



Youth in Action programme "Youth for democracy project"

JOIN THE CLUB

start your business with us

1st Meeting: Lefkas/Greece, November 14-17, 2012



SOLIDARITY TRACKS
Cultural NGO for Youth
www.tamonopatia.org



Magazine



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Introduction

The Youth Entrepreneurs Club is a meeting point for young people who are interested in developing an entrepreneurial project. With this club, we want to support the future young entrepreneurs by giving them useful information.

At the same time, the club will also work as a link between them. Within the club, the future young entrepreneurs have the possibility to meet partners from different countries, talk about ideas and opportunities and share experiences or problems. This club is expected to be established as a forum and a nexus linking the future young European entrepreneurs with the politicians, entrepreneurs and experts from all around Europe.

Along this project, we wish to hold four meetings, of four days each, in four European countries: Greece, Romania, Italy and France.

The first meeting took place in Lefkas (Greece) from 14th to 17th of November 2012. In those four days, the young participants attended the conferences and interventions of some Greek experts in entrepreneurship like Emmanuel Labithianakis or Fannis Lazaris.

Besides, during the meeting, the participants could know about concrete examples of young entrepreneurs in Lefkas. Kristina Pejic, Dimitris Rompotis, Ophelie Sigg and Ioannis Mavrokefalos joined

the “Youth Entrepreneurs Club” and shared with us their own personal stories as young entrepreneurs.

The participants also visited the municipality of Lefkas where they met up with Mrs Skiada Zoe, vice-mayor of Lefkas and responsible for the social sector; Mr Aravanis Eleftherios, vice-mayor of Lefkas and responsible for financial affairs; and Mr Vicentios Nikolaos, vice-mayor and responsible for Apollonion region. The group talked with them about the employment situation in Greece and particularly in Lefkas and about the efforts that municipality is making to fight against the unemployment. Moreover, the participants had the opportunity to make some recommendations to the local politicians and they proposed different measures to stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit on the Island.

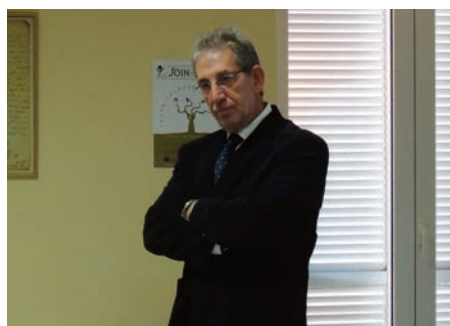
This Lefkadian meeting was only the beginning of the whole adventure. It was an important meeting which helped us to start working about economical and political problems in Europe. *“We are young, we are the future and if we want it, we can create a better society where everybody has opportunities to contribute. We hope we can create together new sorts of jobs and new ways of integration also for disabled people or people in particular situation of social disadvantage.”*



Greek experts: conferences with

It is very important that experienced people join the project. People who tried hard and succeeded in their life. That's why, one aim of 'Youth Entrepreneurs Club' is to put together both, the ones who succeeded and the ones who wish to be successful. It is a big motivation for young people to listen to the experience from the experts themselves. For these reasons, during our seminar we had special guests sharing their knowledge with the young audience.

Intervention and debate «Juvenile Entrepreneurship: from the concept towards the setting up of an enterprise» (project management), by Mr. Emmanuel Labithianakis



Mr. Labithianakis is pricing manager at the marketing department of OTE (Hellenic Telecommunications Organization) but he has some experience as entrepreneur too. He owned two successful companies: a book publisher and a courier delivery company. For Mr Labithianakis, nobody was born to be entrepreneur but everyone can become one, if they really want to and they believe in their knowledge and skills. Young entrepreneurs have to be inspired by their own dream, in order to succeed. They have to be self-confident and passionate for what they are doing.

Some participants shared with the expert their fears about setting up a new business.

According to Mr Labithianakis it is normal to have initially fears of the sort because they come from the very fact that being an entrepreneur is a risk. Yet if you are professional, methodical and well organized and if you trust yourself and work hard, you will succeed and your fears will vanish. Labithianakis encouraged the participants to become entrepreneurs because "you can make your dreams come true".

By being your own boss you can make your ideas reality. You have to make the decisions and this is so creative and inspiring".

