Center for youth education
Tel/fax. + 387 30 511 565; cem@bih.net.ba www.cem.ba
Mali trg bb, 72270 Travnik, BiH; ID number: **4236426970005**
Unicredit bank: 3386907799137190

Live your life without alcohol!

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You Can Do It Without Alcohol!
Press Statement

An International Camp titled „Live Life Without Alcohol“ was held on the last weekend in September on the mountain of Vlasic. The Camp was organized by Centar for Youth Education (CEM) from Travnik and Association for Drug Use Prevention and Harm Reduction „LINK“ from Sarajevo. Supported by representatives of the member organizations of „Lifestyle Without Alcohol“ Network from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and partner organizations from Serbia and Macedonia, young people of the Camp pointed to the increasing problems of alcohol consumption in society, especially among their peers.

In environments where alcohol is accepted as the "social heritage" or "tradition", and its consumption is justified, or even expected in situations such as celebrations or gatherings, the risk that the young people, especially teenagers, will begin to consume alcohol at an early age of life is very high. This means that the effects that alcohol causes will also occur in their youth and bring problems. Although well informed about it, many young people continue to consume alcohol in large quantities, which can lead to long-term dependency. According to statistics in Europe, 43% of students aged between 15 and 16 years regularly consumed alcohol[i]. Statistics of this kind for the Balkans region do not exist.

On the other hand, there are young people who are having fun without alcohol. Among them are "Alcohol free lifestyle" peer educators of the CEM who, in creative ways, show the damage caused by alcohol. One of them is a sixteen years old Milan Todorovic, a student of High School for catering and tourism from Sarajevo:
"I had an hour of practical training in catering with coctails as topic. The professor made cocktails from various alcoholic beverages and he offered us to try them, so I said: 'Professor, I am a peer educator on "Alcohol free lifestyle" and therefore I will not try it'. Then we agreed that at the next class I may bring drinks that do not contain alcohol (fruit juices, etc.), and to make coctails out of them."

Continued education and activities that draw people's attention to the harmful effects of alcohol are planned for the future, all in order to reduce the alcohol consumption among young people. One of those activities will be the Annual International Summer Camp which will be organized by the European Youth Organization „Active - Sobriety, Friendship and Peace“, the Center for Youth Education and „LINK“, which will be held during the summer of 2013 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Project „Lifestyle Without Alcohol“, within which this year's International Camp on Vlasic was held, is financially supported by the Swedish organization IOGT-NTO.

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NOTE TO THE EDITORS

For more information please contact

Center for youth education

Karolina Plišo, PR
Tel/fax: + 387 30 511 565
Mob: + 387 66 628 845
e-mail: karolina.pliso@cem.ba
www.cem.ba

Center for youth education (CEM) is the largest non-governmental youth organization in Central Bosnia. CEM has its headquarter in Travnik, and in this region it has been operating since 1998. Organization was first called PRONI Institute of Social Education, and later renamed to Forum Syd Central Project Bosnia.
From first december 2007, CEM operates as an independent, non-governmental organization.

CEM operates with planned, systematic and professional work with youth, toward individual and community development.

Through the three-year long project **"Alcohol free lifestyle",** which aims to create a safe, healthy and alcohol-free environment for youth, CEM has formed an informal network of organizations **"Lifestyle without alcohol"**, educated **young peer educators**, advocated and continues advocating policies and laws related to alcohol abuse.

CEM is a member of the European umbrella youth organization **"Active-sobriety, friendship and peace"** Stockholm, Sweden.

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WHO 2011, Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health
http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/global_alcohol_report/en/index.html