

# NEWSLETTER

*July 2022.*



**FONDACIJA**  
HASTOR



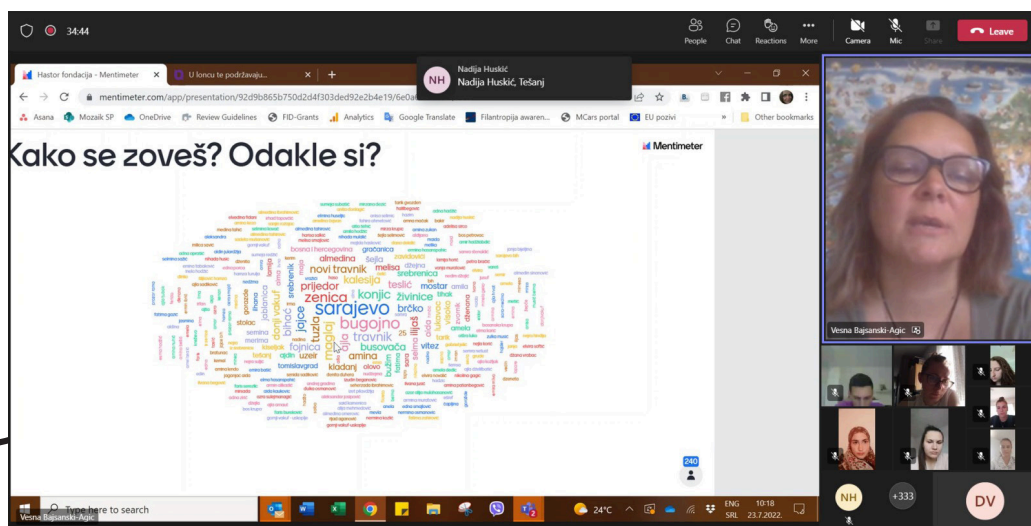
## Young People as the Present Power of the Country and the Initiators of Changes in the Society

The meeting was opened by the head of the Foundation, Seid Fijuljanin, who wholeheartedly greeted all scholarship holders. He spoke about the importance of establishing new friendships within the Foundation on the scholarship holders' paths to personal and professional achievements. After that, the executive director of the Mosaic Foundation Vesna Bajšanski-Agić talked about the obstacles and dangers we can encounter on our quest for achievement, and different ways we can create possibilities for ourselves through entrepreneurial spirit and activism.

The Mosaic Foundation and the Hastor Foundation are connected through philanthropy and young people who are active members of the society, and who, thanks to various opportunities, make numerous changes in their local communities, which, in turn, are reflected on the whole society of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Vesna emphasized that the Mosaic Foundation and the Hastor Foundation do not treat young people as if they are the future of our country but see them as the present power of the country to whom they present opportunities that they can use. The goal of the Mosaic Foundation is to give direction to the young people who want to stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to try to create opportunities in their own country, so that they can have a life that they want within their homeland.

Further into the meeting, Vesna gave a presentation to the scholarship holders about the Mosaic Foundation, "lonac.pro", and the Youth Bank and the way these organizations operate. She also talked about the beginnings of the Mosaic Foundation, and how they help young people achieve entrepreneurial and activist dreams, especially when dreams motivate young people to pursue that direction.



## Scholarship Holders' Monthly Meeting:

### Young People as the Present Power of the Country and the Initiators of Changes in the Society

Something that is very important to point out is the fact that every scholarship holder of the Hastor Foundation can reach out to the Mosaik Foundation and "lonac.pro" in order to propose an entrepreneurial idea or an activist project, and that those scholarship holders can rely on the organizations when it comes to receiving support on their way to achieving their final goal.

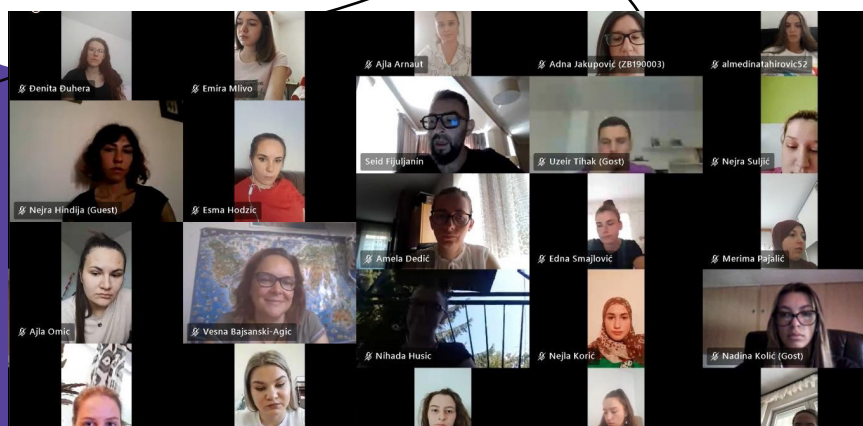
The scholarship holders, moved by this inspiring lecture, said that they gained motivation, will, and enthusiasm to become more active, and a few other scholarship holders wrote that they felt hopeful about doing something for themselves and their community. Vesna's answer to this was that everyone could have support from the Mosaic Foundation; and she encouraged all scholarship holders to reach out to them.

