



## Decision and Statements of the Jury “Political, Socio-Economic Projects”

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### Project no. 159

#### “The Belgrade Youth Summit” – Serbia and Montenegro

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The Belgrade Summit 2009 took place from December 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009, attended by 300 young people – young political leaders and civil society activists from former Yugoslav countries and human rights activists from all over the world, as well as representatives of regional and EU institutions. The event was organized by **the Youth Initiative for Human Rights**, a regional network of non-governmental organizations with programs in the territories of Serbia, Kosovo, Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The aim of the initiative was, to enhance youth participation in the democratisation of society and to strengthen the rule of law through the process of dealing with the past in the regions of former Yugoslavia. An important element of this summit was its critical view of governmental policy in this region. The young people criticised in particular the way of dealing with the past. The summit therefore supported the existing regional initiative for establishing the Regional Commission for Truth Seeking and Truth-Telling about War Crimes, and called for youth involvement in this Commission.

As a result of this Youth Summit a declaration was sent to all institutions concerned in the Western Balkan States and the European Union on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2009: the International Human Rights Day. This Declaration demands, among other things, for support in establishing the Regional War Crimes Facts Commission. The summit will take place annually in different centres of the Western Balkan States.

Peace begins through dialogue. The young people openly discussed the problems of their shared past and recognized that increased co-operation is needed between their countries in order to guarantee a sustainable peace in the Western Balkans. Furthermore they have realized that telling the truth and dealing with the past are indispensable preconditions for reconciliation and peace.