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REGIONAL WOMEN'S LOBBY for PEACE SECURITY and JUSTICE in SOUTHEAST EUROPE-RWLSEE (<http://rwlsee.org/>)

CONCEPT NOTE

On international peace project

NO MORE WOUNDS

The transformative power of art in building inclusive peace, transitional justice, and reconciliation in the Western Balkans

*International joint peace project of RWLSEE, Academy of Fine Arts of Macerata and Rocca Malatestiana Festival, in Italy, supported by UN Women and Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden
September 23 to 30, 2021, Fano, Italy*

Background

The situation in post-conflict region of the Western Balkans continues to be fragile and insecure due to delays in peacebuilding processes as well as in transitional justice and reconciliation. The fragile peace and security agenda have negatively impacted the gender equality agenda and undermines efforts of empowering women in peace, justice, security, and governance. Women continue to be discriminated against in many fields and are unable to play leading roles in ongoing peace dialogue efforts in the region and in decision making on political and security issues in much of the region. The impacts of COVID-19 have shown to be more exacerbated for women and girls across every sphere, from health to the economy, security to social protection and, it becomes even more complicated and dis-favorable for gender equality the fact of fragile peace and new security concerns that keep the region unstable, and risks required level of peace and stability. In addition to this, the European and Euro-Atlantic integrations are in a slow pace due to internal and external factors. This complex political and security situation did not allow for real progress in goals of peacebuilding, transitional justice, reconciliation, and gender equality while post-war consequences keep society divided, in mistrust and injustices. Most affected part of society are women victims of wars and particularly women victims of conflict related sexual violence whose wounds are not yet healed due to incomplete transitional justice.

Regional Women's Lobby in Southeast Europe (RWLSEE) have been working for many years in addressing and offering response to the problems of gender inclusive peacemaking and peacebuilding. We continue to do so based on concerns, analyzes, debates and regional dialogues between women from politics and civil society of diverse backgrounds and including the non-traditional actors. Since last year, the RWLSEE has employed the dimension of art in promoting peace, transitional justice and reconciliation, in terms of expanding support base for the WPS



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agenda with non-traditional actors. The activity was organized together with Italian partners and based on recommendations of participants, RWLSEE jointly with Academy of Fine Arts in Macerata and Rocca Fano Festival is organizing this follow up activity.

The power of art in healing the wounds of war has made us name our project “No More Wounds” and our focus will be to examine the transformative power of art in post-conflict period that aims in bringing about inclusive peace, transitional justice and reconciliation through memorial arts.

Art and post-conflict memorialization are currently widely debated by scholars, including aesthetics and politics of peace arts. Art, memory, and human rights activism are also increasingly intertwined. But there is little questioning about what memorial arts do for gender justice, how women and men are included and represented, and how this intertwines with other questions related to broader perspective of gender inclusive peacebuilding and reconciliation and writing the true history while preventing untruth. The common understanding is that addressing a global range of cases, including genocide, authoritarianism, civil war, through gendered commemoration of past violence helps transitional justice and reconciliation and prevents producing counter-narratives that spoil peacebuilding goals.

Transitional justice in the Western Balkans has been delaying while women victims of wars and particularly victims of conflict related sexual violence feel forgotten or ignored. The fact that perpetrators are still not punished makes the tragedy and injustice intolerable. In past twenty years of peacebuilding in the Western Balkans, the existing transitional justice mechanisms such as courts, truth commissions, reparations, memorialization and building rule of law and accountable democratic institutions, have brought limited results. Therefore, the RWLSEE focuses to address and contribute to transitional justice for to bring about deserved justice and restitution to women survivors of these war tragedies while promoting peace and reconciliation in the post-conflict settings of our region and beyond. We consider that denial of war tragedies denounces the victims and rehabilitates the perpetrators.

