solved. All users of this application can see at what stage is the solution to their problem, that is, the city hall has answered their problem or has already solved it or does not respond at all. We would be interested to see a map showing the problems in Moldova.

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Also, we had a very interesting and, perhaps, the largest number of questions were asked at this meeting, a meeting in the edition of the daily newspaper [SME](#), Matúš Krcmarik, who runs the Department of foreign news. But, of course, all our questions were related to internal investigations, in particular, to the loud murder of a journalist in Slovakia. We could not leave this meeting for a long time, although it lasted less than an hour, it was so lively and interesting that it seemed to us that we stayed there for about two hours. Issues related to freedom of speech and human rights are very relevant in our country. The fact that this murder led to the change of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Internal Affairs seems fantastic to us, as, in the last 10 years, there have been dozens of demonstrations and rallies, hundreds of protests, but never, not a single official has resigned, not even a high-ranking official. And then immediately the head of government left. We hope that this will serve as an example for all other countries that are on the road to democracy.

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After that, our group had a meeting with Anna Plassat Murinova, Director of the Department of development assistance and humanitarian assistance in the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia](#). The meeting was very open and interactive. Anna told us how the Slovak Republic helps Moldova and in what directions they work, as well as our participants had the opportunity to tell their opinion about the acutest problems in our country and in what direction we can cooperate between our countries. It is very symbolic that another group from Gagauzia was present at the meeting, which was also in Slovakia during the training trip on the project to support civil society in Gagauzia. We were able to exchange views on what we liked in Slovakia and we were able to establish contact for cooperation in Gagauzia.



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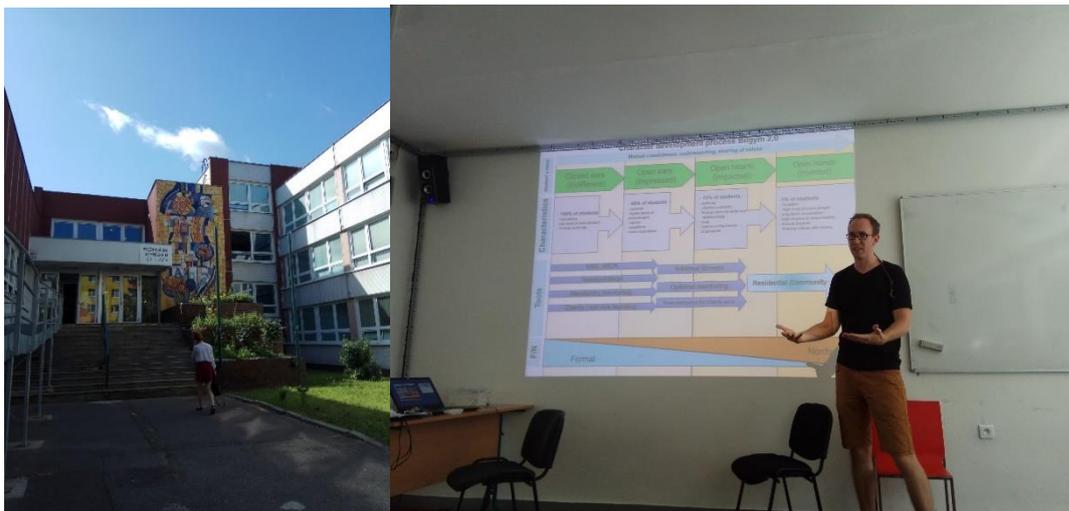


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But also, on the first days of our arrival in Bratislava, our group was divided, one part of participants went to another program related to education, which was prepared by organizers from Slovakia. The group consisted of 3 people and one translator, who work on proposals of development the non-formal education in Gagauzia in frames of work group “education and culture” integrated with help of GaMCon project. Participants had an opportunity to visit two schools, which practice non-formal education – primary school “[Narnia](#)” and secondary school [C.S.Lewis](#). Thanks to this visit our horizons of work and knowledge will became wider and we will have a professional approach to process of modernization the education in Gagauzia. We took in consideration very interesting ideas, one of the most important, as we consider, is mentoring. Mentors help the students to cope with difficulties and they show by their examples how is it beautiful to love studying, all of this can be achieved with help of the close connection with teachers. But the most interesting point is the fact that teachers also have their own mentors, who help them to overcome stress and other difficulties in communication with children. It is very important, because the teacher should be maximum effective on his job and for this he should make big efforts. Of course, people can talk about the benefits of non-formal education a lot, but it is much better to see it once than to hear it many times. So, this is the way we chose. We hope, that this experience will became a good factor for development of non-formal education in Gagauzia and in Moldova as well.



