

Webinar

Conference Planning

Ruth McFarlane

Thursday 27th March 2025 17:00 CET (online)

EPEA Conference Planning

Prepare for your visit to Skopje in November

Ruth McFarlane, UK based

Officer of EPEA's Steering Committee - Treasurer

Director, Doing What Really Matters (supporting students in prison to do university degrees)

treasurer@epea.org

Agenda

- Introduction
- About EKE Bitola
- Facts about Skopje and North Macedonia
- Travel and Accommodation
- Conference theme
- Applications to Present at the Conference
- Questions

Introducing our hosts – EKE Bitola

- **Vele Georgiev** - president of EKE Bitola, educator with expertise in non-formal education. Interest in creating educational opportunities through the Erasmus+ programme for empowering disadvantaged groups.
- **Ivana Baltovska** - employed in “Bitola Prison” and part time working in EKE Bitola. With master in criminal law, she provides inmates with legal help and actively engages in the resocialization process.
- **Sofija Mickoska** - project assistant in EKE Bitola, with a degree for Environmental Engineering. Eager to create and work on projects that promote sustainability and efficiency.

EKE Bitola

Association for non-formal education EUROPEAN CULTURAL EPICENTER Bitola (EKE Bitola), is a non-profit organization based in Bitola, North Macedonia.

Mission: Life-long learning through non-formal education for everyone.

Vision: An inclusive society with active citizens who are personally and professionally accomplished.

Aim: The main aim of the association is to provide high-quality non-formal educational programs for the citizens of Republic of North Macedonia, Europe and the world.

Our work is mainly with Erasmus+ programme, providing educational and mobility opportunities for the citizens from North Macedonia.

General information about North Macedonia

North Macedonia is a country in Southeast Europe, bordered by Kosovo, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia. It has a population of 1,836,713 and its predominantly Christian, with the Macedonian Orthodox Church being the largest, but also has a significant Muslim population, mainly ethnic Albanians. The capital, Skopje, is a cultural and political centre, home to diverse ethnic groups, including Macedonians, Albanians, and smaller minorities like Roma, Vlach, Serbs and Turks.

After World War II, in 1945, People's Republic of Macedonia became a constituent republic of the newly formed Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, later renamed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The country gained independence from Yugoslavia on 08.09.1991, and after a long dispute with Greece over its name, it officially became the Republic of North Macedonia in 2019, following the Prespa Agreement. This name change allowed North Macedonia to move forward with its aspirations for EU and NATO membership.

General information about North Macedonia

Where is North Macedonia located?



Facts and Brief History of Skopje I

Skopje is the capital city of Republic of North Macedonia, located in the northern part of the country. It is the largest city in the country, and according to the 2021 census, the City of Skopje had 526,502 inhabitants. It is approximately 245 m above sea level and covers 571.46 km².

In the Byzantine documents, the city of Skopje was called Skopia, and the Slavs also referred to it as Skopie, Skopje or Skoplje. During the reign of the emperor Samuil, the city belonged to the Samuil's kingdom, while in the later period it was under Byzantine, Bulgarian and Serbian rule. In 1392, the city was captured by the Ottomans and it was named Uskup (Üsküp).

Facts and Brief History of Skopje II

In 1962 due to heavy rains, the river Vardar flooded Skopje. The flood was an indication of the largest earthquake the city experienced. On July 26, 1963, at 5:17 am, the city was devastated by an earthquake measuring 9 degrees on the Mercalli scale (6.1 according to the Richter seismic scale). Due to the earthquake, 1,070 people lost their lives, 90% of the city buildings were demolished, and over 20,000 people were left homeless. After the earthquake, the city began to be built again.

Things to see and do in Skopje I

Macedonia Square, Stone Bridge and the Old Railway Station

Macedonia Square is the main square of Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia. The square is the biggest in North Macedonia, located in the central part of the city, and it crosses the Vardar River. At this square, you can see a lot of monuments and buildings, which make this square even more interesting for visit.

Next to the Square is the Stone Bridge, which is built of solid stone blocks and it connects the Square with the Old Bazaar.

