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United Kingdom
Alumni
Association
of Montenegro

to leave or to stay?
is there a right solution?

GOODBYE BALKANS?

GOODBYE, BALKANS!

— **CALLING ALL ARTISTS**

— age **18-35**

— from the **Western Balkans** countries:
*Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia,
Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia*

— to participate to the open call by making their **artistic statement** as
an answer to this topic (which is elaborated hereafter)

— through **different artistic media**:
*photography, paint, ink, mixed media, sculpture,
installation, or performance/dance performance*

Selected artworks will be exhibited at the **Centre of Contemporary Art of Montenegro** in Podgorica, from **1** until **15 November 2018**, and featured in the exhibition catalogue.

Three prizes will be awarded to the competition winners.

“GOODBYE BALKANS? GOODBYE, BALKANS!” ART COMPETITION

GOODBYE BALKANS? GOODBYE, BALKANS! is an art initiative aimed at raising political awareness about important democratic issues in the Region. This initiative is envisioned as an art competition that will result in a two-week art exhibition at the Centre of Contemporary Art of Montenegro and awarding the best art works. The contest is part of the project “Strengthening Western Balkans Regional Chevening Network by tackling common regional democratic challenges” that is implemented by the UK Alumni Association of Montenegro- MAUK, and financed by the British Embassy Podgorica under the Chevening Alumni Programme Fund (CAPF).

We are using art to acknowledge the problems youth in the Balkans are dealing with, to find possible solutions to the problems, to call for respect of human rights and democracy, to react and shout out, to contribute to the perception of the younger generations in the Balkan, and to promote artists and their ideas in these countries. Be part of our story and show your impact on the society in the whole Region!

COMPETITION FRAMEWORK

Today, more than a quarter of a billion people live in a country other than their birthplace, and there are more than 22 million refugees (UN Report, 2017). These numbers are only increasing. Throughout history, humanity has always been on the move and the **migration** has always been a global phenomenon. We can say that there are, in general, two types of migration. One is caused by positive reasons, such as a change of job, searching for a better life and career opportunities, etc. However, we are witnessing a lot of those that occur in negative circumstances, people move due to conflict, lack of security and stability, environmental change and so on.

In the Western Balkan countries, there is a big **brain drain** problem. It is noticeable that more and more young people leave their places of birth in order to build a better future for themselves and their (future) children somewhere abroad. Usually, it is Europe. Most of those people are educated and dissatisfied with the living conditions at home. According to the research, the reasons for such migration are high unemployment, nepotism and corruption, low salaries, patricracy. Data shows that the youth unemployment rate goes from 33% in Albania to incredible 60% in Serbia. Even though part of the European Union, in Croatia the youth unemployment rate goes above 40%. According to the statistics, around 150.000 young people has left Bosnia and Herzegovina in the past 5 years. In Montenegro, majority of youth wants to leave the country. Around 85% of senior students in Macedonia are wishing to find jobs abroad. In Kosovo, every young man and woman dreams of living somewhere else.

If the youth of the Western Balkan countries is leaving their home in order to find a better future somewhere **abroad**, could we say that it is a positive circumstance? Or a rather negative one? With all things said, we can discuss two important notions, (1) *what is the future of the young generations in the Western Balkans*, and (2) *what is the future of those who leave?*

First of all, if most of the young, educated and ambitious people are leaving, who will remain to create better conditions and build a better future for those who stay? How can we expect a change in politics, economy, society? Without the intellectuals, artists, educated youth, there can be no critical perception and reaction, no progress and creation of welfare state. Youth is constantly summoned to wake up and bring the change, but if they have zero possibility to do so, how can we expect them to react? Leaving seems to be the easiest solution. But is it? What is home for those who have left? Is it the new home they build abroad, or the one they have left behind? How do they cope with transition, with leaving their loved ones and the familiar environment they grew up in? Will they succeed in finding a better future at all? Are they selfish if they leave their friends and colleagues behind to cope with the problems of the society alone?

“It is important that artists are not outside the equation, we don’t stand on the sidelines. **Artists are part of the story of a response**, we cannot stand aside and let others make the response.”

(Anish Kapoor)

“What do you think an artist is? An imbecile who only has eyes if he’s a painter, ears if he’s a musician, or a lyre in every chamber of his heart if he’s a poet – or even, if he’s a boxer, only some muscles? Quite the contrary, he is at the same time a political being constantly alert to the horrifying, passionate or pleasing events in the world, shaping himself completely in their image. How is it possible to be uninterested in other men and by virtue of what cold non-chalance can you detach yourself from the life that they supply so copiously? No, painting is not made to decorate apartments. It’s an offensive and defensive weapon against the enemy.”

(Pablo Picasso)

“The function of the artist in a disturbed society is to **give awareness of the universe**, to ask the right questions, and to elevate the mind.”

(Marina Abramovic)



Mona Hatoum Performance, 1985



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— IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE

PLEASE SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING:

- a **photo / drawing / video** of your work
- a maximum **one-page concept** of your work
- **biography** with **portfolio**
- list of **special requirements** for the **exhibition**
(*light, floor, technical equipment, etc.*)

— to the e-mail address: **mauk.me.uk@gmail.com**. *Please use this e-mail if you have any questions.*

— **DEADLINE: 1 OCTOBER 2018**