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The next day we had a presentation of the initiative "People in need", within the framework of this presentation we met with the head of this organization. He told about their projects and what projects they are implementing in Slovakia. Their main focus is humanitarian assistance to people in need who are in conflict zones or where natural disasters have occurred.

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Then we were waiting for a trip to Slovakia and the first point where we stopped – it was the city of Zilina and there we met with the initiative called – [Nova Synagogue](#). This meeting did not leave anyone indifferent, because we saw real things that can be done without large financial costs. The work these people do is just breathtaking. The old and abandoned building turned into a beautiful cultural center – it really showed what power the idea has.



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[Spissky Hrhov](#) is a unique place where we were lucky enough to visit. The mayor told us about the success of this village - Vladimír Ledecký. This management approach inspired all the members of our band and everyone had the same question – why doesn't anyone do this? Indeed the success of the village obvious. The mayor of the village sent the previous group of mayors who came to him for an exchange of experience, for a lunch to meet our group. This suggests that the success is really amazing. We stood in the center of the village, where there were many well-kept cultural monuments and administrative buildings, a Museum and an art school, and the mayor told us that 19 years ago the village ended here! We were shocked! We thanked him for this reception and for the children's toys made from ecological materials produced by the company in this village and gave him a book about our culture.

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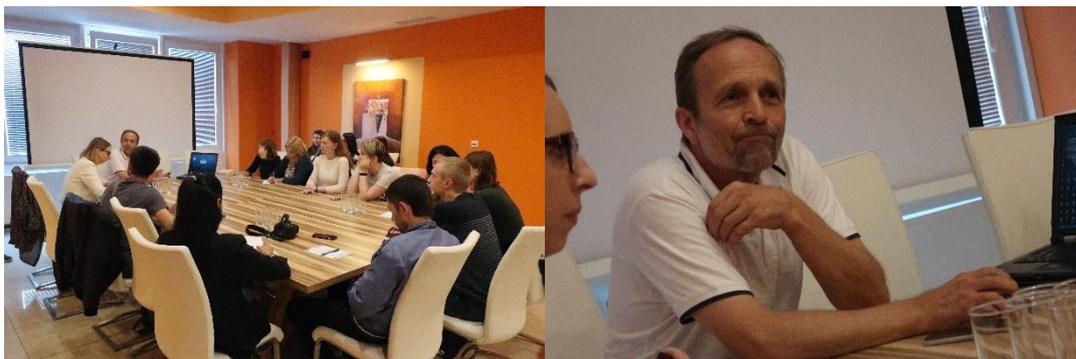


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Then the participants visited the city of Kosice, where we held a meeting in the [Atrium](#) organization, in which we got acquainted with the approach of this company to the renovation of buildings and their views on what a new modern city should be. How they see the architecture of cities and how they can change things that nobody pays attention to with their own efforts and creative ideas. A tour of this city proved that it is really one of the most beautiful cities in Slovakia.

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On June 15, we came to the city-Banska Bystrica, the cultural and economic center of the country, where we got acquainted with the history, traditions, and customs of the region. During this visit, meetings with "Zhupan" of Banska Bystrica. He spoke about the problems faced in the region, in particular, the problem of the emergence of fascist sentiments and how people deal with this problem. This made our participants think, and I hope that the representatives of the authorities that were part of our group will make the necessary conclusions and will work to prevent such sentiments in our Republic of Moldova.

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Also, in this city, there was a meeting with representatives of [Centrum Komunitneho organizovania](#), where we were told about the activities of this organization. The main purpose of this organization is to involve citizens in the decision-making process. This is a very interesting direction, as it is the only effective control over decision-making. The organization works in all regions of banská Bystrica and raises very acute issues, especially those related to illegal buildings, as well as the problems of people of Roma nationality.

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