

EVS call for long-term volunteers in Kuterevo, Croatia

Mountain spirit – Strategic EVS for Nature Conservation

About the project

Mountain spirit is a project involving several volunteer exchanges in Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia and Bulgaria. It aims at combining efforts of international volunteers and local people from mountainous/rural areas for nature conservation activities in protected areas or species.

*The idea is to uncover **invisible links** between places and their inhabitant creatures, to take our responsibilities as humans towards all forms of life without forgetting to listen and learn from nature within and around.*

*To discover the **spirits of mountains in the Balkans** with preserved nature where bears and wolves roam through the wilderness, where there are still waters running freely, where people are resilient.*

The spirits of Velebit mountain, Croatia; Sharr mountain, Kosovo; Frushka gora, Serbia and Pirin mountain, Bulgaria. The spirit of the Bears....

Spirits which are also exposed to threats of destruction, exploitation and loss of the invisible connections that link all of us into one living system.

We believe that with small but consistent efforts another way is possible where people are not on the top, but rather live a peaceful co-existence with nature and themselves.

About the volunteer exchanges

Volunteer exchanges that happened in 2018:

- Croatia – Kuterevo Bear Refuge, Velebit Mountain – 8 months long-term EVS and 2 months short-term EVS
- Kosovo – National Park Sharr Mountain – 1 month short-term EVS
- Kosovo – Prishtina Bear Sanctuary – 2 weeks short-term EVS
- Serbia – National Park Frushka Gora – 2 weeks short-term EVS
- Bulgaria – Nature School Vlahi, Pirin mountain – 3 weeks short-term EVS

Long-term volunteering that is happening at the moment:

- Croatia – 8 months long-term volunteering EVS

Long-term volunteer exchanges happening in 2019-2020

- Croatia – Kuterevo Bear Refuge (4 volunteers for 6 months)

About us

The project involves activities in mountains spread from West to East in the Balkans. [Velebit Association Kuterevo, Croatia](#); [GAIA Kosovo](#); [Vlahi Nature School](#) and [Cooperation for Voluntary Service Bulgaria](#) have been working together for some years now, aiming at making strong connections between people through learning from and acting for nature in the Balkans.

The Spirit of Kuterevo Refuge for Bears and People served as inspiration for the current project which involves new partners such as [Bird Protection and Study Society of Serbia](#) and [Four Paws, Kosovo](#). For 40 years now Kuterevo has been a place where young people can learn and volunteer by being close to nature, bears, local people and their traditions. Thus experiencing and creating the [Kuterevo Spirit](#). We believe each place has its uniqueness and its messages to be listened to and respected, therefore exploring and developing its own spirit.



Kuterevo Spirit

Long-term EVS in Kuterevo Bear Refuge, Croatia

1st of December 2019 – 28th of May 2020



About Velebit Association Kuterevo, Croatia

VUK (Velebit Association Kuterevo) is a local organization that is situated in the Velebit mountain. First international groups started to come to Kuterevo in 1978. The aim of these gatherings was to get youngsters explore life outside of a city, to learn about and from nature, to experience simple and traditional lifestyle and to learn about themselves. Kuterevo is a small village, with around 550 inhabitants, where local lifestyle still depends on seasons and they know how to coexist with wilderness. Today, VUK mainly works on preservation of cultural and natural heritage and protection of bears habitat, which includes sustainable lifestyle.

Since 2002, Velebit Association Kuterevo has been running a Bear Refuge for orphan bears. These bears are attracting visitors from all around the world and through presenting Refuge to them, we also present volunteering and messages of kindness, peace and coexisting between people and nature.

VUK has been hosting various voluntary activities, with more than 200 volunteers each year, where the volunteers invest their time and energy for the common idea of doing good, which is creating a better society step by step. Along individual volunteering, VUK is hosting EVS volunteers (both long- and short-term), SCI workcamps, Youth Exchanges, German Red Cross, scouts groups...

About Velebit mountain

Velebit is a mysterious mountain, with vast landscapes and many endemic species. In the mountain there are 2 National parks, and the whole mountain was proclaimed a Nature park and is under UNESCO Man and Biosphere programme. It is home to 3 large carnivores – brown bear, wolf and lynx.

This year' long-term volunteers will be living as a team and will support the work that the organization is doing, while creating new activities and using the time to learn. They will have plenty of time to get

integrated with the local community. There will be an opportunity to meet the people working in the National and Nature Park Velebit. Many times EVS volunteers will be working together with other individual volunteers at the Refuge, helping with the work around the Refuge and taking care of animals. The EVS will be encouraged to use their time to explore and learn and share the knowledge with other volunteers at the Refuge.



