

Alexander Kojic from "Our House Europe" in Vukovar, Croatia:

"I hope for better days to come and that we all will learn from the pandemic"

I'm in Vukovar again, active in "Our House Europe", but stuck at home for a month now, working from home as most of us these days. This, unprecedented situation related to Corona virus has brought so many changes in our every day's life for sure. Not just visible changes but also changes in our attitude toward many aspects, behaviour, intentions, etc. Hopefully, there are some indications these days pointing out that better days for all of us are knocking to our doors. We are looking forward to them!

Many people in Europe were aware about what has happened in China this winter and tried to be better prepared to what was about to happen. However, the influence of the Corona virus on everything that has recently occurred in Europe (and globally) was far more complicated, harder for our societies than anticipated. I hope humanity will learn some lessons for the Corona pandemic and really hope that those who make public policies, proposing laws and regulations, initiating changes on behalf of public will do that taking into account all the effects of the devastating Corona virus.

However, taking into account the current situation in Croatia; all the measures proposed by the Government through National Civil Protection Headquarters and how the Croatian population responded to the situation, I would say that it is not bad. During the time of this crisis, National Protection Headquarters has acted promptly and provided advices, recommendations and information to the public in a very appropriate manner, thus becoming a trusted and accepted public institution for the citizens, who regard them as a team of truly professionals. According to yesterday's official statistics: there are 1950 people infected by the Corona virus in Croatia, 48 dead so far and 869 people have recovered from the infection. All the counties in Croatia have reported presence of the Corona virus in their territory. Some areas in Croatia are affected more and some, as parts of Slavonia, have reported less number of infected persons. Regarding the population of Vukovar and our surroundings, we have experienced very few persons who have been infected. People here especially have followed all recommendations and rules proposed thus protecting ourselves, our family members, relatives, neighbours, etc. Croatian system has responded well, in general, and with some effective measures enforced in time. It could have been better and, of course, it could have been worse.

As of middle of March, kindergartens, schools and Universities are closed, so pupils attending classes from home; online and via national TV channels. All those who might perform their businesses from home are doing so, so we have lot of people who are not commuting to their jobs on daily basis. Only those who can not perform their duties and obligations are working as usual; police, health care, state and public officials, etc. Many of those who have to go to work have adapted to the situation and have to follow security rules adopted on national level in order to prevent from the infection. As elsewhere in Europe, restaurants, café bars, cinemas, all public events are closed, not allowed (cancelled) or postponed for future.

People in general have to get used to new procedures, new and unwanted set of rules in their every day's life in order to protect themselves from influence of negative effect caused by Corona virus. Some have adapted faster with almost no pain, some did not. We are

people, not computers some would say. Many are forced to change their attitudes, behaviour and habits. For some of us, some things were difficult, like staying at home for a prolonged period, and for some of us there were certain benefits, like staying at home longer than before. Some were faced with the fact that have to spend more time with their family members, and some were blessed because of that. Some were afraid of the full refrigerator, some were afraid of an empty house, some have found new interests and some have found that old ones, for whom they had no enough time before, are groovy! Mankind, represented by individual as a unique being.

I have expected, when it all started, that situation would not be as good (if this can be called good at all) as it is today. I have had fears that the scenario locally and globally would be much worse which is opposite to optimistic person that I consider myself of. I was not afraid of what might happen to me, but I was afraid of the possible consequences to all! I am witness, as we all, how this period have influence on many of us. I mostly thinking of people who take more care of the planet, being sensible for the needs of others, and people who are calm above all. Patience will take us further than we thought it might, for sure.

I am really looking forward to better days coming to us. I hope we will something from the pandemic.

We are all missing our YU-Peace activities, our time together, hugs within the camp and lot of smiles and fun!