For the expert entrepreneur, the first step to start a business is to find a good idea. It is not necessary to find a new idea because "almost everything has already been invented". You don't have to be brilliant to create a new idea of business. But you can do the same others do/did".

Once you decide what you will do, the advice of Labithianakis is to analyze the market and see if your idea can succeed. The key to success is the innovative potential of your idea: it is the only parameter likely to make the difference between your product or service and the product or service of the others. Your offer has to be unique (cheaper or better). After you have found your idea, you have to deploy your strategy with a very good business plan and organize your job. At that point, you should think about how you will get the money to start. "It can flow from your own pocket, or by applying for a loan to a bank or petitioning the financial sup-

port of the national or European Governments" Labithianakis said. He also advised future entrepreneurs to trust professionals. "Nobody can be good at everything, nor can you do everything by yourself. Trust other people who are better than you at something" is the opinion of the expert. In summary, for him, there are three basic reasons why a starting business can fail: "wrong assessment of capital needs; overestimation of self-competence and lack of business plan". One of the biggest problems while starting a business is the initial cost and how difficult can be to find funds. Moreover, new entrepreneurs will have to face a big bureaucracy. It is not only a Greek problem only, it's also a European one. "Starting a business is a difficult task but at the same time it's very challenging", the expert conceded. Besides, Labithianakis wanted to defend the Greek entrepreneur because "they are many and good ones. There are Greek young people who are working on very innovative ideas and businesses." For example, some entrepreneurs are dealing in old good traditional Greek products like olive oil or wine, but using new techniques and fashionable ways. At the end of his intervention, Labithianakis wanted to thank the club for allowing him to feel close to the young participants and let him share all his experiences and knowledge with them. "This club is very important because young people won't feel alone. They can exchange information, ideas and help each other through the club. It is a very powerful networking", he stated.

Mr. Labithianakis and Mr. Lazaris

«The Greek national policy for the development of an “entrepreneurial society” and for the promotion of the spirit of entrepreneurship» by Fannis Lazaris



Fannis Lazaris is a young businessman who owns a consultancy in Lefkas. At his office, Mr Lazaris assists new entrepreneurs to design a business plan and to develop their ideas by getting financial support from Greek and/or European Governments. Europe, and specially Greece, goes through a serious economical crisis. Many people lost their jobs and it is difficult to find a new one. For this reason, many people go to Lazaris office asking “what can I do now?”. The answer for him is not easy. “Only you can know what you can do. You have to become aware of what you know and how to proceed. Think about things at which you are the best.” Lazaris said. Once you find out what you are good at, you have to analyze the possibilities of your idea to succeed. At this point, it is very important to search and find the opportunity. On his conference, Mr Lazaris stressed repeatedly the importance of this step.

You can have a good idea but you also have to judge if your idea fit in place and time. “For example, for Greeks, now it is a very good moment to focus on a new target

regarding the flow of tourism from the Balkan countries”, he explained.

Greece, as a member of the European Union, has many projects running that encourage and support new businesses not only within this country but also in other European countries. To the expert’s mind, it’s very good to receive this kind of support from Europe, so the young people should fully exploit this option at their disposal. Like Mr. Labithianakis, Mr. Lazaris insisted on the importance of being innovative. When investing in innovation it is a very good option to get the financial support from European Commission.

As for the employment policies, Mr. Lazaris thinks Greece presents a very complicated bureaucracy. There are many steps and difficulties to get all the permissions while starting a business. And, the period of crisis raises the chances to improve and facilitate the process to become entrepreneur. “Crisis is a moment full of opportunities for entrepreneurs. Greece, as a state, should make the most of this bad situation in order to change all the wrong things in its economical and political system. Law in Greece must change because, if we want people to invest here, we have to make easier the process of starting a business.

We have crazy laws that are hindering the establishing of business”, Lazaris stated. In addition, Mr. Lazaris explained several examples of successful entrepreneurs on the island of Lefkas. Many of them illustrate how important it is to trust yourself and your ideas. “If you really think

you had a good idea, realize it. Maybe another person had the same idea, but having the courage to realize the idea is what makes the difference”.