Fikreta Jakubović is a scholarship holder who is studying at the History Department at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo and is also the vice-president of the Community of Students. She asked Vesna whether she could apply for a money grant from the Youth Bank necessary for a project that is tightly connected with her studies – Vesna encouraged her to apply. Other scholarship holders also shared their positive experiences at this online meeting. Sara Kuduzović thanked Vesna for her time and optimism which she shared with the scholarship holders of the Hastor Foundation. Also, Sara stated that she was very happy to have found out that we have an abundance of opportunities in our country, and that not all things are that bad. Amela Avdibegović was motivated by the useful lecture and newly acquired knowledge, whereas Ajla Prnjavorac said that the lecture had surely given her much hope for the future of all of us, and also for the future of our country.

At the end of the meeting, the director Seid Fijuljanin thanked Vesna on behalf of all the members of the Hastor Foundation for a very informative and useful lecture. He stated that young people nowadays have more opportunities which they should use, and that they only need willpower, energy, and a wish to achieve their goals. Additionally, the director Fijuljanin stressed that failing at something is actually a new chance to learn, it's simply a short-term experience with a long-lasting value.

The scholarship holders were then addressed by the member of administrative staff Amela Dedić, who shared information regarding scholarship holders' duties to which they are bound by the contract they have with the Foundation.

With this interesting and exciting lecture, lecturer Vesna Bajšanski-Agić succeeded at igniting a spark of social activism which is hiding in every scholarship holder of the Hastor Foundation, even if some do not believe they have it or have not recognized it yet. The spark will surely cause a huge fire which will bring us to new social engagements of scholarship holders, who will show, with their persistence, and a will to work and make changes, that young people are the present power of the country and initiators of changes in the society.



# NEWS

## Summer Vacation in the Netherlands 2022

### Adventures in the "Land of Canals, Tulips, Windmills, Clogs and Bicycles"

For many years, the Hastor Foundation has organized the project "Summer vacation in the Netherlands" in cooperation with the Dutch partner organization "Stichting Kinderhulp Bosnie." This project is special because it gives children from rural areas with a lower socioeconomic status the opportunity to visit the land of tulips and windmills, gain beautiful experiences, and create memories for a lifetime. This year, the selected group of children was accompanied by our scholarship holders Amela Džidić and Amina Zorlak. For them, this trip was a challenge and an adventure, and they returned with many fond memories.



*I remember the monthly meeting of scholarship holders of the Hastor Foundation in 2018, when Amila and Belma told us about their trip to the Netherlands and the experiences they had gained. At that time, I thought that I would never have the courage to go so far and take care of so many children, and today, here I am writing about my trip to the Netherlands and participating in the same project, happy that I got such an opportunity and that I embarked on that adventure.*

Aside from the trip itself, Amela points out that she also enjoyed the preparations for it, considering that during that period she got to meet the children and their parents, and these moments were particularly emotional for her. It is also a practice that before the actual implementation of the project, the scholarship holders who will lead the group get to know each other, and regarding that Amela says:



*After announcing that I was selected for the trip to the Netherlands, Amela told me the name of the other student who would go with me and recommended that we meet before the trip. That's what we did, about a month before the trip we went out for coffee to get to know each other and immediately, as they say, we clicked. We saw that we have the same fundamental principles, that we think in a similar way, and that Amela really chose the right people. It is very important to get along with the person you will travel with, spend so much time together, and take care of so many children together. Of course, Amina and I had a lot of questions, but we bravely approached everything. The day before the trip to the Netherlands, together with the teacher Ramo, and the president of the organization "Stichting Kinderhulp Bosnie" Peter, we went to the elementary school in Srednje, from which 17 children were going on the trip. There we met their parents, as they met us, talked with Peter and teacher Ramo a little more about what awaits us and went home to get ready for the trip.*





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Although this trip is a unique opportunity for children to get to know a new country, build acquaintances and broaden their horizons, it is not easy for them to separate from their parents, just as it is not so easy for the parents themselves to see them off for their adventure, so, on the day of the trip, on their faces she saw a few tears that gave off a feeling of joy and hidden sadness.

*When we arrived in front of the elementary school in Srednje, the parents were already waiting for us. You could see both joy and sadness on their faces. We asked the parents not to get on the bus with their children because it will make parting more difficult and bring more tears. Of course, the children cried because, even though they knew that the journey ahead of them was organized just for them, they were going into the unknown. We still managed to calm them down, and the tears on their faces were soon replaced by excitement and curiosity about what lay ahead.*

Not long after, the children from Srednje were joined by a group of 11 children from the Home for Children without Parental Care in Tuzla and 6 curious little ones who joined the rest of the team in Živinice.

*The reaction of the children who later joined us was the same as the first group's, they cried, but this time the children from Srednje offered comforting words and we got over this situation more easily. After all, it is different when children hear from their peers that what awaits them is nothing terrible. I can't help but mention little Emir who joined us in Živinice. He cried a lot when he got on the bus, and his friend Eldar comforted him and said: "Don't be afraid, I'll be with you, we'll have fun."*

A real adventure for Amina, Amela and our little passengers began on June 11th, when they arrived in the Netherlands. All the tiredness of the journey disappeared, and they were ready to bravely and enthusiastically step into their wonderland and fill their memory books with beautiful experiences. The Dutch families with whom the children were staying readily and excitedly welcomed our little adventurers.

