



UDRUŽENJE  
OBRAZOVANJE GRAĐI BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE  
OSNOVANO 1994



iks.  
Udruga "Instituta Kulturnih Studija"  
Rijeka



## EUFREE: "European citizens United in FREEdom and human rights"

### Civil Words Workshop - Marija: 1 Home 5 States

#### Purpose ▾

- Raise awareness of common history and values** - EUFREE will guide participants to the knowledge of EU values and history, from the common cultural roots to its multicultural identity, learning to distinguish individual responsibilities from collective ones, the value of identities from the risks of nationalisms.
- Encourage active participation** - Participants will share various common activities (questionnaires, study trips, seminars, workshops) deepening their knowledge of limits and opportunities offered by the EU. The level reached at the end of the project compared to the preliminary stages will also be monitored. They will be trained to use common structured methods to address individual "national" visions taking into account different sensitivities and cultures, producing shared training materials (*Europe History is Our Histories, the screenplay of Marija*), useful for educating them to overcome conflicting nationalistic interpretations.

The true story of Marija, which is an emblematic story of many families in the EUFREE project area, begins the last century and runs through it completely, changing dress and shape with the passing of the years and conflicts. Marija Kocjančič was born in 1905 under the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Slovenc and died in independent Slovenia 100 years later. In 103 years of life, despite not having changed her abode, she traveled through 5 States, changed nationality 4 times, learned 4 different languages and survived 3 wars with courage and tenacity.

A tale of resilience that speaks of the borders, allowing us to grasp their uncertainty and how much their meaning changes in relation to the context. Each act of the show represents a historical period in the life of Marija and her family, and each one prompts difficult questions into the audience: what are borders? Do they come before or after a person's identity? When are they needed, and when are they just pretexts? How many are hard and tight and how many are "open"?

This story is replicable in other cross-border contexts as a synthesis of the uncertain nature of such divisions, whether they be nationalistic, political, linguistic, geographical or cultural. Through the true story of those who have traveled all their lives without ever crossing the threshold of their home, we invite you to reflect on your roots, your borders and your identity using theatrical and narrative tools to deal with the Other, with the Different, with the Stranger.

The story of Marija is the story of Our Europe, an example and a warning to all citizens of the Union who struggle to feel part of something bigger, finding comfort in the national identities of their country.





UDRUŽENJE  
OBRAZOVANJE GRADI BOSNU I HERCEGOVINU  
OSNOVANO 1994



iks.  
Udruga "Instituta Kulturnih Studija"  
Rijeka



## Experience ▾

The Civil Words and POKAZ workshop included warm-up exercises together with EUFREE participants in order to break the ice and prepare body and mind for the improvisations based on the MARIJA script, printed in 3 languages. The participants divided themselves in groups and chose a particular scene of their liking to quickly memorize and rehearse before performing in front of the others. Right after the scenes were performed, participants in the audience asked questions to the characters on stage, underlining different aspects and themes of the story, and to each question the actors had to answer as their character would. At the end of the play there was a multigenerational debate in which we confronted the current situation of the states of former Jugoslavia, in particular concerning the emigration crisis of younger generations towards EU countries (45% of BiH population is leaving). We all agreed on the fact that a dialogue between different countries about history is mandatory if we wish to build a better future for everyone.

The next day we had a presentation and a show starring both the participants and the students from the R.M Cossar - L. Da Vinci State Professional Institute. After a brief explanation of the script we asked for volunteers among the students and they were very responsive and involved, proactive and courageous in their proposals. We divided the young volunteers in groups and quickly worked with them on the scenes of their choosing, which they then improvised in front of all their classmates in the great hall, along with the same EUFREE participants from the day before. One of the most amazing aspects was that, despite everyone speaking in their native language, every part of the story was understood and enjoyed by all. The representations gave life to funny and interesting moments, shared by all the audience. In the end we all reflected together on the values expressed by Marija's story: some of the students told similar experiences regarding their families on the oriental border, finding links and similarities with the young participants from former Yugoslavia. From the youngsters also came some interesting insights on the topic of borders and their obsolescence nowadays. To quote a student " borders seem futile now since we're all citizens of the same world, we're just born in different places".

---

## Conclusions ▾

Education, freedom of movement, freedom of expression and right of asylum. These main topics are the center of this entire EUFREE project, which contains everything: all the guided tours of the places of Remembrance, every country visited, all the friends known, every shared experience and emotion, all the things learned; everything declined in different languages and cultures to reflect together on the very nature of Europe as a Community and as an Union. This journey together produced three documents, different in shape but with similar aims:



Co-funded by the  
Europe for Citizens Programme  
of the European Union





UDRUŽENJE  
OBRAZOVANJE GRADI BOSNU I HERCEGOVINU  
OSNOVANO 1994



iks.

Udruga "Inicijativa Kulturnih Studija"  
Rijeka



Žene u crnom  
Beograd



SEZIONE DI MONFALCONE



- European History is Our History - *Recommendations on how to teach history by taking into account the histories of others*
- EUROPE we WISH - *Suggestions for implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights*
- "Marija - one house, five Countries - *Theater screenplay, based on true stories, which addresses borders, wars and freedom. It is available for implementation in educational programs or staging in theaters.*

These three documents represent both the necessity to confront Europe's problems and the means to actually do it. With the first we address Education by creating a shared narrative that unites us in suffering and joy, in guilt and in forgiveness, thanks to the work and research guided by the International Scientific Committee.

With the second we highlight the many shortcomings of the *EU Charter of Fundamental Rights* while proposing simple and specific solutions to important problems like respect for human rights, limited and biased media access, twinning among schools of different countries, improving transparency and accountability of Frontex, and many others issues. Implementing these suggestions into the current EU Charter would be a huge step towards a Europe that makes diversity a value on which to build and invest.

With the third document we provide a powerful story that is capable of conveying both emotions and values through acting. It is a tool useful **both for theater plays and educational workshops**, similar to the work done by Civil Words and POKAZ with the participants. **The structure of the workshops is the same and it can be implemented in schools of different ages, all over Europe because, while available in different languages, it does not depend on words to tell the story.** It encompasses every Country because of the themes it addresses, and acting is the perfect art to convey a moral in an universal way.

We like the ideas of the European Community and European Union, especially in the west where we like to cuddle in the illusion that we all enjoy the same rights no matter where we live, as long as there are twelve stars waving above our heads.

But we forget that in order to be a Community we should have equality of rights, equal dignity and enjoying the same possibilities; in order to be an Union we cannot give up to hate and nationalism, instead we have to care for the Other and the Different, searching for dialogue and wisdom.