The old railway station in Skopje. Today is a museum of the city of Skopje and a symbol of the great earthquake. The clock of the station has stopped at the fatal 05:17 in the morning. Today, Skopje is considered a city of solidarity due to the fact that specifically with solidarity, the city managed to renew itself. Exactly 87 nations in the world provided assistance and helped for the city to be built again.







Things to see and do in Skopje II

Old Bazaar

One of the most recognizable places in Skopje is the Old Skopje Bazaar.

It is part of the city with diverse and rich history, tradition, culture and architecture, today with a blend between the old and the new, the economy and trade, culture and tradition. In the spirit of the historical temporal and developmental circumstances, the culture of organization and tradition of living, the Old Skopje Bazaar has preserved numerous functional facilities from the Ottoman period, and new buildings have been built as a feature of modern times.

Additionally, there are various craft and trade shops. Here, you can find various traditional crafts, potters, shoemakers, tailors, watchmakers, tinsmiths, saddle-makers with various production and service activities. And of course, this is the perfect place if you want to try amazing and delicious traditional Macedonian food and sweets!



Things to see and do in Skopje III

Fortress of Justinian I - “Kale“

The Skopje Fortress, commonly referred to as Kale (from kale, the Turkish word for 'fortress'), is a historic fortress located in the old town of Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia. It is located in Centar municipality and situated on the highest point in the city overlooking the Vardar River. Due to its strategic position and role, the fortress throughout history had often been attacked and used by various warriors.

Today the fortress Kale is one of the most remarkable buildings in Skopje. It is the perfect place if you want to do some walking and to enjoy the beautiful views from the top of the fortress.



Things to see and do in Skopje IV

The Contemporary Art Museum

The contemporary art museum located in Skopje, North Macedonia. It is the biggest and most modern museum in the country. The museum was founded in 1963 following the disastrous earthquake that hit the city. Donated by the Polish Government, the museum was designed by the Polish architectural group.

The building became one of the symbols of post-earthquake international solidarity efforts in Reconstruction of Skopje. If you enjoy visiting museums, this museum is the perfect opportunity for you!



Things to see and do in Skopje V

Vodno Mountain

This mountain is a popular destination for tourists and locals. The mountain is known for its stunning views, hiking trails, and numerous attractions.

It is also known for the Millennium Cross. This iconic cross stands 66 meters tall, built to commemorate 2,000 years of Christianity in Macedonia, and offers breathtaking views of Skopje and the surrounding area. Visitors can reach the top of the cross by taking a cable car or hiking up the mountain. This is a perfect destination for you if you want to hike or have an adventure outside the city.



Things to see and do in Skopje VI

Canyon Matka

This canyon is located on the Treska River and is a popular spot for hiking, kayaking, and rock climbing, located on the other side of Vodno. The canyon is surrounded by towering cliffs and offers stunning views of the crystal-clear water below. Visitors can also explore the nearby caves, which are home to unique rock formations and underground lakes. The most popular cave is “Vrelo Cave“. This is a perfect place if you want to do some hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing or kayaking. Do not miss this adventure!



kami...www.mywanderlust.pl



Things to see and do in Skopje VII

Skopje Aqueduct

The Skopje Aqueduct is an aqueduct and archaeological site located in the neighbourhood of village Vizbegovo, 2 km northwest of central Skopje, North Macedonia. It was built of stone and bricks and today it has 55 arcs leaning on massive columns.

The archaeological site Skopje Aqueduct is presumed to have been built by Justinian I during the period 527 - 554, which is why it is also called Justinian's Aqueduct. There are also assumptions that it was built in the 16th century, during the Ottoman Empire. If you are a fan of history, this is the perfect place for you!



Things to see and do in Skopje VIII

Skupi - a city of Roman and late-ancient times

It is an archaeological locality, located on the 4.5 km northwest from the centre of the city. The geographical features of the location made it suitable for fortification and connection to the Roman cities in the region. As a result, Skupi was developed into a big city – Roman colony in the province of Dardanija, which easily became regional, economic, religious, cultural and administrative centre, and above all, it is also one of the many archaeological sites in Macedonia. The archaeological locality is a proof of the Roman city of Skupi, which has been the first discovered urbanely organized suburb on the territory of the Skopje Valley so far.



Other cities to visit if you have enough time!

Bitola

Bitola is a city in the southwestern part of North Macedonia, located in the southern part of the Pelagonia valley, surrounded by the Baba Mountain and Pelister.

