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Cross-Border Cooperation under the Umbrella Project Entitled “Borderland Culture as a Bridge for the Integration of Local Communities in the Euroregion Bug” Implemented by the Association of Local Governments of the Euroregion Bug

Introduction

The aim of the article is to present the possibilities of cooperation with the Euroregion Bug on the example of micro-projects in the Programme period 2007–2013 on the example of the umbrella project “Borderland culture as a bridge for the integration of local communities in the Euroregion Bug”.

Support financed by the European Regional Development Fund is a special type of intervention in the framework of cross-border policy due to the large amount of funds, the specificity of the implementation system and the complexity of procedures. For this reason, its effectiveness is greater than the methods of cross-border cooperation before Poland’s accession to the European Union. The implementation of the projects of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland–Belarus–Ukraine 2007–2013 has been highly effective due to harnessing the experience and good practices of previously completed programmes.

The analysis of data concerning the spending of the aforementioned funds has been prepared with the help of information obtained from Euroregion Bug reports, Joint Technical Secretariat of Cross-Border Cooperation Programme

Poland–Belarus–Ukraine and other studies, independent reports, own research based on data obtained from current professional work and experience.

In the years 2007–2013, Poland–Belarus–Ukraine Cross-Border Cooperation was implemented as part of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). Support from the EU budget increased significantly to over EUR 170 million and 117 projects were implemented by means of these funds. These were large infrastructural, regular and umbrella projects. They have resulted in significant progress in such sectors and areas as: social infrastructure, health care, education, tourism, protection of cultural heritage, security as well as infrastructure and service of border crossings.

In terms of budget, the Poland–Belarus–Ukraine Programme is the largest cross-border programme on the land borders of the European Union. The grants will co-finance projects focused on the protection and promotion of cross-border cultural and natural heritage, increasing the infrastructure accessibility of regions, improving infrastructure, procedures and service of border crossings.

The Programme's strategy was adopted as a result of a socio-economic analysis commissioned by the Managing Authority, in which common priorities at the national and regional level of the participating countries and their regions were identified. It is also based on experience from previous programming periods. The Programme's strategy also takes into account the views of stakeholders regarding common needs and challenges in the Programme area. In addition, it reflects the decisions made by the Polish authorities of Belarus and Ukraine, focusing the Programme's attention on these thematic areas, in which participating countries can solve common problems and use shared resources.

1. Association of Local Governments of the Euroregion Bug – genesis and cross-border cooperation

The Euroregion Bug Cross-border Association¹, which exists since 1995, brings together the Lublin Voivodeship in Poland, the Brest region in Belarus, the Volyn region and two areas from the Lviv region in Ukraine². The association was established in September 1995 in Lutsk (Ukraine) on the initiative of the governors of: Chełm (Marian Cichosz), Lublin (Edward Hunk), Zamość

¹ E. Małecka, M. Czekał, *Euroregiony na granicach Polski 2007*, Urząd Statystyczny we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2007, pp. 145–154.

² J. Polski, *Strategia rozwoju euroregionu. Euroregion Bug*, t. 16, Norbertinum, Lublin 1997, pp. 28–34.

(Stanisław Rapa) and Tarnobrzeg (Paweł Stawowy), and the Chairman of the Volyn State Administration, Borys Klimczuk³.

The Euroregion Bug, covering an area of 80.9 thousand km², is one of the largest European Euroregions. The Polish part is 31.1%, Ukrainian – 28.4% and Belarusian – 40.5%. In 2011, the Euroregion Bug was inhabited by 4802.1 thousand people (45.2% of Poles, 29.0% of Belarusians and 25.8% of Ukrainians).

The largest cities are: Lublin (348.6 thousand inhabitants), Brest (320.9 thousand), Lutsk (210.0 thousand), Baranavichy (169.9 thousand) and Pinsk (134.2 thousand). In addition, in the Euroregion there are six other large cities, with the number of residents ranging from 50 to 100 thousand. The highest rate of urbanization is characteristic of the Belarusian part (67.2%), in the Polish and Ukrainian part the share of rural population prevails, and the urbanization rate was 46.5% and 49.3%, respectively.

On November 18, 1999, an initiative was launched to create the Association of Local Governments of the Euroregion Bug. The founders of the Association were: Lubelskie Voivodeship, represented by Arkadiusz Bratkowski (Marshal of the Lubelskie Voivodeship), County Office in Chełm, represented by Adam Rychliczek (*Starosta* of Chełm) and the Włodawa Commune represented by Kazimierz Nielepiuk (Head of Włodawa Commune). On April 3, 2000, the District Court in Lublin issued a decision on SSERB (*Stowarzyszenie Samorządów Euroregionu Bug*) registration.