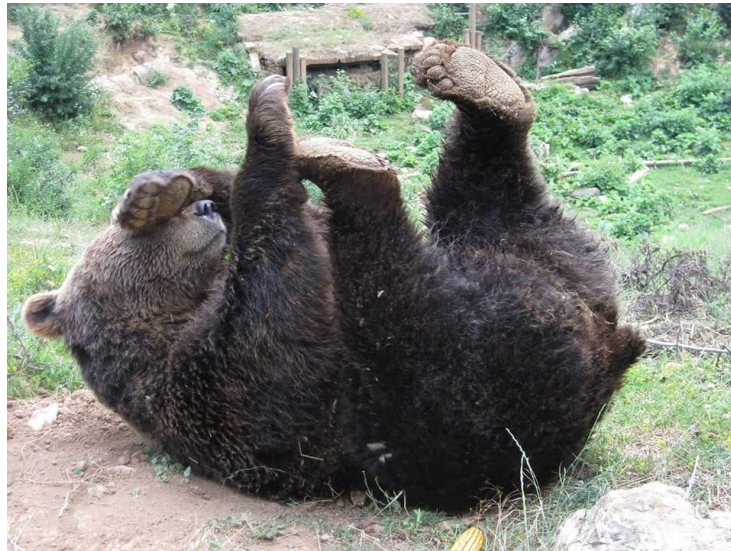
Examples of Tasks/Activities during the Service

- Support the work of Velebit Association Kuterevo:
 - Maintaining and fixing the facilities (paths, signs, enclosures, constructions)
 - Taking care of animals
 - Working with other volunteers
 - Guiding visitors and engage in discussion with them about nature, wild animals, making change (it's a great way to share positive ideas) – mostly in spring time
- Support the publication of Velebit Association Kuterevo
- Exploring UNESCO Man and Biosphere program, Velebit Nature Park; 2 National Parks in Velebit, the village of Kuterevo and its nature
- Creating educational activities and implementing them with others coming to the Refuge
- Documenting natural biodiversity in Velebit mountain:
 - Wildlife and landscape research and documenting
 - Searching for tracks and traces of animal life



Learning opportunities:

- About biodiversity and nature
- About bears biology, mythology, ecology and protection
- Living in a small mountain community, learning to share
- Living with international volunteers; learning from each other; sharing; awareness about sustainability in everyday life
- Experience life in the Balkans with all its charms and challenges
- How to deal with problems and finding solutions



Practicalities:

Duration: 6 months – from December 2019 until May 2020

Arrival day: 1st December 2019

Departure day: 28th May 2020

Age: between 18 and 30 years

Accommodation: In Kuterevo village, in houses of local people. Rooms will be shared (2-3 people per room) and they are few minutes walk from the Refuge.

Food: The EVS volunteers will cook for themselves in teams; all volunteers in Kuterevo share meals together. The food will be vegetarian, as we are trying to be as sustainable as possible.

Pocket money: 120 EUR per month (4 EUR per day), received in the beginning of each month

Insurance: Volunteers will be insured by CIGNA. It is advised to make European Health Insurance (valid in all EU countries; free to make).

Travel to the EVS venue: Reimburse of the travel tickets will be done according to the rules of the Erasmus+ program based on distance calculation and at **receipt of original documents**. The environmental way of travelling (train, bus, etc.) is strongly encouraged.

(Distance band calculator: 100-499 km = 180 euro, 500-1999 km = 275 euro, 2000-2999 km = 360 euro, 3000-3999 km = 530 euro, 4000-7999 km = 820 euro)

You should NOT expect from this EVS: tourism, long vacation, living in a big city, being mobile all the time, unlimited access to resources (shopping centers, unseasonal food, internet...), a lot of privacy, because you will be sharing your living space with other volunteers...

But DO expect: being active and experiencing challenges, simple living conditions, sharing space with other volunteers, discovering local way of life, food, customs, vegetarian food (sustainable diet), self-initiative, learning, lots of inspiration...



Profile of the volunteer:

We can imagine that interested volunteers are:

- mountain and nature lovers; people, who like to be outside
- hard working and flexible to the needs of Velebit Association Kuterevo
- able to communicate openly, ready to step outside of the comfort zone; open for learning new things
- some skills in writing, photography and video could contribute to documenting the activities
- positive attitude and like to be part of the team
- likes to learn and experience different things

How to apply?

Fill in the google form ([link here](#)) choosing “8-month long EVS in Kuterevo Bear Refuge (Croatia)” and send your **CV** and **specific motivation letter** to kuterevo.evs@gmail.com.

Deadline: 10th October 2019