Emmanuel Labithianakis

“Trust other people who are better than you at something”

“Starting a business is a difficult task but at the same time it’s very challenging”

Fannis Lazaris

“Crisis is a moment full of opportunities for entrepreneurs”

“Law in Greece must change if we want people to invest here”

Young entrepreneurs in Lefkas

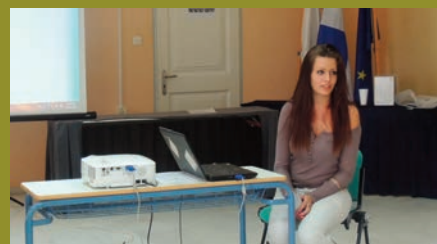
Kristina Pejčić

In 2011, at the age of 20 years old only, Kristina Pejcic came from Serbia to Lefkas to do a “European Voluntary Service” with Solidarity Tracks. Over ten months, she was working at the Elderly care center of the city, helping the old people in their daily life. She felt in love with the Island and after her EVS, she decided to stay in Lefkas. She worked in the tourist sector in the summer. Then, she realized that the Serbian tourism is a big potential market for the Island. Actually, more than 15 thousands Serbians came to the small village Nydri last summer. “Many Serbians came to me asking for advice, which restaurant is good, places

to go for party, Greek traditional taverns... So, I thought it would be a great idea to open a website where Serbian tourists could find this kind of information about the Island” Kristina said. So, with her boyfriend, Kristina decided to create ‘Volim Lefkadu’ (I love Lefkada, in Serbian). It is a website for Serbians where they will find tourist information, restaurants, cafés, taverns, hotels, villas, shops...than is all kind of tourist business can be advertised in the web site through advertisement with pictures and texts with location and information about them.

Whatsoever four months only, ‘Volim Lefkadu’ acquired several

customers and started to become popular in the Island. Within “I’m confident that we will succeed. But if not, I won’t regret because, at least, I tried to do something on my own while being too young”, Kristina asserted.



“Lefkaditiki Gi”

During our seminar in Lefkas, the participants visited ‘the Land of Lefkas’ (“Lefkaditiki Gi”, in Greek) where they made a tour through all the stages of the “Lefkaditiki Gi” wine production.

Wine ranks among the most important traditional products of Greece, together with olive oil. There are many wineries, but “Lefkaditiki Gi” is the most successful and popular one in the region.

Having established in 2000, Lefkaditiki Gi is run by Dimitris Rompotis, an experienced enologist.

First, Dimitris set up a small wi-

nery at Syvros, a small village in the South of the Island. The business was going so well that he decided to invest more and make innovations in the business. The basic idea of this entrepreneur was to construct a modern winery which is open for everybody. They used a big plot of land by the central road of the Island to construct four buildings. The two bigger lie the production area, where the wine is made, treated, and shed into bottles. A third building in the ‘Land of Lefkas’ (“Lefkaditiki Gi”) houses an exhibition about olive oil and its production. The fourth building is the reception

room. The visitors can taste and buy “Lefkaditiki Gi” wine meanwhile they are enjoying a rich exposition about the traditional machinery of wine production.



Ophélie Sigg

At the center of Lefkada town, there is a French point. It is “So Paris!” managed by the young entrepreneur Ophélie Sigg.

In 2010, this French girl arrived in Lefkas to do an EVS with Solidarity Tracks. This experience changed her life and she decided to stay on the Island. At the beginning, it was a difficult situation, because “for a foreign person who doesn’t speak Greek, it’s hard to find a job”, Ophélie said.

That’s why she had the idea to

run her own jewellery business. “Lefkas is a small town and girls don’t want to wear the same clothes or accessories as every other girl does. For this, I thought it was a good idea that my products should be unique” Ophélie said. So, all the things you can find in “So Paris” are hand made and unique.

Ophélie knows about the importance of being active on Internet and she is also selling online. In this way, her creations are available all over the world.



Ioannis Mavrokefalos

Ioannis Mavrokefalos is a young Lefkadian civil engineer. When he finished his studies in Patra, he started his traineeship in companies where he would get working experience. Yet the situation for young people is difficult these last years. “The companies want only to hire people with experience but if they never give the chance to beginners, young people will never get this experience”, Ioannis said.

He couldn’t land a job and had to decide whether to stay in Greece or move to another country. Although many of his friends moved to European countries or United States, he decided to stay in Greece. He came back to his homestead, Lefkas, and established his own company as a civil engineer. At his office, Ioannis plans and designs in his professional capacity several constructions for his customers. At the

beginning it was hard, because he didn’t have many customers but, little by little, the business was improving, and now the company has enough work and customers to subsist.