According to the Statute, the Association's activity is financed from membership fees (commune, powiat and voivodeship local governments), and the aim is to inspire, support and coordinate cross-border cooperation between local governments⁴, local communities and administrative authorities from border areas along the Bug River border. On April 27, 2000, the First General Meeting was held, during which the Board of the Association was elected: Marek Tęcza (president), Edward Hunek and Adam Rychliczek (vice presidents), Arkadiusz Bratkowski, Krzysztof Szydłowski, Janusz Szpak, Tadeusz Sawicki, Mirosław Złomaniec (members). In September 2001, the ERB Local Governments Association was entered into the National Register of Associations. At present, 73 local governments belong to the SSERB.

Funds for SSERB's activities come from the contributions of associated local governments and supporting self-governments, while all pro-development

³ M. Bałtowski, *Regiony, euroregiony, rozwój regionalny. Euroregion Bug*, t. 4, Norbertinum, Lublin 1996, pp. 140–144.

⁴ R. Koszyk-Białobrzeska, R. Kisiel, *Euroregionalna współpraca i integracja na przykładzie Euroregionu Bałtyk*, Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski, Olsztyn 2008, p. 28.

cross-border projects undertaken in the Euroregion⁵ area were implemented with the aid of European funds, including: Small Projects⁶ Fund within the National PHARE⁷ Programme “Polish Eastern Border” and the Neighborhood Programme Poland–Belarus–Ukraine INTERREG IIIA/Tacis CBC⁸, Poland–Belarus–Ukraine 2007–2013 Cross-Border Cooperation Programme implemented as part of ENPI, which was a continuation and extension of cooperation in border areas of those three countries.

Cooperation between local and regional administration, various institutions, schools, non-governmental organizations and people in the region covered by the Programme required improvement in order to implement and fully use the social and economic potential of the region. The Programme was based on good practices developed during the implementation of the Poland–Belarus–Ukraine Neighborhood Programme INTERREG IIIA/Tacis CBC 2004–2006 and focused on increasing competitiveness and improving the quality of life in the Programme area by supporting entrepreneurship and development of the main transport and environmental infrastructure⁹.

2. Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland–Belarus–Ukraine 2007–2013. Priority 3. Network cooperation and local community initiatives. Measure 3.2. Initiatives of local communities in the context of the Euroregion Bug

The Association of Local Government Euroregion Bug implemented the Umbrella Project no. IPBU.03.02.00-06-828/12 entitled “Cross-border culture as a bridge for the integration of local communities in the Euroregion Bug” started on 1 January 2014 and ended on 31 December 2015. One of the objectives of the Programme was to encourage local initiatives and support them in various areas among people and communities of neighboring border areas in order to build good relations and create the basis for further development of cooperation.

⁵ L. Roszkowska, R. Roszkowski, *Rozwój współpracy transgranicznej na granicach Polski na przykładzie Euroregionu Pradziad*, Stowarzyszenie Gmin Polskich Euroregionu Pradziad, Prudnik 2007, pp. 7–14.

⁶ *Program Sąsiedztwa Polska–Białoruś–Ukraina INTERREG IIIA/Tacis CBC 2004–2006. Uzupełnienie programu*, Warszawa 2005.

⁷ J. Tkaczyński, G. Rossmann, *Fundusze Unii Europejskiej*, Temida, Białystok 2003, pp. 67–70.

⁸ *Program Sąsiedztwa Polska–Białoruś–Ukraina...*

⁹ R. Goździk, *Zasady finansowania projektów ze środków unijnych w Polsce w latach 2007–2013*, VERBA, Lublin 2009, p. 185.

The overall objective of the call for proposals under examination was to achieve the objectives of the Programme by supporting projects within the priority of the third Programme, namely: network cooperation, as well as local community initiatives. The detailed purpose of this call for proposals was to support local community initiatives under Measure 3.2 Local communities' initiatives. Its general purpose was social, scientific, educational and cultural integration of the border area. The development of cross-border interpersonal contacts and social initiatives as well as scientific and educational cooperation, cultural and sports events were supported. Cross-border cooperation of schools and universities was supported, including exchange of students, pupils, teachers and scientists, organization of conferences and scientific seminars.

Projects targeted at the development of social initiatives, cultural and sports events could be co-financed. The support was given to projects of local communities, including those aimed at promoting and maintaining common traditions of border areas. Conditions were created to facilitate mutual contacts between cross-border communities. Support was also given to activities aimed at cultivating cultural diversity, supporting national minorities as well as broadly understood development of civil society and local communities.