Because of insufficiently addressed massive abuses and manipulative historical narratives are likely to keep societies divided, deepen mistrust and even slow down peacebuilding and developmental goals and because of limits of existing mechanisms of transitional justice, RWLSEE's intervention integrates art as relevant dimension in building inclusive peace, justice, and reconciliation. The activity planned builds on the previous one, an online regional peace dialogue between women, politicians, artists, academicians, and civil society activists, from the Western Balkans and Italy, which provided important recommendations on the need to continue a dialogue on power of art in healing the wounds of wars and promoting gender inclusive peacebuilding goals



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Activity

The activity is a joint international peace project named “No More Wounds” organized by the RWLSEE and Italian partners, Academy of Fine Arts in Macerata (ADAM) through Erasmus Program and its Office in ADAM, and Fano Rocca Festival.

This activity aims at promoting inclusive peace through the dialogue between women politicians, academicians, and artists, from the eight countries of the Western Balkans and Italy, that will be brought together on dialogue on the role of art in inclusive peace, transitional justice and reconciliation processes in the Western Balkans, which are rather slow process risking of undermining current level of progress in peacebuilding. This regionally mediated peace dialogue will address the nexus between art, peace, and reconciliation with focus on helping heal the wounds of war and overcome the overall consequences of wars to women and especially related to transitional justice for women survivors of conflict related sexual violence. It is recognized that reconciliation processes can be essentially supported by art and culture as a different light approach to peacebuilding, trust-building, and reconciliation processes.

This activity is in line with Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, Generation Equality, UNSC Resolution 1325 and other related resolutions, and RWLSEE mission and its shared commitments with the WPS-HA.

The project ‘No More Wounds’ is continuation of the phase IV Project activity “Support to inclusive peace, transitional justice and reconciliation through art”, based on the results achieved during the inclusive peace dialogue between women politicians and artists from the region of WB and Italy who contributed in Kosovo-Serbia regional dialogue for strengthening peace and stability in the region and raised awareness on importance of women’s equal inclusion at the peace negotiating tables and gender inclusive provisions in peace agreements for sustainable outcomes.

This year, the project ‘No More Wounds’ includes two parts: **1. Art Workshop and Exhibition** on the topic of post-conflict art in promoting inclusive peace, at the Fano Rocca Malatestiana Festival, where artist will be given space to develop their creative artwork followed by Exhibition; **2. International Conference ‘No More Wounds’** on the transformative power of art in peace, justice and reconciliation.



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It is important to emphasize that cooperation beyond the Balkans with Italy, Italian University, the Academy of Fine Arts in Macerata and Fano Rocca Festival has allowed to grow the relevance of this important issues out of Balkans, through the language of art.

About the International Conference

The international conference "No More Wounds" will address the transformative power of art in building inclusive peace, justice, and reconciliation in the post-conflict Western Balkans. The aim of the conference is to examine the significant role that the art plays in peace, transitional justice, and reconciliation in the aftermath of conflicts. It will explore the relationship between art, politics, peace and justice, employing some relevant topics: why the art is important mechanism for peacebuilding and especially for gender inclusive peacebuilding; art of peace and politics of art; what is the power of art in healing the wounds of wars and transitional justice, and especially related to women survivors of conflict related sexual violence; what can we learn from existing research and best practices in the world; what message conveys the artwork and exhibition of the Balkan and Italian women artists and in Rocca Malatestiana Festival this year.

About the Art Workshop and Exhibition

The short artistic residence in Fano, in such an environment as the Rocca Malatestiana in Fano, Italy, including spaces such as prison cells, a chapel and other areas which can be used, intends to offer a creative space as a source to develop the concept of the exhibition, to emphasize the role of art in the peace and reconciliation processes related to the Balkans, but also its potent possibility of amplifying, showing the world the "wound" in the female world which tore through the Balkans since thirty years ago.

The uniqueness of this workshop and its exhibition lies in bringing together the artists of eight Western Balkan countries and Italian artists in the splendid context of the Rocca Malatesta and making them work side by side, each artist in a cell or in an area, to give body to their idea. The challenge is to propose a work, an installation or a drawing, a sketch or a project board representing the idea of each artist.

The works and the projects will then be brought together in an exhibition, open until October 3rd, in the exhibition area on the first floor of the Rocca.