It is the city where you can drink the most beautiful coffee on “Shirok Sokak - Wide Street“, visit the museum of Kemal Ataturk, have a pleasant walk on Pelister or visit the archaeological site - Heraclea Lyncestis.

If you want to feel the mixture of the history and the enjoyment, you should definitely visit Bitola.



Other cities to visit if you have enough time!

Ohrid

Ohrid is known for having 365 churches, one for each day of the year, and has been referred to as the "Jerusalem of the Balkans".

The city is rich in picturesque houses and monuments, and tourism is predominant. It is located southwest of Skopje, west of Resen and Bitola. It is also known for the Ohrid Lake which is protected by UNESCO. The lake Ohrid is the oldest natural lake in Europe and one of the oldest lakes in the whole world. With a maximum depth of 288 metres and mean depth of 155 m, it is the deepest lake in the Balkans.



Airport Information

Skopje International Airport is distanced from Hotel Aleksandar Palace 23 kilometres, which is around 20 minutes driving. The airport is the larger and busier of the two international airports in North Macedonia, with the other being the St. Paul the Apostle Airport in Ohrid.



Arrival to Skopje I

There are a numerous direct flights to Skopje with **Wizz Air** :

Belgium

Brussels Charleroi

Germany

Berlin Brandenburg

Bremen

Dortmund

Frankfurt Hahn

Friedrichshafen

Hamburg

Karlsruhe/Baden-Baden

Memmingen-Munich West

Nuremberg

Stuttgart

France

Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg

Lyon

Paris Beauvais

Hungary

Budapest

Italy

Bologna

Rome Ciampino

Rome Fiumicino

Venice

Venice Treviso

Malta

Malta

Netherlands

Eindhoven

Norway

Oslo Sandefjord Torp

Slovakia

Bratislava

Slovenia

Ljubljana

Spain

Barcelona El Prat

Sweden

Göteborg Landvetter

Malmö

United Kingdom

London Luton

Arrival to Skopje II

Direct flights from different airlines*:

Aegean Airlines
Athens

Air Serbia
Belgrade

Austrian Airlines
Vienna

Chair Airlines
Zurich

Croatia Airlines
Zagreb

LOT Polish Airlines
Warsaw

Lufthansa
Frankfurt Main

Norwegian
Oslo

Pegasus
Izmir

Transavia
Amsterdam

Turkish Airlines
Istanbul

***direct flights are subject to change; please check available flight options after 1st May 2025**

Arrival to Skopje III

For those who have time:

By night train from Berlin, Vienna or Zurich to Budapest

Bus from Budapest to Belgrade (ca. 6 h)

Train from Belgrade – Border (2 h)

Bus from Border to Skopje (1 h)

Alternatively

Day (8.5 h) or night train from Milan to Bari

Ferry from Bari to Durrës (ALB) (10 h overnight, daily)

Bus from Durres to Ohrid and Ohrid to Skopje (6h)

Transport from the Airport

- **Shuttle Bus** - At this link you can see the time table for all the shuttle buses that go from the Airport to Skopje and from Skopje to the airport:
<https://tinyurl.com/53vtya2p>
- **Taxi** - Is the most expensive method for travel in our country. It usually takes around 25€ total from the airport to the city centre of Skopje.
- We might organise bus transfer included in the conference fee. We don't know yet if this really fits in the budget. At least a transfer at the end of the conference from the venue to the airport should be possible.

Venue of the EPEA Training Conference 2025

Hotel Aleksandar Palace - Skopje

The Hotel is relatively close to the city centre, distanced from the centre 3 km. You can see more information regarding the accommodation at the following link:

<https://aleksandarpalace.com.mk/>

The hotel offers:

- Single Room
- Twin Room
- Double Room
- Junior Suite



Staying in Skopje – other hotel options

Near the Aleksandar Palace

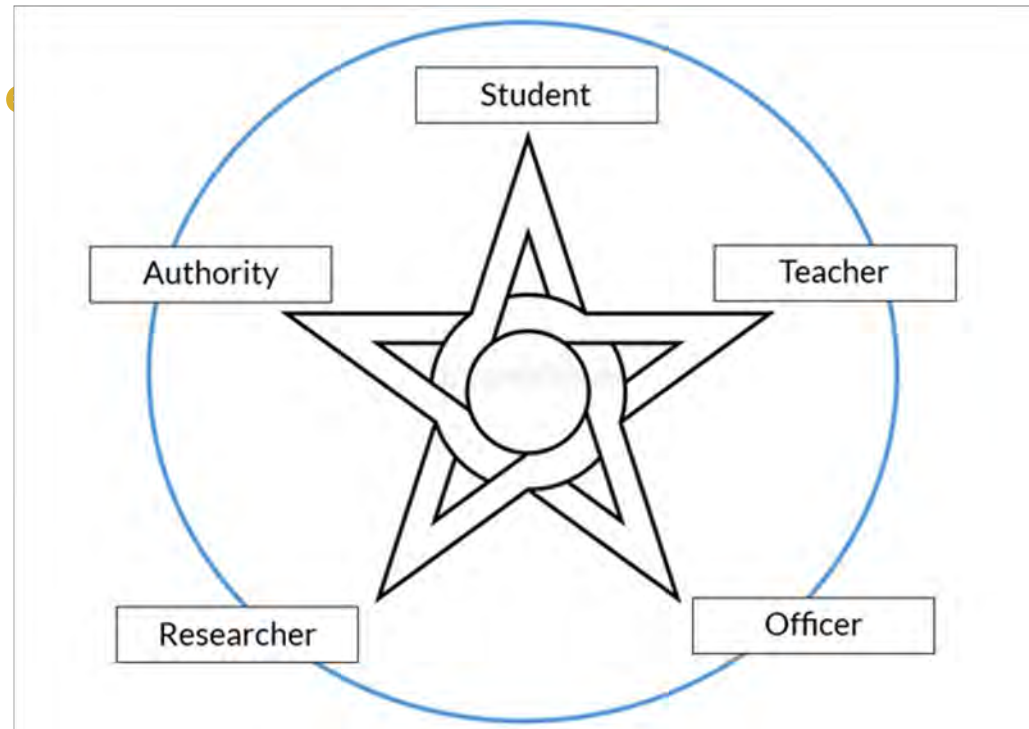
- Hotel Story - <https://hotelstory.com.mk/>
- Hotel Portal - <https://tinyurl.com/2nf639ud>

Other Hotels in Skopje

- Hotel Holiday Inn - <https://tinyurl.com/ycmc6z9v>
- Hotel Ibis - <https://tinyurl.com/kvtf936e>
- City Park Hotel - <https://tinyurl.com/2s3pmtbj>
- Hotel Domestika - <https://tinyurl.com/47h4yzvw>
- Hotel Istanbul - <https://tinyurl.com/zkvj7twa>
- Hotel Super 8 - <https://tinyurl.com/4yw2nc97>

Conference Theme

- Open up the Dialogue
- Let's Talk !



Call for contributions

- The training conference offers a platform for the different stakeholders involved in education in prison.
- We invite teachers, researchers, prison staff, prison authorities and formerly incarcerated people who benefited from education in prison.
- You are invited to contribute to the conference as a speaker in the plenary or as a workshop leader, for a smaller public.
- It has not to be something exceptional. The conference is a platform for professional exchange where good practices or challenges can be shared or where you even get some counselling for a problem in your professional life.
- The Steering Committee reviews the applications by the end of April. Chosen contributors will be informed and will be offered a reduced conference fee.
- Apply for a contribution under this link: <https://epea.org/conferences/>

Conference fees

- EPEA members € 390
- Non-members € 450

reduced fee by 50% for

- contributors (speakers and workshop leaders)
- participants from the CoE member states in Eastern and Southern Europe
- The conference fee will include all meals except one lunch.
- Accommodation will be available at the venue and will cost €90 per room and person per night
- twin rooms with two beds or double room for 2 people are available and cost € 105
- See: <https://epea.org/conferences/>
- **Register** for the conference will start around May 7th, 2025

Thank you for your attention!

epea@epea.org



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONFERENCE DES OING DU
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



www.epea.org



www.facebook.com/epeaorg

Advocacy

Policy Formation

Research

Partnerships

Professional Development

NETWORKING



EUROPEAN PRISON EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Support

RESOURCES