The communities inhabiting the Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian border area are connected by cultural and historical ties. However, despite the significant development of cooperation, it is still important to overcome cultural, psychological and language barriers. It is important to create new connections by supporting cross-border cooperation between various entities, the effect of which was further integration. An important element of such connections are city networks. Such activities will contribute to strengthening the sense of identity of the inhabitants of the area, mutual understanding and breaking down existing barriers. Developing cooperation on many levels, including educational and cultural area, allowed for broadening knowledge about the region, including its cultural and economic diversity, leading to further integration of local communities.

The total amount of co-financing planned in the scope of the call for proposals analyzed was EUR 6,654,291.98. Each grant under the call for proposals had to be between EUR 225,000 and EUR 900,000 under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)¹⁰.

¹⁰ A. Szymańska, *Jak przygotować dobry wniosek czyli jak skutecznie pozyskiwać fundusze unijne 2007–2013*, Drukarnia Wydawnictw Naukowych, Warszawa 2008, p. 13.

As part of co-financing, umbrella projects¹¹ were treated as priority with a total budget exceeding EUR 350,000 and with a balanced distribution of costs between partners. Co-financing covered up to 90% of eligible costs¹² in projects. Association of Local Governments of the Euroregion Bug as part of the project entitled “Borderland culture as a bridge for the integration of local communities in the Euroregion Bug” has achieved the main objective of the project, which was to support the local communities' initiatives of the Euroregion Bug Cross-border Association to maintain common cultural traditions. The project pursued specific objectives, including:

1. Integration of the Polish-Ukrainian border area and deepening cooperation through the development of cross-border contacts and initiatives of local communities in the field of culture¹³ and maintaining common cultural traditions.

2. Promoting local culture and traditions of the Goraj Commune and the Sabolottia Commune.

3. Cultural integration of the Euroregion Bug area through the creation of a Cross-Border E-Center of Cooperation Lublin–Lutsk.

4. Popularization and mutual promotion of tradition, folk and culinary culture as well as artistic achievements with reference to cooperation between local communities of the Polish-Ukrainian border.

5. Intensifying cooperation and maintaining common cultural traditions between the communities of Tomaszów Lubelski in Poland and Rava Ruska in Ukraine.

6. Raising awareness of the local community from the area of the cross-border commune of Werbkowice and the city of Ugniv, through maintaining and spreading the cultural heritage of the region in the form of workshops, outdoor staging of the ritual event and promotional tools.

7. Development of cooperation between Polish and Belarusian cultural and scientific institutions for the maintenance and popularization of common cultural traditions in the border region of Wisznice–Brest.

¹¹ The umbrella project is a project in which there is one lead partner (beneficiary) and many other partners. Each of the partners implements a specific part of the project (the so-called micro-project); Guidelines for applicants: European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. Poland–Belarus–Ukraine Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013, Guidelines for Applicants, valid for the third call for proposals, Measure 3.2 “Local Communities Initiative”.

¹² Qualified cost; more in: Guidelines for applicants – Measure 3.2 “Local community initiatives”, pp. 7–22.

¹³ I. Ksenicz, *Od reformy do reformy? Współpraca władz lokalnych i regionalnych Polski i Ukrainy w latach 1999–2014*, Pracownia Wydawnicza Andrzej Zabwarny, Zalesie Górne 2018, pp. 177–178.

8. Presentation and popularization of folk culture of the local communities of the Bug River borderland.

9. Raising the awareness of border residents about the cultural diversity of Euroregion Bug.

10. Support and development of cooperation between Lublin and Lviv in the field of culture through comprehensive activities enabling proper preparation and implementation of joint cross-border projects.

11. Inspiration, preservation and promotion of rural cultural traditions of the Ukrainian-Polish border.

The selection of specific objectives was adapted to the planned activities, which were proposed by the stakeholders of individual activities included in the umbrella project. Final beneficiaries of the umbrella project (target groups)¹⁴ were: residents of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine from Łęczna, Tomaszów Lubelski, Łaszczów, Werbkowice, Wisznice, Włodawa, Gmina Goraj, Włodawa, Ruda-Huta, Brest, Lutsk, Kovel, Zhovkva, Rava Ruska, Ugniv, Shatsk and the municipality of Sabolottia. In total, more than 1,000,000 people.

The project was consistent and fully implemented the objectives of Priority 3. Network cooperation and initiatives of local communities and Measures 3.2. Initiatives of local communities of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland–Belarus–Ukraine 2007–2013. The implementation of a wide-spread cross-border undertaking, consisting of 11 grassroots initiatives, positively influenced the integration of the Polish-Ukrainian-Belarusian border area. It was important for deepening cooperation through the development of cross-border contacts and initiatives of local communities in the field of culture and maintaining common cultural traditions.

