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EMPOWERMENT

SELF DEFENCE

for youthworkers - Building safe spaces

TC - SERBIA Veliki Gaj 15-21. June 2026.
(travel dates included)



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What is this training about?

Empowerment Self-Defence (ESD) is an approach that combines awareness, boundary setting, verbal skills and physical strategies to prevent and respond to violence.

During this training course, youth workers will explore how ESD can help them create safer environments for young people, strengthen their own confidence, and react effectively in challenging situations.

The program is experiential, practical and body-based. Participants should be ready for active involvement.



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More about ESD

Empowerment Self-Defence (ESD) is a violence-prevention approach that combines awareness, communication, boundary setting, and physical skills. It supports people to recognize risk early, make informed choices, and respond in ways that increase safety and dignity.

ESD is not about fighting or proving strength. Physical techniques are used as a last option and are always connected to voice, posture, and decision-making under pressure. Avoidance, de-escalation, and leaving a situation early are understood as successful outcomes.

At its core, ESD is about agency. Participants learn to trust their perception, express clear boundaries, and act in alignment with their values. By integrating body and mind, the approach builds confidence that can be transferred into professional work with young people and into everyday life.

[ESD EUROPE WEBSITE](#)





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Objectives:

PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- understand principles of ESD
- develop practical verbal & physical tools
- increase personal and professional confidence
- learn how to transfer methods into youth work
- explore how to build safer spaces in their organizations
- exchange practices with colleagues from different countries



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Participant profile

We are looking for participants who are:

- 18+
- Youth workers
- Trainers, educators or facilitators
- Social workers, teachers, mentors
- People actively working with young people

Participants must:

- ✓ be able to apply the learning in their daily work
- ✓ be motivated to explore body-based learning
- ✓ be ready for physical participation
- ✓ commit to attending the full program



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About the Facilitator

GENTIANA SUSAJ

Gentiana Susaj is Co-Founder and Coordinator of ESD Europe and Founder of ESD Albania. With over 20 years of international experience in gender equality, violence prevention, and human rights across Europe and Latin America, she has dedicated her career to making safety, dignity, and empowerment accessible to all.

A Level 4 Certified ESD Instructor, black belt in Aikido, BJJ practitioner, Gentiana brings together martial arts, legal expertise, and trauma-informed pedagogy in a dynamic, embodied, and deeply empowering teaching style.

Since 2017, she has organized and delivered ESD trainings across multiple European countries, led 15 Training of Trainers cohorts, and trained thousands of women, youth, educators, and professionals in Europe. She has also played a key role in integrating ESD into national education policy in Albania, where the program is now implemented in public schools.



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Methodology & What to Expect

This training is based on experiential, participant-centered learning. You will gain knowledge by practicing, reflecting, and connecting it to your work with young people.

During the course you can expect:

- active participation instead of lectures
- individual, pair and small group exercises
- guided simulations based on real-life situations
- body-based work with posture, movement and voice
- simple, practical physical techniques
- group reflection and transfer to youth work practice

All activities are built on consent and respect for personal boundaries. You are encouraged to communicate your limits and choose your level of involvement.



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Venue:

The training will take place at Magnet House, an international educational and community center located in the village of Veliki Gaj, near the Romanian border. Surrounded by nature and far from city noise, it offers a calm and focused environment ideal for intensive learning and group connection.



About the space:

- accommodation in shared multi-bed rooms
- shared bathrooms and showers
- large main training hall (70m²) with high ceiling and natural light
- additional smaller working areas
- big courtyard with outdoor possibilities
- tatami floor available for movement, practice or breaks
- flexible room setup – chairs, projections, flipcharts

Veliki Gaj is a small and peaceful village with very limited shops or services, but plenty of greenery, fresh air and quiet evenings. The venue functions as a community house, encouraging cooperation, shared responsibility and informal time together.



[Website of Magnet House](#)



Travel

Budget for travel reimbursement is based on the Erasmus+ [Distance Calculator](#), so please check your distance.

Before booking any tickets contact us for approval.

In order to be reimbursed, you must provide **ALL** travel documents for both directions of travel **before** reimbursement.

If traveling by plane that includes: invoice + boarding passes

If traveling by bus: bus ticket showing the price

If traveling by train: train ticket showing the price

If traveling by car: fuel invoices+ pay toll bills

If bought online - documents must be uploaded in pdf to provided folder.

If bought in person - you must provide original tickets, bills, boarding passes etc. + upload scanned to provided folder.

Travel distance	Green travel	Non-Green travel
10 – 99 km	56 EUR	28 EUR
100 – 499 km	285 EUR	211 EUR
500 – 1999 km	417 EUR	309 EUR
2000 – 2999 km	535 EUR	395 EUR
3000 – 3999 km	785 EUR	580 EUR
4000 – 7999 km	1188 EUR	1188 EUR



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Travel to Vršac.

All participants are responsible for organizing their travel to Vršac.

By plane:

If you are arriving by plane, you will land at Belgrade Nikola Tesla Airport. From there, you can use public transport (regular lines are free, shuttle bus is 4 euros) to reach the Belgrade Bus Station.

From Belgrade, you can take a direct bus to Vršac.

 **Bus timetable**

By bus:

If you are arriving in Belgrade by bus, you can continue your journey by taking another bus from Belgrade to Vršac.

 **Bus timetable**

By car:

If you are traveling by car, you can come directly to the venue location.

 **Venue location**

Arrival in Vršac:

Once you arrive in Vršac, the organizing team will pick you up and transfer you to the venue by car.

Important

! Please contact us before purchasing your tickets and wait for our confirmation before making any payments.



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What to bring

Because this is a physically active training, please bring:

- comfortable sports / workout clothes
- indoor sneakers to keep the training space clean
- water bottle
- personal medication if needed

Please also bring your toiletries. (*towels to be confirmed*)

Health & safety

Participants are highly encouraged to have travel health insurance for this TC.

Participants are responsible for informing organizers about injuries or health conditions that may influence participation.

You always have the right to step out of an activity due to physical/ mental health.



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