Eco-home project

Participants could visit the Eco-house built by “Solidarity Tracks” at Nidri. It is part of an ambitious project of this organization that started in June 2012. Around forty people from many different European and Mediterranean countries came to Lefkas to build a house using traditional and ecological materials (clay, sand and straw) and technologies. During the ten days of seminar, the participants of

“building our Euro med Eco-home” project constructed the 60% of the external house. Along 2013, “Solidarity Tracks” will organize different work camps to finish the external construction, interior furnishing and an eco-garden around the house. When everything will be ready, the building and the surrounding area will work as an info youth center dedicated to educational activities about environment and

sustainable development.

To know more about this project check the Prezi presentation: <http://prezi.com/oiahmwho21n/liveworkingprocessbuildingourecohometogether-nidri-greece/>



Meeting politicians

It is very important for the club's member to know about the political situation in different countries with respect to the employment situation. For this reason, the participants will meet up with local institutions in every meeting. Over their Lefkadian sojourn, the group visited the municipality of the city.



They were received by Mrs Skiada Zoe, vice-mayor of Lefkas and responsible for the social sector; Mr Aravanis Eleftherios, vice-mayor of Lefkas and respon-

sible for financial affairs; and Mr Vicentios Nikolaos, vice-mayor and responsible for Apollonion region.

The group talked with them about the employment situation in Greece and on Lefkas and the efforts that municipality is making to fight against the unemployment. Mrs. Skiada explained two European projects which will be carried out by the municipality. One of those contains training courses and activities for unemployed people who want to enter the labour market. The other project is planned to support people who want to be entrepreneurs. Both projects are directed towards unemployed youngsters but also involve people with fewer opportunities.

In reply to a question of one participant, Mrs Skiada assured that Greeks and foreigners have the same facilities; and difficulties if they want to start a business in this country. "Both will face the same problem in this sense, the big bureaucracy", the politician said. Furthermore, the participants had the opportunity to give some recommendation to the local politician where they proposed various measures to stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit in the Island.



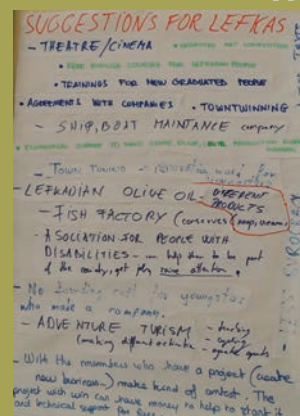
Recommendation Letter for Municipality of Lefkas

"Dear representative of Municipality of Lefkas,

In November in 2012, Solidarity Tracks Organization, in cooperation with the Municipality of Lefkas and with the support of the Foundation for Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action Program, organized the first meeting in the frame of the "Join the club, start your business with us" project. At this meeting, a small group of youngsters (entrepreneurs or would be entrepreneurs) from different European countries took part in four days of discussion and sharing experience in this field. This project allowed the participants to have an overview of entrepreneurship in Greece, especially on Lefkas and its area, by meeting Greek experts in the field. Processing all the information gathered during these four days, the participants came up with new ideas and suggestions to develop the youth entrepreneur sector in Greece and more particularly in the area of Lefkas.

Here are some suggestions written by the youngsters:

- Reduce taxes for small businesses.
- Trainings for newly graduated people.
- Town twinning for developing youth entrepreneurship.
- Financial support to innovate viticulture, growing ecological olives, lentils and other traditional cultures/cultivations.
- Create a new organization to support young people with disability, who nevertheless wish to launch their own business.
- Remove founding cost for youngsters who want to establish their own company.
- Offering free technical support to young entrepreneurs who have already started their own business.
- Less bureaucracy.
- Create funds in the ecology and environmental protection field, in order to encourage youth entrepreneurship.
- Encourage the initiatives of entrepreneurship education for youth in the non-formal way.
- Encourage the initiatives of non-formal education for youth in the field of entrepreneurship.
- Reduce the costs of insurance in the first 3 years of a new company, in order to encourage new entrepreneurs to hire employees



The Youth Entrepreneur Club wants to express his solidarity and sympathy with the Greek people suffering from the economical crisis that has lately struck Greece, so they are inviting Greek youngsters who want to create their business to join the club in order to implement their own innovative ideas and build together our common future.