An umbrella cross-border project contributed to deepening and strengthening the existing partnership cooperation between local governments and non-governmental organizations and enabled its further development as part of the exchange of experiences and mutual direct cooperation, mainly institutions promoting culture and art, administration, as well as close cooperation between creators and artists – people involved in cultural activities on a daily basis. The activities carried out have contributed to the consolidation of conditions and the consolidation of foundations for direct contacts at various levels and thus created a basis for lasting cooperation in the social, educational, cultural, administrative and institutional dimension, both between institutions and the

¹⁴ “Target groups” are groups/entities directly impacted by action at the level of the objective, and “final beneficiaries” are those who benefit from the action in the long term at the level of society.

inhabitants of the border area. The project showed the need for social participation at the lowest level – an individual – which, in turn, triggered the desire to continue mutual contacts in the future. In a precise way, it facilitated mutual learning, understanding, and, at the same time, the penetration of cultures, views, exchange of thoughts, liquidation of xenophobia, mutual prejudices and stereotypes, which in consequence led to overcoming cultural, psychological or linguistic barriers. High quality and attractiveness of cultural heritage and traditions, as well as a large untapped potential of residents facilitated the organization of joint ventures which helped to remove barriers in contacts between the Polish-Ukrainian cross-border region.

3. Umbrella project “Borderland culture as a bridge for the integration of local communities in the Euroregion Bug” – analysis of project activities

The umbrella project “Borderland culture as a bridge for the integration of local communities in the Euroregion Bug” consisted of 11 micro-projects:

Micro-project no. 1 entitled “Łęczna and Kovel – cross-border towns of two traditions and cultures”, in which the Lead Partner of micro-project was the Cultural Center in Łęczna constitutes part of the programme implementation. The amount of co-financing from the European Union amounted to EUR 39,445.69, and the project partner¹⁵ was the Executive Committee of the Kovel Municipal Council of Volyn Region, Ukraine. As part of the micro-project, two outdoor events took place. Łęczyński Fair, a two-day cultural event with the participation of artists and creators from Łęczna and Kovel, aimed at developing artistic contacts between creative communities. In addition, they were designed to promote, to know and to better understand the tradition and culture of twin cities. Festival of two cultures in Kovel, a 2-day cultural event with artists from Łęczna and Kovel. The festival was another common cultural event that initiated the organization of joint initiatives of the local community of Łęczna and Kovel in the field of culture and the cultivation of tradition. The product of the project was a joint bilingual publication (Polish, Ukrainian) containing texts on the implementation of a common cross-border micro-project supplemented by photographic documentation¹⁶.

Another implemented activity was the micro-project no. 2 entitled “Let’s meet culturally – cooperation between the Goraj commune and the Sabolottia

¹⁵ M. Domiter, A. Marciszewska, *Zarządzanie projektami unijnymi. Teoria i praktyka*, Del-fin, Warszawa 2013, pp. 134–143.

¹⁶ Culture Centre in Łęczna, *Łęczna* – publication within the project, p. 27

commune”, in which the Goraj Commune was the Lead Partner. The project received co-financing worth EUR 17,300.05, and the project partner was the Commune of Sabolottia from Ukraine. As part of the project, the Gorajski Festival of Brass Bands in Goraj took place during which a band marching from the Goraj commune and the Ukrainian commune of Sabolottia, performances of these orchestras, contests concerning the culture and traditions of the region and the PL-BY-UA Programme were planned. The outcome of the festival was greater interest of the participants in the cultural heritage of the Goraj commune and attention to cultural values of Sabolottia commune. Two-day culinary workshops were organized in the Sabolottia commune. On the first day, the products of the Sabolottia¹⁷ commune were prepared, on the second day, there was a joint tasting of dishes in the open air together with dances and singing of local songs. A similar event was also organized on the Polish side. Workshops “Gorajskie delicacies” were combined with a family picnic. At the workshops on the Polish side, participants had the opportunity to taste dishes from the Goraj commune, such as: buckwheat groats, onion bread and onion soup.

The next micro-project (no. 3) was entitled “Cross-border E-Center for Cultural Cooperation Lublin–Lutsk”. The Lead Partner was the Institute of Public Administration in Lublin. A project of EUR 43,188.42 was carried out in partnership with the Lutsk City Office in Ukraine. As part of the micro-project, the Cross-Border E-Center of Cultural Cooperation Lublin–Lutsk was established. A joint Internet portal was created in Polish, Ukrainian and English, on which all cultural initiatives from the Euroregion Bug area were presented. They became an inspiration to create new ideas for spending free time and organizing cultural activities in this area. The portal included such areas as: cultural events, cultural heritage, science, business, local government. In addition, the portal had a cooperation forum, accommodation and catering facilities¹⁸. As part of the micro-project, training for local governments was organized – cultural competence trainer, organized to increase the number of common cross-border cultural initiatives in the Euroregion Bug. A Polish-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation strategy in the field of culture was also developed¹⁹.