*After we arrived in the Netherlands, the children went to their new families where they were settled, and the two of us went with Peter, his wife Mariel and their dog Isa to their house.*

*Although most of the children from the group that visited the Netherlands this year adjusted to the change very well and boldly took part in all the planned workshops, there were still some who hesitated. Our support in such moments was necessary because the two of us were a support system that those children could confide in and whose help they needed, and they also needed us for easier communication when meeting the families they were staying with.*

*On Sunday, June 12, the children participated in a workshop where they wrote and coloured postcards for their families in Bosnia. Also, a distribution of clothes was organised, so everyone, including us teachers, could choose some of the clothes and shoes prepared by the Dutch families.*

As the workshops took place every other day, our team's Tuesday was reserved for Maisdoolhof – a corn field. Many diverse activities were planned where children could drive go-karts, ride ponies, play football, jump on trampolines, etc. The activities lasted the entire day, and naturally everyone was tired, but we were also proud to see the happiness on the children's faces after a whole day of playing and socializing with their peers.

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Adventures in the "Land of Canals, Tulips, Windmills, Clogs and Bicycles"



*The adventures continued on Thursday when we spent time on the ship playing bingo and enjoying lunch and music that the children chose themselves. Before Sunday and the picnic, Amina and I had free time to get to know the Netherlands better, specifically Malden and Nijmegen. Nijmegen is the oldest city in the Netherlands, but it still has something to offer and entertain tourists, which is why its description is – "old city, young vibe." Our hosts, Peter and Mariel, did their best to be the best hosts possible. We felt at home, and I can say that, among other things, I overcame my fear of dogs while spending time with their two dogs, Isa and Bo. We spent a lot of time riding bikes, talking, and getting to know each other better. We tried traditional Dutch dishes and sweets but also cooked beans for our host and made a potato pie that disappeared in the blink of an eye when we brought it to the picnic on Sunday, where everyone brought some of the food they had prepared themselves.*

Our young and old travellers continued their activities on Monday when they took part in a 6.5-kilometer-long walk during which they played different games to make their trip as interesting as possible. The children, including Amina and Amela, were especially happy to ride horses, which was a long-standing wish of most of our adventurers.



*Wednesday was reserved for the Efteling amusement park. Although this was the day with the greatest amount of responsibility, somehow everything well even though we were both stressed when we saw the "Baron" attraction. On the bus to Efteling, you could hear the courageous words of our "brave" heroes and the big promises of all the rides they would try out. The truth is, after going on the first ride, they already lost what little courage they had left, but that made our day easier. When we finished with the first attraction, of course, one of the scariest, we moved on to some relaxing ones, and the entire day was well-balanced.*



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Our scholarship holders spent Thursday in Amsterdam and had the opportunity to see some of the most famous locations and historical structures.

*Friday was especially eventful. In the evening, we went to a farewell dinner, where we learned that we had to wear costumes. Amela was to wear some funny clown-like clothes, while I was to wear a pink wig with a Hawaiian shirt. After the first musical point ended, they announced that the third point would be special and that "Three Sisters from Bosnia," a very famous band, would honour us with their presence. I applauded loudly, having no idea that one of those three sisters was me, and the other two were Peter and Amela. You can't even imagine my reaction at that moment. When we went on stage, they greeted us with laughs, so it was difficult for us to finish our choreography to the song "Lollypop". Still, we survived. Amela and I had the Saturday free to spend on our own, give gifts to the family that hosted us, and pack our bags.*

One of the most emotional and the saddest moments for each of our teams that had visited the Netherlands was parting with new friends and ending the adventure. Behind them remains a beautiful and unforgettable experience, and the road to their homes and parents lies ahead.



*We hugged our friends, got on the bus, hugged them a few more times after that, and headed back. We left the Netherlands with the hope that we had left at least a piece of our Bosnia there.*

We are happy that, year after year, we receive more and more beautiful, meaningful, but also emotional reports about the realization of the "Summer vacation in the Netherlands" project. We are especially looking forward to the children's smiles and joy because of everything they experienced and can tell their parents about. The Hastor Foundation thus weaved itself into their childhoods, threaded a thread of happiness, and remained inside them forever. These are our greatest successes, and we are extremely proud of each of them because they are special, and we cherish them as such. The photos we received from this and all other trips to the Netherlands are kept and inherited as our greatest treasure. They show fulfilled wishes, sincere children's joy, friendship, and love - in one word, the Hastor Foundation.



**Prepared by:** Amela Džidić and Amina Zorlak  
**Translated by:** Vedin Klovo and Nejra Galijašević



# SCHOLARSHIP HOLDER OF THE MONTH

Volunteering is a special aspect of human activity. Through this process, we express our humanity and empathy, show our willingness to work, help others, and that's way we build our community. Scholarship holders of the Hastor Foundation do this in a special way within the framework of a system that has proven to be very successful throughout all these years of the Foundation's existence. Every month, one of the scholarship holders is included among the best with his work, and this month it is our scholarship holder Džejla Alibašić.