Goals and objectives

The conference on 'Art, Inclusive Peace, Transitional Justice and Reconciliation' is a regionally mediated peace dialogue between women of politics and artists, which aims at promoting Women, Peace and Security Agenda by including 'non-traditional' actors such as art and artist, which is one of the recommendations coming out of findings when the RWLSEE reviewed the 20 years progress



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and challenges of the UNSCR 1325 and WPS and 25 years of the Beijing Platform in the Western Balkans, and this is also a recommendation at the global level reviews.

The overall goal will be to increase women's meaningful participation and leadership in peacebuilding processes, post-conflict democratic governance where issues of peace and security are being decided and increase their agency and influence in shaping and deciding on gender inclusive peace, transitional justice and reconciliation, while speeding up European integration of the region.

By inclusion of art and artists as non-traditional actors in promoting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through the regional peace dialogue and, with partnerships beyond the Western Balkans, with Italy, we aim at strengthening connections and sociality on the role and influence of art in building sustainable peace, reconciliation, transitional justice while empowering women and peacebuilding, much needed in our region. To this end, our project brings in additional values such as cooperation beyond Balkans with Italy and with non-traditional actors such as artists which allows to speed up reaching our overall goals of gender equality and gender inclusive peacebuilding.

Specific objectives:

1. The main objective will be promoting gender inclusive peacebuilding mission of art and how can art serve better the goal of healing the wounds of wars of women and justice for them, for women victims of conflict related sexual violence, as a contribution also to trust-building and reconciliation.
2. The discussions on politics of peace art will serve the objective of having the visual arts contribute in transitional justice and historical truths, through looking at how to represent and witness atrocities, human rights violation and genocide in post-conflict societies, and how to place them in a broader perspective of art in the aftermath of wars.
3. The other important objective is to promote the power of art to visualize peaceful encounters as aspirations for peace, different from other approaches that present aspirations for peace through visualizing violence encounters.
4. Enhancing regional peace dialogue among women from the Western Balkans and with participation of women from Italy in support of peacebuilding, gender inclusive peace processes and mutual understanding and trust-building in our region.

Expected results

Expected results will be manifold including:



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- Set of recommendations and raising awareness on the need of mobilizing artists and other non-traditional actors in support of gender equality and gender inclusive peacebuilding as well as creating alliances of support beyond the Western Balkans, such as Italy, in ensuring transitional justice and reconciliation
- Promoted transitional justice for women survivors of conflict related sexual violence in wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Croatia through the transformative power of art and memorialization in helping inclusive peacebuilding and reconciliation.
- Exhibition of artwork of artists from eight Western Balkans countries and Italy, Fano Rocca Festival, promoting international injustices and wounds of wars to women and aspirations of peace through peaceful encounters in post-conflict context while memorializing historic truth of wars and tragedies.
- Enhanced peace dialogue between women in arts, politics, academia and human rights activism, from the Western Balkans and Italy as well with Italian people, which leads to sensibilization of other countries to the Balkans wounds of war. It supports ongoing peace processes in the region, in particular the EU ongoing facilitated Brussels dialogue on normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, the raising women's voices on sustainable peace, development, stability and European integration of countries of the Western Balkans
- Published brochure/catalogue on the project "No More Wound" as a relevant document for sensibilization and lobbying on gaining international support for inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding and gender equality in the Western Balkans.

Participants, Location and Time

The activity will bring together women leaders from the region of the Western Balkans and Italy, politicians, artists, academicians, civil society activists, RWLSEE Steering Committee members from focus countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, and from Slovenia and international partners, UN Women and the Swedish Government.

The International Conference will take place on from 26 to 30 September 2021. The Art Workshop will take place from 23 to 30 September 2021. The exhibition will be opened on 28 September and stay open until 3 October 2021.

The venue of the activity is in Fano, Italy, within the Fano Rocca Malatestiana Festival. It will be held in person while always respecting Covid-19 measures imposed by Italian Health authorities .