¹⁷ Goraj Commune, *Goraj and Sobolottia Commune* – publication within the project, pp. 5–12.

¹⁸ M. Furtak-Niczyporuk, T. Lenartowicz, O. Łaba, M. Rudzki, *Strategia polsko-ukraińskiej współpracy transgranicznej w obszarze kultury*, Instytut Spraw Administracji Publicznej, Lublin–Lutsk 2014.

¹⁹ J. Niczyporuk, *Cross-Border Polish-Ukrainian Cultural Cooperation in the Bug Euroregion*, Instytut Spraw Administracji Publicznej, Lublin 2014, pp. 121–129.

In the next micro-project initiative, no. 4 “Meeting with Tradition, Culture and Cuisine of the Polish-Ukrainian Borderland”, the Lead Partner was the Commune Culture Center in Łaszczów. The value of co-financing from the European Union amounted to EUR 32,193.24. The partner of the project was Zhovkva District State Administration from Ukraine. As part of the micro-project, two-day creative workshops were organized – “Save from oblivion”, both on the Polish and Ukrainian side. The workshops were intended to preserve and cultivate the rich cultural traditions associated with the cycle of celebration on both sides of the border, focusing primarily around Christmas and Easter. During the workshops, the participants, under the supervision of trainers, made traditional Christmas tree decorations as well as Easter eggs and Easter palms. The project also included the organization of a two-day culinary workshop “Cuisine of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland” on both sides of the border²⁰. These workshops served to nurture regional cultural traditions, combining the presentation of regional cuisine, attention to tradition and cultural heritage, as well as the integration of local communities on the border. As part of the micro-project, two bilingual publications were published (in Polish and Ukrainian). Publication with recipes – *Regional Cuisine of the Polish-Ukrainian Borderland* – contained materials collected during culinary workshops, traditional recipes from regions participating in the micro-project. It also included photographic documentation. The second publication was the volume of Polish-Ukrainian poetry, *Written with a Heart*, containing a collection of 20 poems (10 from Poland and 10 from Ukraine)²¹. As part of the book’s promotion, poetry evenings were held during which poems were presented by regional poets, both in Poland and in Ukraine.

Micro-project no. 5 was entitled “Cross-border colors of Roztocze – cooperation between Tomaszów Lubelski and Rava Ruska”. The Lead Partner was the City of Tomaszów Lubelski. The co-financing amount was EUR 35,956.36. The project was implemented in partnership with Rava Ruska Municipal Committee from Ukraine. The activities carried out in this micro-project included, among others, the organization of ethnographic workshops in the field of sculpture, traditional dance, beliefs, folk magic and pottery on the Polish and Ukrainian side. The workshops were conducted by Polish and Ukrainian trainers – with particular emphasis on common elements connecting both cultures. The workshop resulted in products and presentations demonstrated at the Roztocze Color Fair

²⁰ Commune Culture Centre in Łaszczów, *Regional Cuisine of the Polish-Ukrainian Border*, Fotpress, Zamość 2015.

²¹ Commune Centre of Culture in Łaszczów, Polish-Ukrainian poetry volume, *Written with a Heart*, Fotpress, Zamość 2014.

and a publication including photographic documentation, a description of the workshops and the most important places related to the culture of Tomaszów Lubelski and Rawa Ruska. The publication was made in three languages: Polish, Ukrainian and English²². Another event within the micro-project was a cultural event in Tomaszów Lubelski – Border Fair: Colors of Roztocze. It referred to the tradition of organized fairs, which were visited by numerous buyers and artists from many parts of Poland and Europe. The event included, among others, handicrafts demonstrations, presentation of regional dishes and demonstrations of regional artists.