## Džejla Alibašić

Džejla comes from Sarajevo. She is currently a student at the Faculty of Economics, University of Sarajevo, Department of Management, majoring in Business Analytics. She is in her third year of studies and has been a Foundation scholarship holder for six years. Džejla has been interested in economics since high school, so the Faculty of Economics was a completely logical choice for her.



When it comes to her volunteer engagement within the Hastor Foundation, Džejla had the opportunity to socialize with her mentors as a student, and later she took on the role of a mentor herself and continued to apply all the positive values she acquired as a student. Having become a mentor to younger scholarship holders, Džejla had many wonderful experiences, and she singles out mentoring a group of high school students who attended the School of Economics as the most special one. She points out that she had the opportunity to exchange opinions with them because they could often talk about what Džejla is studying and what the students are learning in high school. Their meetings were very rich and meaningful because they covered various topics and visited cultural institutions and many other places that Džejla as their mentor, thought they had to see and get to know.

Together with the other mentors, Džejla tried to bring animation and positive energy into every meeting. Although she volunteered as a mentor to younger scholarship holders for a very short time, Džejla used that time to make creative content and work in various ways to educate and expand her students' horizons.

She continued her volunteer work as a member of the monitoring team. She says that this period was very demanding, since the task of the members of this team is to monitor the effectiveness of meetings



# SCHOLARSHIP HOLDER OF THE MONTH

with younger scholarship holders and to help the mentors in their implementation. But, as she states, Džejla enjoyed watching the content that the mentors created for their groups, so she stayed at some meetings until the very end.

In addition to the already mentioned types of volunteering at the Foundation, Džejla had the desire and ambition to expand her knowledge and experience and became a member of the administrative team in the second year of her studies and is still there today. The administrative team of the Hastor Foundation is one of the most important teams whose members perform various and responsible tasks, and among them, regulation of work on the application, checking of announcements and reports received from scholarship holders volunteering in the field, and review of their annual plans and programs. They also communicate with current scholarship holders, their parents and a large number of candidates who are interested in our scholarship. Through volunteering in the administrative team, she learned a lot, made many acquaintances and, as she points out, became more responsible due to the seriousness of the tasks she performs. As a member of the administration who volunteers in the office, she gained freedom and good communication skills due to the already mentioned activities that this type of volunteer work at the Hastor Foundation entails. Precisely because of all the above, Džejla says that this type of volunteering is extremely important, since the Foundation has a large number of scholarship holders, but also interesting, considering the variety of tasks she performed. She points out that it is her pleasure to work with other members of the administration and help scholarship holders and their parents to solve their dilemmas and fulfil their obligations in the best possible way. She approaches tasks very seriously and is very happy to share her opinions with other colleagues, which is also one of the main determinants of the Foundation - getting to know others, getting to know yourself.

*The foundation helped me to build self-confidence, gain new acquaintances, but also to gain different and useful experiences. I also met my best friend at the Foundation, and I'm sure I'm not the only one who found special people in this environment who are always ready to help and support each other. It's nice to know that you have support for your whole life in someone, I found such support in the Hastor Foundation and I am grateful for everything it has given me so far.*

The opportunity to move forward, meet different people and perform different tasks is the best thing that the Foundation provides to its members, and she sees the results through their growth into mature and self-aware individuals ready to work on themselves and help the people around them, therefore she says to all other scholarship holders:

*Build your dreams boldly and courageously step towards their realization. Every new experience is also a life lesson from which you learn a lot for the future, and every new obstacle is just an opportunity to strengthen your will and desire for the success you are aiming for. And finally, be happy that you have the support of a community such as the Hastor Foundation, as I do myself.*

# RAM – RUBRIC OF ACTIVE YOUTH

The rubric of active youth is the space through which we present the most diligent scholarship holders of our Foundation every month. They are those who, day after day, strive to invest their time and energy in higher goals and thus improve themselves and their society. Just as RAM (working memory) is a part of a computer without which its work cannot even be imagined, so are our scholarship holders, who, in addition to volunteer activism within the Foundation, also work extremely diligently in their local communities and thus represent the Hastor Foundation and its mission, a part without which our work would certainly not be the same. RAM is a column dedicated to those who actively work every day to improve their society and improve themselves, therefore it is our pleasure to talk about one of them every month, and this time that honor went to Amra Pušina.

## Amra Pušina

Amra Pušina has been a scholarship holder of the Hastor Foundation for a little over a year, but even in such a short time, she managed to show her virtues, which can primarily be observed in her selflessness and desire to help others. Our Amra comes from Iljaš, a small place near Sarajevo, where she finished elementary school and high school. During her elementary and high school education, she achieved great success and participated in many sections and extracurricular activities. Her love for books and science, her desire to help and save human lives, and foster empathy and humanity are just some of the reasons why Amra decided to study medicine, and she is currently a fifth-year student at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Sarajevo. Years of work, effort and dedication gave results, so she was the recipient of the Dean's Pride award for being the best student of her generation four times in a row. Amra points out that the awards and recognitions she has won mean a lot to her, but that they are not a decisive factor in her success because she is a true lover of medicine, someone who enjoys learning, gaining knowledge, and every cognition fulfills her in a special way.



