

TASTE AWAY 2.0

Mrachenik, Bulgaria
29 April - 7 May 2026



A YOUTH EXCHANGE
BRINGING YOUNG PEOPLE
TOGETHER THROUGH
CULTURE AND CUISINE



INVITATION

This Youth Exchange will gather 40 young people to disconnect from the digital world and reconnect with themselves, others, and the joy of shared experiences.

Set in a rural mountain area in Bulgaria, the project is focused on **food** - preparation, cooking, and sharing meals with young people from 7 countries.

Prepare for **cultural exchange** and **human connection**, between the group and with local Bulgarian residents!

In a minimalistic, close-to-nature environment, you can explore creativity, mindful living, and self-awareness through hands-on activities and arts, embracing a “back to the basics” lifestyle that celebrates inclusion, diversity, and learning.



OBJECTIVES

Building an international community of young people by living, learning and cooking together based on the values of connection, joy, creativity and accountability

Discovering different cultures through food, cooking and learning together

Embracing minimalist and sustainable living, building real offline connections while unplugging from all the digital noise

Developing the abilities of young people to self-reflect, foster creativity, manage resources, plan and implement their ideas in a real-life context, and develop a sense of community

Giving back to the local community by taking the learnings of young people into a real-life context.

LET'S GET
COOKIN'

HOW AND WHEN?

1. YOUTH EXCHANGE - 29th April - 7th May 2026, Bulgaria

The YE will be divided into 3 main program parts:

Part 1 - Discovering (Day 1-5)

You can discover yourself and your strengths, plus getting to know each other through working and playing together. We will use different methods of learning by experience, such as theatre, media, outdoor, with **cooking and all activities related to cooking as the main focus.**

Part 2 - Reality (Day 6-8)

Real-life experience where you can interact with the local community and put into real-life context your learnings from the previous days.

Part 3 - Last steps (Day 9-11)

The time to put all the experience together and close the YE. You will create products for dissemination: photo album, articles, video while reflecting on your learnings from the youth exchange.

2. FOLLOW UP - JUN-AUG '26

With the support of the partner organizations you will: a) evaluate the project in a meeting after the YE, b) share about the impact the Youth Exchange had on your life.



THIS EXCHANGE IS FOR YOU, IF...

YOU ARE

- between 18 and 25 years old
- live in Austria, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Hungary, France, Italy or Georgia
- enthusiastic about cooking, teamwork and cultural exchange
- ready to disconnect from your phone and embrace a minimalistic lifestyle close to nature
- fully available during the youth exchange (no late arrivals or early departures!)



WHAT TO EXPECT

development of your communication, teamwork and other personal skills

opportunities to get creative, especially through cooking

immersion of yourself in different cultures and values

learning by doing

keeping the space clean, cozy, and welcoming, by taking part in simple daily chores as a team

living in a simple, environmentally sustainable space

disconnection from constant digital screen time

connecting with others naturally through offline, exciting experiences

learning by cooking

Financial agreements

Participation fee: 30-50 €*

Participation fee is based on a sliding scale: you pay as much as you can, according to your financial situation. If paying any participation fee is a problem to you, reach out to us - we are ready to find a solution so money is not an obstacle for you to join the program.

ABOUT US

VENUE

Smokinya Foundation is a youth-focused organisation based in Bulgaria, dedicated to personal growth, cultural exchange, and social change.

Through volunteering projects, designed training programs and community initiatives, Smokinya empowers young people to build essential life skills, engage with diverse cultures, and drive positive change.

We focus on inclusion, sustainability, and lifelong learning, helping young leaders gain the tools they need to create meaningful change in their communities and beyond.

Mrachenik is a small village with around 60 residents, most of whom are elderly. Despite this and its size, the community is welcoming. The village has only one shop, but it sits in the beautiful region of Sredna Gora, known for its rich natural landscapes, historic sites, and breathtaking mountain views. The surrounding area is ideal for those who appreciate quiet, rural life, with plenty of opportunities to explore nature and connect with the local culture.

*You can bring your own tent if you wish to stay alone.

Basic furnishings and shared common areas are provided for a comfortable stay.

FACILITIES

- shared tents (up to 3 people) with
 - 10 cm foam mattress
 - pillow, pillow case and mattress cover
- 3 showers
- 6 indoor toilets
- campfire spot
- equipped kitchen



BRIGHT LANDS

FESTIVAL



BRIGHT FUTURE CENTER

The activities will take place in BRIGHT Future Center, a former school, that was purchased by Smokinya in 2023. Since then, we are working on making it a hub of non-formal education and a reference point at the local and European levels.

There, ESC and Erasmus+ projects were hosted in the last few years and the school became the "temporary house" for young people from all over Europe.

The basic condition offered by the venue supports human connections: who passed through it learned how to appreciate little moments and the spirit of being a united and empowered group is encouraged by this setting.



TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Smokinya Foundation will reimburse all participants individually, according to internal, national and EU regulations up to the following limits:

Country	Standard travel	Green travel
1. Bulgaria	28 €	56 €
2. Georgia	309 €	417 €
3. Bosnia	211 €	285 €
4. France	395 €	
5. Hungary	211 €	285 €
6. Italy	309 €	417 €
7.		

Do NOT purchase any tickets before receiving confirmation from us about your participation!

Green travel relates to environmental sustainability: the project is designed in an eco-friendly way and incorporates green practices (e.g. green travel). Green travel is the one that use low-emissions means of transport for the main part of the travel, such as bus, train or car-pooling (with 3 or more people on board). The total trip distance must be at least 60% done in an eco-friendly way (bus, train, carpooling). Additional documentation is necessary.

**TRAVEL
GREEN!**



PARTNERS

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READY TO COOK?

Instructions

- 1 Read the Infopack carefully
- 2 Find the email address of the partner from your country
- 3 Apply in an email directly with the partners
- 4 Wait to hear back from the partner and us
- 5 Get ready for a delicious experience

QUESTIONS?

Reach out to us at any point in email:
info@smokinya.com!

SEE YOU

IN THE BEAUTIFUL MARCHENIK SOON!