As regards micro-project no. 6 – “Let’s rebuild things in our imagination that no longer exist and let’s complete the picture of reality” – the Lead Partner was the Werbkowice Commune. Co-financing under the project amounted to EUR 37,016.98. Project was implemented with a Ukrainian partner: Ugniv City Council. As part of the micro-project the following events took place: stationary and field workshops “Live lessons” – eight-day workshops on the Polish side and on the Ukrainian side. The aim of the workshop was to provide knowledge (theoretical and practical) related to ceremonial customs, traditional crafts, ceremonial art, presenting and maintaining local traditions, taking into account the differences and similarities in their celebration. The range of workshops includes: native folk culture/customs (Slavic rituals, Christmas and ceremonial calendar, for example, Christmas, Jare Gody [Slavic spring equinox festival], Kupala’s Night, Harvest Festival) and showing ritual elements in modern holidays. Outdoor staging of ritual events was based on a script prepared during the workshops. During the presentation, the audience could receive the amulets hand-made by the participants of the micro-project, take part in ritual contests, other activating elements of the event such as parades, dances, songs, and ceremonies. Traditions, rituals and customs presented during the event contributed to the development and improvement of knowledge about local traditions²³.

Micro-project no. 7 “Where is the source... – musical culture of the borderland between Poland and Belarus” was worth EUR 42,454.75. The partner of the project was the Cultural Branch of Brest region from Belarus. Micro-project’s Lead Partner was the Commune Center for Culture and Education in Wisznice. The first cultural event envisaged in the micro-project was a review of folk bands of the borderland between Poland and Belarus. Young music bands inspired by ancient folk music were invited to the review to present their work and make

²² Town Hall in Tomaszów Lubelski, *Barwy Roztocza*, Fotpress, Zamość 2014, p. 22.

²³ Werbkowice Commune, *We will rebuild in the imagination things that are no longer there and fill them with the image of reality*, pp. 11–12.

contact with folk bands. As part of the implemented micro-project there were folk singing workshops for borderland musicians. The workshop was attended by participants selected from Polish and Belarusian artists presenting their work at the review of folk groups. Polish and Belarusian members of music bands had the opportunity to train their folk singing skills under the supervision of professional instructors. During the workshops, the participants deepened their knowledge about the old folk music of the borderland, improved their vocal skills, and also had the opportunity to exchange experiences and skills not only between Polish and Belarusian participants but also between generations. During the review, a panel of experts in the field of linguistics, ethnography and anthropology of the culture of the borderlands of Poland and Belarus from the University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska in Lublin and the University of Brest carried out scientific research on early borderland music. The task of experts was to collect materials and develop a songbook of unique, disappearing and endangered folk songs (texts and music scores) from this area. An important element of the micro-project was the Polish-Belarusian youth exchange. The youth underwent the “Young Culture Manager” training during which they learned professional organization of cultural events. To check the acquired skills, the participants of the training co-organized the Festival of Borderland Music and a conference summarizing the micro-project. During the Festival of Borderland Music, the bands participating in singing workshops presented their skills. Each of the bands presented works inspired by the culture and traditions of the borderland of Poland and Belarus²⁴.

In another micro-project no. 8 – “Folklore and Folk Art of the Bug River Borderland” – the Włodawa Commune was the Lead Partner. The value of co-financing from the European Union was estimated at EUR 41,447.30. The partner in the project was the Department of Culture and Tourism of the Shatsk Administration from Ukraine. As part of micro-project in Poland, there were workshops “Nadbużańskie borderland of culture, tradition and nations”. These were sculpture and painting workshops as well as weaving and folk embroidery. The workshops were intended to convey knowledge about the tradition of Bug folk handicraft, to familiarize with the authentic values of folk culture and to teach practical skills in selected fields of art. The next measure envisaged in the micro-project was the organization of two fairs on the Bug River Folklore “My Little Border”, on the Polish side in the village of Orchówek and on the Ukrainian side in Shatsk. The fairs were aimed at the popularization and broad

²⁴ F. Czyżewski, A. Dudek-Szumigaj, M. Żygalova, *Gdzie bije źródło...: pieśni ludowe pogranicza Polski i Białorusi*, Polihymnia, Gminny Ośrodek Kultury i Oświaty, Lublin–Wisznice 2015, pp. 279–280.

presentation of folklore, handicrafts and cuisine of the Bug River borderland, as well as integration of communities on both sides of the border. As part of the micro-project, a publication entitled *My Little Borderland*, which is a cultural folder containing a description of the traditions and folklore of the Bug River on the Polish-Ukrainian borderland, was published, and a four-minute film spot *Bug River Culture Borderland, Traditions and Nations* promoting folklore of the Bug River on the Polish-Ukrainian borderland was provided. The spot was made public on YouTube, micro-project partners' websites and tourist portals.