*To the students of my volunteer group, I often repeat a quote that intrigued me even as an elementary school student: "Everybody is a genius, but if you judge a fish by the ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that is incapable." A person is the most productive, the most creative, and the happiest when they are completely "immersed" in what they do. It is very important that we love what we do and do our best at that.*



# RAM – RUBRIC OF ACTIVE YOUTH



Amra often volunteers in the local community in the Association "Be My Friend", which operates in her municipality and gathers people of different ages with difficulties in mental and physical development. "Be My Friend" is a story about the courage, struggle, and immense love of a mother who founded the Association in 2006 to help her son with Down syndrome, as well as other parents and children who are in a similar situation. Aware of the fact that in the society we live in, there are numerous prejudices and stereotypes and that people with developmental disabilities are often labeled and marginalized, Amra wanted to somehow help and contribute to raising awareness of the importance of paying attention to people with disabilities and their inclusion in social life. The association "Be My Friend" was a great opportunity for this, however, Amra states that her friends from the Association helped her more instead. After a few hours spent with them, she feels rested and is always filled with positive energy. Every time they remind her again and again how everything beautiful in life fits into the heart and our small deed, sometimes just a smile and a warm word, can mean the whole world to someone.



*Being a scholarship recipient of the Hastor Foundation is a great honor and satisfaction. In addition to financial support, the Hastor Foundation creates a network of young, successful, hardworking, talented, and altruistic people who are there for each other, and promote knowledge, work, and perseverance, and only in this way can we build the future and initiate changes in the society in which we live. I made new friends, made many acquaintances, and I think that is the most valuable thing in the Hastor Foundation - the fact that in almost every city you have at least one person you know. For a year and a half, I have been mentoring younger scholarship holders who are students. The role of a mentor is exciting, but at the same time very responsible. I try to reach out to every student, support, motivate and inspire them to be better people. It makes me very happy when they complete the tasks at the end of our workshop and our meetings, and they often surprise me with their talents and skills. These are truly hard-working young people of whom I am immensely proud.*

Amra is just one of many scholarship recipients of the Hastor Foundation whose mission in life is to help others. We hope that her example will serve as an inspiration to other young people to get started and improve other people's lives with their activism because doing good gives good in return.

**Prepared by:** Amina Abaspahić  
**Translated by:** Vedin Klovo

# ALUMNI OF THE MONTH

The inspiring stories of our alumni, who carry the Hastor Foundation in their hearts even years after their last signed contracts, testify that the connection with the Foundation does not end with the end of education. If you ever wondered who edited the first version of the newsletter that you read every month, the answer lies in the story of this month's alumni who, as we will show below, is in many ways a special example of a Hastor Foundation scholarship holder.

## Enver Fejzović

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Enver became a scholarship holder of the Hastor Foundation in 2006 and therefore belongs to the first generation of our scholarship holders. He fondly remembers his interview for the scholarship where he met the teacher Ramo and Nermina Smajić who helped him to successfully fulfill his volunteering duties in the office and the field. From the moment he became a scholarship holder until the end of that status, Enver diligently and devotedly performed his volunteering duties and tried to do his best to advance the Foundation's mission and realize its idea of volunteer work in the best possible way. As the editor of the newsletter, he had the obligation to prepare and edit texts with six other scholarship holders. People who volunteered in the field shared their experiences from volunteering, from which the editorial staff created inspiring stories.

Our alumnus especially remembers his volunteering in the field. Volunteer work at that time meant 16 hours spent with students. He spent one weekend every month with his group in the town of Ilovača near Goražde. Since Enver lived in Visoko, he had to travel 150 km one way every time. Each trip required changing three buses. For two years, he volunteered like this, getting to know the city of Goražde and its residents, whom he says are truly special people who are ready to help at any time.

In addition to regular volunteering activities in which he helped students to master physics, mathematics, and foreign language material they also had free activities during which they played, socialized, and strengthened their bonds. He cites the weekend he spent visiting the oldest inhabitants of Ilovača with the rest of the scholarship holders as one of the more special meetings. As a sign of gratitude, the son of an old woman, who had just come from abroad for vacation, presented all the students with modest gifts. This gesture delighted Enver and was the reason that that weekend with the students remains deeply etched in his memory.

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# ALUMNI OF THE MONTH



*In addition to volunteering in the field, I also had the opportunity to volunteer in the office, where I most often performed tasks related to the scholarship holders' received documentation and responded to scholarship holders' letters. In addition to my regular schedule, whenever I had a break at university, I came to the office to volunteer, and it happened that I spent up to 50 hours in the office a month. My colleague Semir Mujkanović from Brčko was my competition and motivation to spend as much time as possible volunteering in the office. Our example is just one in a series of examples of scholarship holders of the Hastor Foundation who are each other's inspiration and motivation for daily progress. We saw each other as friends and role models, and today, reading about the current scholarship holders, I see that this is a trend that has been active throughout the years and remains the same, which is precisely what makes the Foundation and its team special. I am happy to see that the roles of me and my friends were inherited by new and more successful scholarship holders who continued to build and improve what we started in 2006.*

Workshops, educations, socializing, and material assistance are just some of the benefits that the Hastor Foundation provided to Enver. However, he singles out one acquaintance in particular that he made at the Foundation, and who made a mark on his entire life. Namely, he met his current wife, Ajla Čalaš from Goražde, at an art exhibition of works by scholarship holders of the Hastor Foundation. Ajla was also a scholarship holder, first as a high school student and later as a university student. In this way, Enver, as he points out, perpetuated his relationship with the Hastor Foundation, which is a special joy for him. The Foundation thus remained an important and special part of his life, which follows him, and he cherishes with great care.