We wish this wonderful island to progress, to innovate and develop as this is the only way a society can surmount (or: get over) an economical crisis".

Impact of the project

If we want this project to succeed, it is necessary that people know about it. We need youngsters joining the club and participating actively with their own ideas. The club is considered to be an open meeting point to exchange ideas and suggestions and to work as a useful tool for young entrepreneurs or people who would like to become ones. For these reasons, everyone is invited to join the club and, as part of the seminar held on Lefkas, we decided to promote our club around the town. We explained to many youngsters what the project is about and we invited them to attend the public presentation of the “Young entrepreneurs club” on the last day of our seminar.



MyLefkada



Lefkada Slowguide



Media feedback

After the first meeting in Greece, “Youth Entrepreneurs club” had a remarkable impact on the Lefkadian medias. This will help the club to be known by Greek youngsters.

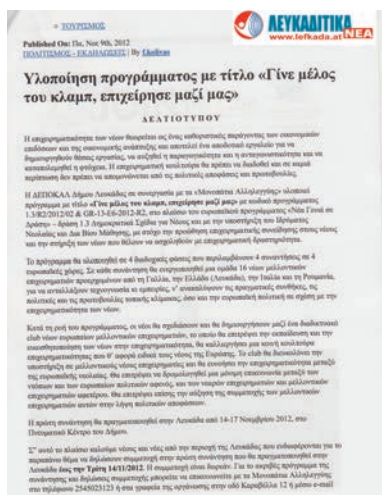
Lefkada Xalará



Nea tis Lefkadas



Lefkadtika Nea



Working groups

We had only four days of seminar so we had no time to lose. Since the first moment, we formed three small working groups in order to be more efficient. Two of the groups had the task to create audiovisual tools and materials that would summarize all that would happen during the seminar. On the one hand, we had the “magazine group” who created these pages you are reading now with articles and information about the first meeting on Lefkas. On the other hand, there was the “making of group” which produced a video showing how the Greek experience was.



The last group of ours was “forum group”. The task of this group was to decide and plan how the club would work, how to improve on the social network that we have to create, how to involve new members and which topics should be treated in the forum. No doubt, already set all this is a very important job, if we wish to have a successful club.



Forum group

The group decided different topics and themes to be included in the forum. “Case studies” is one of those. In this theme, the members of the club will analyze different cases. “New ideas” will be the place where young entrepreneurs can share their ideas in order to find partners, receive advice or just exchange opinions. In “resources”, everyone will find valuable theoretical information. The theme “policies” will be dedicated to disseminate knowledge about the laws, the political situation and the em-

ployment situation in different countries. “Do’s & don’ts” will work as a guide about what you should and shouldn’t do to promote and have a successful business, especially related with marketing skills. And last but not least, we have “experiences” where the participants will exchange concrete cases they know well about young entrepreneurs in their region.

Become a member

You will find these themes in our forum. If you want to participate and join all these conversations, you just have to enrol in it. By becoming a member, you can stir up new discussions and topics that you consider important. Beside this, the members will also have the option to join the skype meetings between young entrepreneurs and experts. So, don’t wait and register in our club!

Forum		
	n. 2 ME	Topic
- case studies	KARLOS	IS A GOOD IDEA WITH THIS?
- new ideas	ANDREA	
- resources	REGINA & DANIEL	A UNIVERSITY OF BUSINESS
- policies	MCARLOTTA JESSICA	A POLICY
- Do's & don'ts	BIOFI DAVID & DANIELA	ROMANIA'S MARKETING SKILLS
- Experiences		

Future steps of the project

The Lefkas meeting was just the beginning, signalling the creation of the club. Ever since, we have to keep working to preserve this network. Through the forum, we will be permanently connected. Yet, our relation won’t be exclusively online. In January, we will hold another

meeting, this time in Romania. Other sixteen youngsters will gather together at Baile Tusnad to discuss about entrepreneurship and to know how the employment conditions look like in this country. Moreover, during the Romanian meeting, the participants will

continue improving the club, discovering new topics and uttering new ideas and opinions. And of course, they will create another magazine about everything they will talk of. So, if you want to know what will happen there, pay attention to our web and forum!