The micro-project no. 9 "The revival and preservation of folk traditions in the organization of local festivals and rites of the Cross-Border Union «Euroregion Bug»" is a project that received the co-funding in the amount of EUR 3,009.86. It was implemented in partnership with the Chelm Local Action Group from Poland. The Lead Partner of the micro-project was the Brest Regional Agro-Economic Union. Within this micro-project, a Polish-Belarusian culinary competition "Tastes of Polesie" was held for the owners of agritourism farms. The materials and photos collected during the competition formed a bilingual publication (Polish, Russian) presenting little known, traditional recipes of the cuisine from the Polish-Belarusian border²⁵. There were also two open-air events: "Dożynki" on the Polish side and "Koniki" on the Belarusian side. During outdoor events, participants had the opportunity to learn about the traditions and customs of the Polish-Belarusian borderland and to participate in rituals related to the tradition and culture of both countries. Both events were filmed and broadcast on television in Poland and Belarus.

Micro-project no. 10 was entitled "Professionalization of cultural sector personnel from Lublin and Lviv in the field of project management". The Municipality of Lublin was the Lead Partner. The amount of co-financing was EUR 44,948.70. The project partner established the Municipal Institution "City Institute" Lviv in Ukraine. As part of the micro-project, accredited training in the PRINCE2 methodology at the Foundation level was carried out along with exams in Lublin and Lviv. The organization of the training together with the exam was aimed at raising the level of knowledge and competences of the staff involved in the implementation of cultural projects in Lublin and Lviv. The training was carried out by a company accredited in this area and was completed with an exam and relevant certificates obtained by the participants. The micro-project was also aimed at developing, publishing and distributing a publication presenting previous experience in the implementation of cultural projects in the

²⁵ All recipes are presented in the *Poleskie Delicacies – Recipe of Dishes of the Belarusian and Polish Cuisine*, published as part of the project implementation.

cities of Lublin, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Lutsk. The publication was aimed at presenting the best cultural projects carried out by representatives of the cultural sector from Lublin, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Lutsk with particular emphasis on cross-border and international projects. During the micro-project, two conferences were held, the first one initiating the project in Lviv and a conference summarizing the micro-project in Lublin.

In the last implemented micro-project no. 11 “Cultural identity of local communities of the Ukrainian-Polish borderland” the Lead Partner was the Hirka Polonka Village Council. The co-financing amounted to EUR 31,155.67. The project was implemented in partnership with the Ruda-Huta commune from Poland. As part of the micro-project, a team of experts in the field of cultural traditions was established. On the basis of research carried out by experts, a guide to the cultural traditions of the Polish-Ukrainian border region was established, with particular emphasis on the traditions and culture of the Ruda-Huta and Hirka Polonka communes. The publication was released in three languages: Polish, Ukrainian and English. A publication presenting artistic groups from the Polish-Ukrainian borderland²⁶ was also released. The micro-project predicted a conference dedicated to the development of agritourism in the area of neighboring communes. During the micro-project, the Cross-border Festival “The Rainbow of Cultural Traditions and Polish-Ukrainian Borderland Art” was held. The festival was conducted in two stages. The first stage in Poland and the second one in Ukraine. During the Festivals, folk band shows as well as handicraft workshops on the Polish-Ukrainian borderland were organized.

4. Outcome of the cross-border cooperation as part of the umbrella project

The implementation of joint and cross-border activities as part of the umbrella project served to establish lasting, mutual, direct, good-neighborly, trust-based contacts between communities, better mutual understanding and exchange of experience. Joint cross-border projects enabled the popularization of the common cultural heritage, whose development plays a significant role in enhancing the sense of residents’ identity, increasing tourism and has a positive impact on the region’s economic potential. The umbrella project created the basis for the development of cross-border cooperation on two levels: between the Lead Partners of micro-projects, and their partners from Ukraine or Belarus and between the Association of Local Governments of the Bug Euroregion and Beneficiaries

²⁶ Ruda-Huta Commune, *Culture of the Borderland* – the work published as part of the project implementation, p. 31.

implementing cross-border projects. For many years, members of the Association have been benefiting from the aid in establishing cross-border partnerships, so it also happened when establishing an umbrella project. Some LGUs associated in SSERB have been cooperating with their counterparts from Ukraine or Belarus for years, but there are many entities that have just started cooperation from mutual recognition of resources and needs, searching for common areas of activity. It was important to orientate these activities towards the regional level rather than the local one. The umbrella project was an opportunity to create a cooperation network aimed at one goal. It allowed to identify common areas of action, stimulation, development or continuation of cooperation between Polish-Ukrainian or Polish-Belarusian partners. It assumed the implementation of several “soft” activities implemented in partnership to the benefit of all parties to the project. Thanks to their diverse form, micro-projects affected as broad a range as possible on selected target groups. Youth and children participated in the joint workshop, as well as selected groups of local creators and artists, folk groups, which allowed for a mutual understanding of culture and tradition, and then further promotion of it in their native country, among others, by drawing inspiration from neighboring regions. Public outdoor promotional events were intended for customers from both sides of the border. They have become a good way to become familiar with traditions (including culinary) and the habits of “neighbors” and the mutual integration of all community groups, including their youngest recipients. Numerous multilingual publications and brochures presenting diverse cultural resources of the borderland, intended for recipients in the country and abroad, were among the key factors influencing the communities. As a result of micro-projects, Internet websites were launched, as well as the Cross-Border E-Center of Cultural Cooperation Lublin–Lutsk.