Our former scholarship holders show us how the conditions and way of working have changed during all these years of the Hastor Foundation's existence. The number of scholarship holders has increased manifold, but the goal has always remained the same. Stories about strong friendships and lifelong loves are just one in a series of proofs of the special functioning of a community of people connected by one thing - the Hastor Foundation.



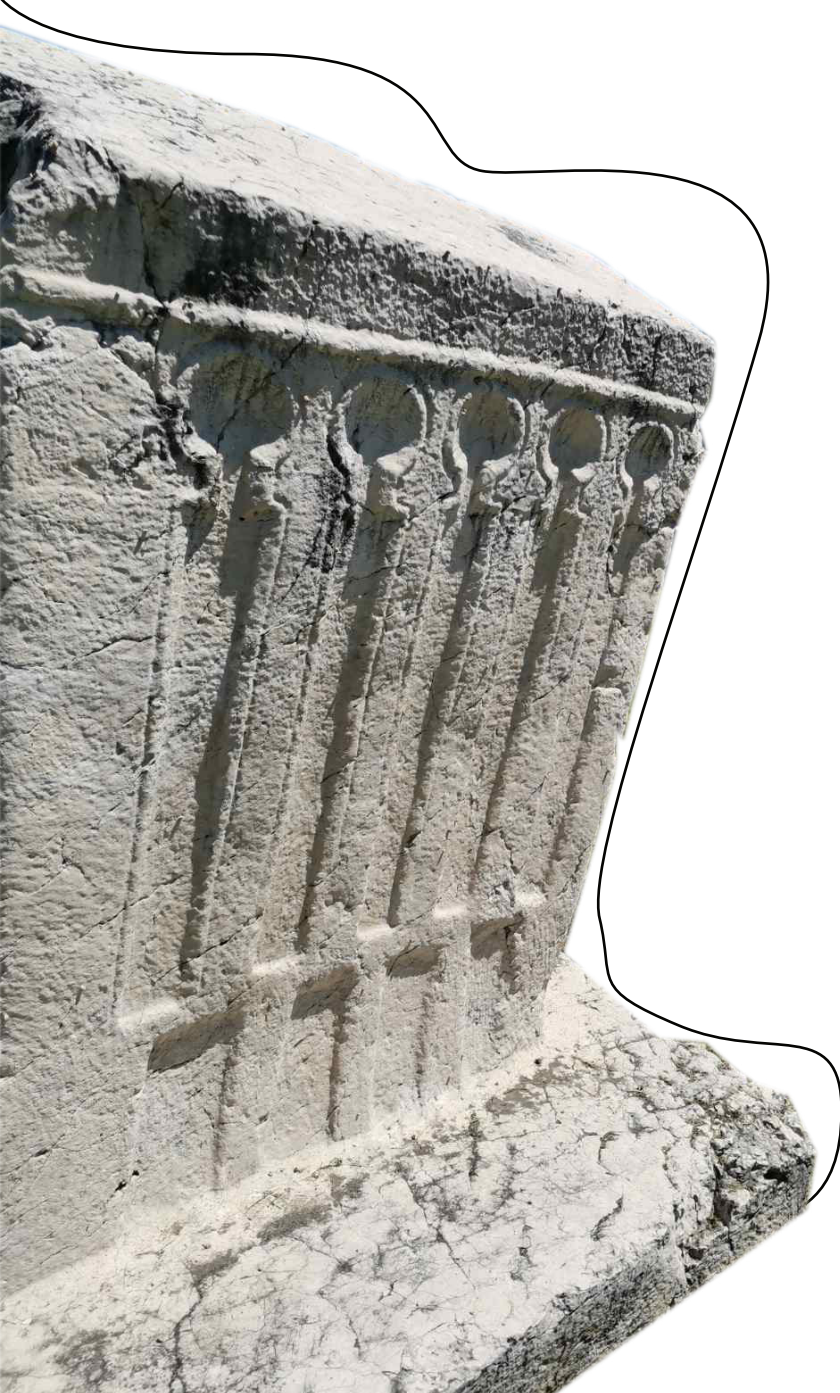
**Prepared by:** Nedžma Latić

**Translated by:** Nejra Galijašević

# CULTURAL HERITAGE

## Stećak as One of the Most Valuable Treasure of Bosnian Cultural Heritage

The current geographical area of Bosnia and Herzegovina went through different historical periods which left a large number of cultural and historic monuments that serve as symbols of the wealthy heritage this land contains. In this text, we bring you the story of stećci, the so-called stone sleepers, who evoke and depict the past with their epitaphs, drawings and other ornaments. In the next newsletter editions, we will also present numerous other landmarks and monuments from the cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



