

**Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR)** builds links among young people across the Balkans, from different ethnic groups and countries, to enhance the participation of young people in the transitional justice and dialogue processes and prevent the re-emergence of the conflicts that devastated the region for so many years.

YIHR is a response of and for a generation that was raised during and right after the violent conflicts.

The Network works in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia.

YIHR supports **participation** of youth in transitional justice and dialogue processes. It **opens** taboo topics, **challenges** dominant and nationalist narratives, **pays respect** to victims of crimes often denied and relativized, works on a local level to **engage youth in dialogue** and pioneers youth involvement in seeking accountability and justice.

YIHR facilitates **engagement** of youth in human rights advocacy in areas of minority, LGBT and more generally **fundamental, civic** and **political rights**. YIHR monitors the state of human rights and produces relevant reports on **rule of law** which it delivers to the UN, OSCE, CoE, EC and national stakeholders. YIHR supports local human rights organizations and engages in **coalitions** and **campaigns**.

YIHR organizes **youth exchange** and **visiting** programs, cross-border and regional meetings of **journalists, young politicians, historians, educators** and **youth workers**. The organization facilitates regional cooperation of youth engaging in **human rights** and **reconciliation** projects. YIHR coordinates **regional youth efforts** towards human rights, justice and accountability.

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Interaction between civil society and the state is a crucial when it comes to advocating institutional change, legal revisions and all any components of systematic change.

Civil society actors should, in these activities, be independent as they draw their legitimacy not through public support but from codified standards in human rights and international law.

However, the actors are dependent of the state since these reforms should be carried out by the formal institutional mechanisms.

When it comes to work directed at challenging dominant narratives, the state is the actor that sets these narratives. Thus, the NGOs and other social actors usually have the responsive or reactionary role as the state is usually setting the agenda.

The interaction in these terms is more often the product of conflict. The social actors in this respect usually conflict the state-sponsored, state-produced and state-enforced narratives. This is usually the conflict between the perceived national interest and human rights of specific (usually minority and marginalized) groups.

When it comes to financial cooperation and financial independence, the NGOs usually have to rely on private and foreign sources of financing when challenging the dominant narratives.