Evaluation of the participants

11

Maria Grazia Alaïmo, Italy

"It was very interesting to participate in this project. The topic is really good and current. I also think the idea of creating a website where young Europeans (entrepreneurs or not) can compare their ideas and feelings, is very innovative. As a disabled person, I consider this club is a way to allow others to know about

our world and make them aware of our reality. I have learned a lot from this first meeting on Lefkas. The interventions of the experts helped me to gain an insight into the subject. Thanks to the testimony of two young girls who decided to enter into the business world, I learnt an important life lesson: never give up

your dreams and have always the courage to face your fears.

Besides, I had the opportunity to meet people with a different cultural background from mine, I worked with them side by side and in this way I gained not only knowledge but also emotions and experiences."

David Jankovszky, Romania

"I had no special expectations; I thought it would be good and useful. After four days of seminar, I can say it really was. My association will organize the next meeting in Romania, so for me it was very useful to get acquainted with the expectations of the other participants and organizations in order to prepare the meeting in January.

In my opinion, the most interesting activities were the conferences of Mr. Labithianakis and Mr. Lazaris.

I liked very much their spirit. Here, we made the easy part of project: creating the club. But, now, here comes the difficult part: to keep the interest of participants alive with the project. I hope our club will succeed, and this only will hap-

pen if all of us cooperate to make it works.

For sure, I will help other members in everything where I could offer as an entrepreneur: giving advices, sharing information... Furthermore, this meeting has been useful for me, because along these days I came across two new ideas for future projects."

Katerina Katopodi, Greece

"I completely achieved all my objectives in this seminar: I improved my English, I learnt a lot thanks to the speeches of the experts and I had a fruitful intercultural exchange by meeting new people from different countries

For me, the most helpful activity was the conference of Mr Labithianakis because he not only shared his knowledge with us, but also he encouraged us to be brave and trust ourselves and our own ideas. I will promote the club in my

community because I think it is very useful for many youngsters. At least, for me it was too useful., I got a big inspiration to become entrepreneur and I will try to succeed in working on one idea of business."

Jessica Cencetti, France

"Only four days of seminar is too short a time to be efficient for us, but we worked hard to bring about something useful for other youngsters. The conferences of the experts were very inspiring because they encouraged us a lot to start a business on condition that

we believe in our idea.

However, I liked most our visits to the young entrepreneurs on Lefkada. They explained us their experience, the tough going they found and how they faced the problems as entrepreneurs. Thanks to this club, we can learn about the em-

ployment situation in other countries and this is really useful.

Personally, I will work with the group to make a working club, participating in the forum, exchanging ideas and knowledge...in summary, working together with other youngsters."

Mamadou Daouda, France

"In my case, I was very interested on the topic since the beginning. I can say I learnt many things, so for me it was a very useful meeting. Especially, I liked the conference of Mr. Labithianakis because he taught us about the business plan and how important is to trust ourselves.

In France, the lack of working experience is the biggest problem for a young person to find a job. Given this situation, I'm planning to start my own business because I think the entrepreneurship is a good option for youngsters who are having problems in finding employment.

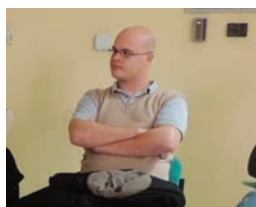
I have a project in my mind concerning my business about communication. I never tried before because I was afraid of failing, but, after the meeting, I'm more confident and I will try to make my idea reality.

The most important point of this project is the network we created."

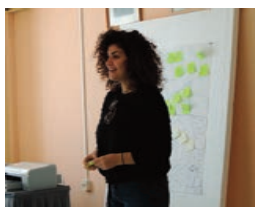
Maria Grazia



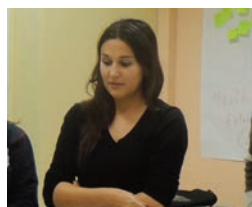
David



Katerina



Jessica



Daouda



Partners



Municipality of Lefkas - DEPOKAL (Greece)



Fédération Familles De France Moselle (France)



Together (France)



Istituto dei Ciechi "Florio e Salamone" (Italy)



Work in progress (Italy)



Solidarity Tracks (Greece)



Asociația de Tineri din Ardeal (Romania)



PIHE- Association for Youth and Students in Partium (Romania)

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