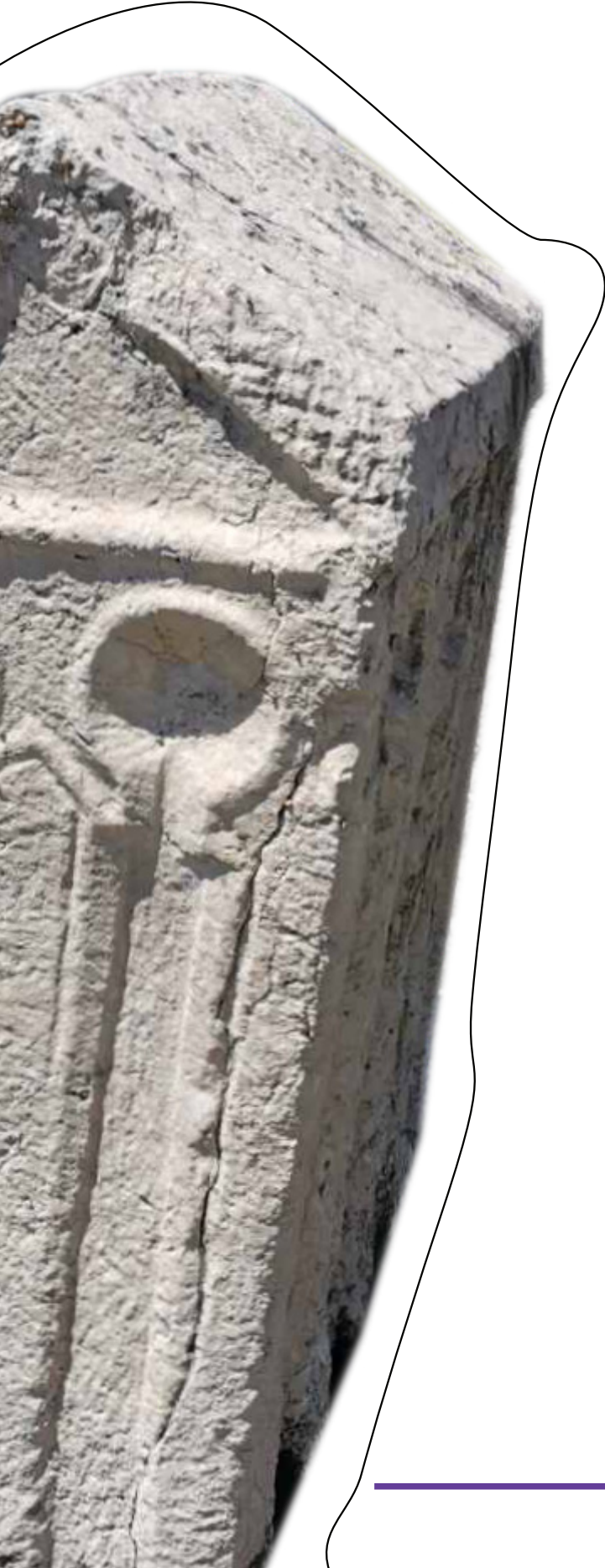
Stećak is the name for a tombstone specifically linked to the period of medieval Bosnia, which depicts the socio-political context within that period. An important trait of stećci is that they were almost always ornated, so through a contemporary perspective, they represent a very characteristic form of artistic expression from the period of medieval Bosnia. The original names of the gravestones were bilig, kam, zlamen, home, eternal home, while the most generally accepted and most frequently used name today is stećak – or plural, stećci. Stećci are rarely found individually, it is more common to find them in groups, in necropolises. From a historical perspective, they were first mentioned in 1530, in the travelogue of Benedikt Krupešić. Today, it is said that about 50 000 gravestones are preserved, while the same number was destroyed during the last two centuries. They are spread out throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, but they are also to be found in western Serbia, Montenegro and Dalmatia. In concurrent times, stećci are forgotten, neglected, destroyed, moved and devastated. The main reason for this behavior is the forgetfulness about their primary function, position and role in their time, as well as the inadequate valuation in the modern context.

The primary shapes of the stećci are horizontal and vertical monoliths. The vertical monuments include some variants such as stela, cippus, obelisk and nišan. Most of them are horizontal monuments which are found in three forms: plate, case and sarcophagus.



# CULTURAL HERITAGE

## Stećak as One of the Most Valuable Treasure of Bosnian Cultural Heritage



The appearance of the stećci as an architectural monumental gravestone form is directly connected with the economic potential of the Bosnian feudal society, or rather with the desire of certain individuals to show their prestige and power by using external landmarks on their gravesites. However, some of these stećci show the burials of poor farmers and maybe even serfs. The appearance of more stylish gravestones corresponds with the expansion of medieval Bosnia during the reign of Stjepan II and Tvrtko I.

