

EVS call for short-term EVS in Brezovica, Kosovo

Mountain spirit – Strategic EVS for Nature Conservation

About the project

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

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

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

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

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

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

About the volunteer exchanges

Short-term volunteer exchanges in 2018:

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

Long-term volunteer exchanges in 2018 and 2019

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

About us

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

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



Listen to the Pines of Sharr

Short-term EVS in Sharr mountain, Kosovo

21 July – 19 Aug 2018



About Sharr mountain, Kosovo

As every mountain Sharr has its own spirit and her story can be heard by anyone ready to listen. Glacial lakes and circuses will tell you about prehistoric times, large carnivores (bears, wolves) don't recognize state borders of Kosovo, Macedonia, Albania and explore large territories, chamoix and vultures have a unique view on the world from the rocky mountain peaks, and the high-land pastures still keep the memory of numerous herds of sheep. Forests of Bosnian and Macedonian pines supposedly provide habitats even for the elusive Balkan lynx...

Nowadays, a part of the mountain is designated as a National Park in Kosovo and local people are pressuring for the same form of protection in Macedonia. Sharr mountain is rich of waters, medicinal herbs and butterflies. It is home to hundreds endemic for the Balkans species.

[GAIA](#) has been organizing youth exchanges and volunteer activities in Sharr, in Brezovica, Kosovo for some years now. Young people from the region and Europe have been slowly getting to know and exploring the mountain, the challenges it is facing and the people who are living here. In the summer of 2017 the first edition of a small and unique for Kosovo nature gathering took place in the ski resort Brezovica. BREfest ([stories](#), [videos](#)) brought people from diverse local communities, attracted visitors from the region and involved international volunteers for 3 days of exchange, sharing, discussions and entertainment.

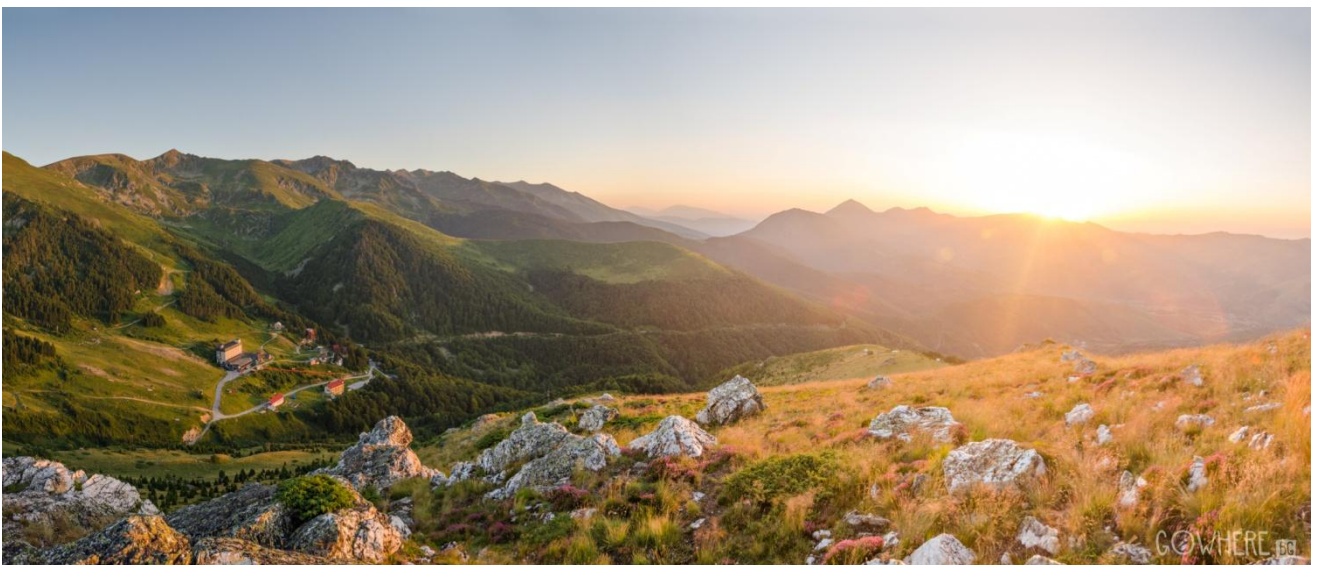


About the short-term group EVS

The current EVS will gather 12 volunteers for 30 days to explore and document Sharr mountain natural biodiversity. Divided within small teams you will be documenting habitats, searching for traces of animal life, researching on plants. Through carefully listening, humbly observing and following natural rhythms the volunteers will try to pass on the mountain messages recreated into info signs, posters, etc.

The group will also participate and contribute to the summer activities program of GAIA, i.e. BREfest 2018, where each volunteer will share about the nature of the places they come from; get involved in activities with Roma children from Imaginatorium, GAIA's alternative education centre in Gracanica, etc.

The short-term EVS will contribute to establishing long-term nature conservation volunteer activities with local and international volunteers in cooperation with the respective institutions in Shar mountain. Moreover, it will bring forward and promote the idea of individual responsibility towards preserved and respected nature.



Examples of Tasks/Activities during the Service

- Documenting natural biodiversity in Sharr mountain:
 - Wildlife research and documenting
 - Searching for tracks and traces of animal life
- Renewing marks of the touristic paths
- Creating and setting up information signs
- Organizing clean-up actions
- Leading workshops on nature conservation
- Participating in the organization of BREfest 2018

Learning opportunities:

- About biodiversity, landscapes; methods for researching; conservation measures
- About protected areas, local and international legislation
- Living in a small mountain community
- Living with international volunteers; learning from each other; sharing;
- Awareness about sustainability in everyday life
- Experience life in the Balkans with all its charms and challenges
- Facilitating workshops

What to expect	What not to expect
Active, challenging, inspiring 30 days Simple living conditions Sharing space with other volunteers Discovering local way of life, food, customs Vegan and vegetarian food Self-initiative Water and electricity cuts	Tourism 4-weeks' vacation Living in a big city Unlimited access to resources (shopping centers, unseasonal food, internet...)

Practicalities:



Duration: 21 July –19 August 2018 (30 days)

Arrival day: 21 July 2018

Departure day: 19 August 2018

Age: between 18 and 30 years

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

Accommodation: In Brezovica ski resort (1700 m), in shared rooms (between 4-6 people in one room).

Food: Volunteers will cook for themselves in small teams vegan/vegetarian food

Pocket money: 60 EUR (2 EUR per day), received in the

first half of the service

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

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

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



Profile of the volunteer:

We can imagine that interested volunteers are:

- mountain and nature lovers; people, who like to be outside
- the project might be engaging for students in environmental and natural sciences, however this is not an internship or specialization!
- previous experience with activities, related to nature protection is welcomed but not obligatory
- some skills in photography and video could contribute to documenting the activities
- experience in running workshops or educational activities with international groups is also a plus
- initiative and independent; ready to step outside of the comfort zone;
- able to communicate openly and ready to learn new things through non-formal, informal and experiential learning
- flexible towards needs and priorities of the project

How to apply?

Fill in the google form ([link here](#)) choosing “1-month long group EVS in Sharr Mountain (Kosovo)” and send your CV and **specific motivation letter** to gaia.kosovo@gmail.com.

Deadline: April 13th 2018