For 15 years the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland–Belarus–Ukraine, has been supporting cross-border development processes in the borderland of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine by co-financing various projects. All supported projects are of non-profit character and contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the inhabitants of eastern Poland and western Ukraine and Belarus. Any project funded by the Programme should demonstrate a strong cross-border effect, not only through partnerships between institutions from these three countries, but above all through actions and their positive impact on border areas.

Cultural cooperation between institutions from neighboring countries has gained great popularity, which is why the aim of part of the activities under micro-projects was to create the basis for its further development. These activities relate to, among others, developing a common strategy for cross-border coop-

eration in the field of culture, training for representatives of local governments, increasing their competences in the field of cultural cooperation. They provided an excellent basis for continuing and expanding the scope of cross-border cooperation in the field of culture between institutions from the Euroregion Bug area²⁷.

Summary

The Association of Local Governments of the Euroregion Bug implements its statutory objectives within the scope of activities and broadly understood cross-border issues. It is an intermediary institution for EU funds operators under EU Programmes, mainly co-financed from the European Regional Development Fund. As part of EU funds, it has recruited from such programmes as the National PHARE Programme “Polish Eastern Border” and the Neighborhood Programme Poland–Belarus–Ukraine INTERREG IIIA/Tacis CBC, Poland–Belarus–Ukraine 2007–2013 Cross-Border Cooperation Programme implemented as part of the European Neighborhood Instrument and Partnerships.

The Association of Local Governments of the Euroregion Bug implemented the Umbrella Project no. IPBU.03.02.00-06-828/12 entitled “Cross-border culture as a bridge for the integration of local communities in Euroregion Bug” in the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2015. The project involved 11 micro-projects.

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Summary: The Association of Local Governments of the Euroregion Bug implements its statutory objectives within the scope of activities and broadly understood cross-border issues. It is an intermediary institution for EU funds operators under EU Programmes, mainly co-financed from the European Regional Development Fund. As part of EU funds, it has recruited from such programmes as the National PHARE Programme – Polish Eastern Border and the Neighbourhood Programme Poland–Belarus–Ukraine INTERREG IIIA/Tacis CBC, Poland–Belarus–Ukraine 2007–2013 Cross-Border Cooperation Programme implemented as part of the European Neighbourhood Instrument and Partnerships (ENPI). The Association of Local Governments of Euroregion Bug implemented the Umbrella Project no. IPBU.03.02.00-06-828/12 entitled “Cross-border culture as a bridge for the integration of local communities in Euroregion Bug” within 1 January 2014 – 31 December 2015. The project involved 11 micro-projects.

Keywords: Euroregion Bug; cross-border association; micro-projects

Współpraca transgraniczna w ramach Projektu Parasolowego „Kultura pogranicza pomostem integracji społeczności lokalnych w Euroregionie Bug”

Streszczenie: Stowarzyszenie Samorządów Euroregionu Bug realizuje cele statutowe w obrębie działania i szeroko pojętych zagadnień transgranicznych. To instytucja pośrednicząca dla operatorów środków unijnych w ramach programów unijnych, głównie współfinansowanych z Europejskiego Funduszu Rozwoju Regionalnego. W ramach funduszy unijnych przeprowadziła nabory z takich programów jak: Narodowy Program PHARE – Polska Granica Wschodnia, Program Sąsiedztwa Polska–Białoruś–Ukraina INTERREG IIIA/Tacis CBC, Program Współpracy Transgranicznej Polska–Białoruś–Ukraina 2007–2013 realizowany w ramach Europejskiego Instrumentu Sąsiedztwa i Partnerstwa (EISP). Stowarzyszenie Samorządów Euroregionu Bug zrealizowało Projekt Parasolowy nr IPBU.03.02.00-06-828/12 pt. „Kultura pogranicza pomostem integracji społeczności lokalnych w Euroregionie Bug” w okresie 1.01.2014–31.12.2015. W ramach projektu przeprowadzono 11 mikroprojektów.

Słowa kluczowe: Euroregion Bug; stowarzyszenie transgraniczne; mikroprojekty