The artistic elements are an important and indispensable part of these monumental medieval tombstones. They are implemented on the gravestones and every artistic expression tells a story of who lies below the stećak. Through the iconographic reading of these ornaments, we can find out about many things and return to the mystical medieval period to discern how people lived in Bosnia. The stećci are a "portal" to the past through which we enter in the world of rulers and knights, vassals and followers, as well as noble ladies watching the tournaments; they are the symbol of war and warriors and inscriptions about those who gave their lives serving their lords, through them we enter into the consciousness of medieval dancers, we watch the hunting scenes, as well as the real and imaginary animal realm, the crosses as a symbol of the Christian faith, as well as a world of different expressions and architectonic elements. In this way, the stećci are a complex visual and narrative communication of the European collective heritage. Moreover, it is important to mention that in many cases, the tombstones were decorated with artistic elements of the area in which they were made.

The stećci contain gothic and Romanesque motives, tournament motives, festivity motives and more. They tell us how the medieval man lived; so we must first seek to preserve them as the cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina and learn more about them. As Mak Dizdar wrote: "Stećak means to me what not for others, what on and in it others were not able or did not know to see. It is stone but also is the word, it's an earth but also is the sky, it's the matter but also is the spirit, it is a scream but also is the song, it is death but yet is a life, it is the past, but also is the future."

**Prepared by:** Amina Abaspahić  
**Translated by:** Ešref Mehanović

# LETTER OF APPRECIATION

My dear and valued Hastor Foundation,

I am writing to you after a long time because I feel that I am obliged to thank you for the help provided and the opportunity to be your scholarship holder. I remember when our dear teacher Ramo and his late wife unexpectedly visited my family and me before I started the third grade of high school. While I was riding my bike, the teacher stopped me and asked where Amela Pezer's house was, and I excitedly said that it was me. In his endearing manner, he told me to take him to my house. My family and I had a difficult period behind us, we experienced a shock for the whole family, so that teacher's arrival was a light that gave me hope, but also comfort that it was God's provision and reward for the ordeal suffered.

That day, my application for the Hastor Foundation scholarship was in the teacher's hands. When we met and talked about the situation at the school, the teacher said that we would be invited to the signing of the contract, which would be held in our municipality. I was in disbelief that out of so many requests and excellent students, I was given the opportunity to be part of the Hastor Foundation family. Since then and to this day, I proudly say that I am part of that family.

Throughout my high school education, the Foundation was with me both through financial aid and through support on my way to build myself as a mature and educated person. After high school, I enrolled in college and continued heading in the same direction. New environment, new habits, everything was new, and with that, my first-time leading volunteer meetings. At the very beginning, it was difficult to coordinate everything and adapt, but my family, especially my parents who were always by my side, showed me support and encouraged me to continue fulfilling my obligations responsibly and with dedication to overcome the obstacles that come my way. As the volunteer hours passed one after the other, it was getting easier and nicer for me. I eagerly awaited the next meeting. The meetings of scholarship students in Sarajevo were special in their own way, we learned and met new people from various parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thank you for that, Foundation. I finished my undergraduate studies with the great help of the Hastor Foundation, and I must point out that I am really happy about that, I could turn to the Foundation whenever I needed someone's help and, of course, that help was never lacking. Thanks to God, my patience, knowledge, my parents and the Hastor Foundation, I finished my undergraduate education in the best possible time. I earned a degree in economics and graduated with the desire to continue and expand my education.

The Foundation was also there during the holidays, so I had the opportunity to do part-time internships in the field of insurance and in the bank. I enriched my CV with those experiences and volunteer activities in the field. In September, after completing my undergraduate studies, I enrolled in a master's degree at the Faculty of Economics in Zenica. In the same period, I did an internship in an accounting service and gained new knowledge and skills. I have almost finished my master's studies, and I finished those obligations in the best possible time, except for one - writing a master's thesis.

At the same time when I passed the master's studies exams and slowly began to shape the theme of my master's thesis, I took an important step in my life. I decided to marry my chosen one. I am currently an employee in an accounting service, and I am in the phase of preparing my master's thesis.

Foundation, for me you were a guide to the realization of my dreams, you represented motivation for progress both professionally and personally. Volunteer meetings helped me to become independent, to be a socially responsible person, they helped me to build my personality, to be more committed to taking responsibility and in many other things. Whenever I have the opportunity to mention you, I am happy to do so. Thank you, Foundation, for everything you have done for me, I still feel like a member of this family. In the hope that I learned from you how to help people in need, I will try to do it in the future as well, thank you very much for everything.

I express my great gratitude to teacher Ramo, director Seid Fijuljanin and dear Amela Dedić.

Amela Pezer-Mujkić

**Translated by:** Amelina Čejvan







# POETRY CORNER

## *Memories*

Time is taking quick steps  
Every pleasant and unpleasant moment there was  
Only left behind are dim memories  
Of moments lost in time

Sometimes you reflect on the past  
Imagine what could've been  
Take a few steps back  
And the old memories come flooding

The visualized images overwhelm you like an avalanche  
Evoking memories of the past  
Love, grief, sadness or happiness  
Now only followed by nostalgia

Then finally you get it—everything will someday be past  
And old memories can't be brought back  
And that you need to go through life with courage  
And make new memories along the way.

*Aldina Hadžić*

**Translated by:** Said Kamenica



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