

# THROUGH INNOVATIONS TO EFFECTIVE COOPERATION II

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## THROUGH INNOVATIONS TO EFFECTIVE COOPERATION – PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

Cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine is of crucial importance for both countries. Numerous international bilateral agreements are constituting standard framework for development of bilateral relations. Nevertheless, real life experience and examples from other countries reveal that while the role of official relations at national governmental level is the fundamental backbone of cross-border cooperation, there must also exist the counterpart at the micro level of border regions.

The project entitled “Provision of information and implementation of innovative approaches in cross-border cooperation between the Slovak Republic and Ukraine” (CBCo1030) within program area Cross-border cooperation, aimed at reducing existing barriers in cross-border cooperation according to a model of Nordic countries. Implementation of work experience of northern European authorities should increase the efficiency of Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation.

The Centre of Social and Psychological Sciences of Slovak Academy of Sciences as a beneficiary of the project cooperated by research with five others partner institutions:

1. Institute of Cross-border Cooperation (Uzhgorod, Ukraine)
2. Authorities of Municipal Region of Finmark (Vadso, Norway)
3. ISD Slovakia (Bardejov, Slovakia)
4. Košice Municipal Region (Košice, Slovakia)

5. International Institute of Cross-border Analysis and Management (Uzhgorod, Ukraine)

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**Project budget: 222 233 Euro**

**Project grant: 188 898 Euro**

**Project duration: May 2016 – April 2017**

**Project site: Košice and Prešov municipality, Transcarpathian region**

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Current cross-border cooperation is a very powerful and importantly, a constructive resource for development of the international relations system. Active cooperation has a positive effect on solving the problems of participating cross-border regions, creates conditions for accelerated growth of welfare, directs partner countries policy towards equalizing level of life between more developed and depressed and peripheral regions.

This is confirmed by *development of transborder cooperation in the geopolitical area of the Carpathians*. European Union enlargement has opened up entirely new opportunities for its expansion and deepening.



However, analysis of the issues of transborder cooperation dynamics in this important part of Europe shows that *its management requires significant optimization. In particular, currently there is an urgent need in using such efficient management tools as:* macro policy coordination, state economic incentives or bilateral and multilateral financial cooperation.

In terms of *their own* their bilateral or multilateral intergovernmental transborder cooperation programs *with appropriate funding, at the new Eastern border in the Carpathian they are unfortunately non-existent.* This *negatively affects* activities if transborder structures that are not able to get a financial backing from the European funds. The fate of the Carpathian Euro-region is a dramatic confirmation.

Apparently, cross-border coopera-

tion in the area of the Carpathians in general, and Ukrainian-Slovak cross-border cooperation in particular lacks effective tools of macropolitical coordination and support.

Meanwhile, such tools in Europe are existing, and there is a vast positive experience accumulated in its use. Declarations of the European cross-border cooperation forums marked the feasibility of using the positive experience of the Nordic countries in managing cross-border cooperation in order to enhance such partnership in the Carpathian region.

The scientific studies conducted by experts are based on modern methodological principles of researching the nature of cross-border processes, such as a combination of subjects' interests and subjects' engagement into the world globalization and glocalization processes.

Significance of the macropolitical tools for the TBC development is evidenced by more than twenty years operation of North European institutions, in particular of Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and of the Regional Council (BRC) established in 1993.

Based on the objectives to find the ways to implement innovative mechanisms for cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine in the Carpathian region, to form a new systematic quality of implementing the existing potential, the expert group formulated their practical recommendations on the basis of analysing the key parameters such as the origin (genealogy), determining environmental factors, essential features and forms of development, main goals and feedback.

Authors of the project studies and analyses and the project team:

**Marian Gajdoš** - expert guarantor of the project for Slovakia, CSPS SAS, gajdosm@saske.sk (historian - the research focuses on Czech and Slo-

vak history of 20th century, the history of ethnic minorities, the history of the Ruthenians and Ukrainians in Slovakia and Central Europe and the development of cross-border relations after 1945);

**Serhii Ustych** - expert guarantor of the project for Ukraine, director of the Institute for Transborder Cooperation, ustich\_si@ukr.net; Professor at Uzghorod National University, doctor of sociology, representative of plenipotentiary;

**Richard Filčák** - Slovak expert, CSPS SAS, progrfil@savba.sk (research of the intersections between environmental and economic/social policies; specific focus on the EU economic and social cohesion policies vis-à-vis industrial development and the environmental trends.);





**Stanislav Konečný** – Slovak expert, CSPS SAS, [konecny@saske.sk](mailto:konecny@saske.sk) (Development of ethnic minorities, inter-ethnic relations and ethnic policies in Slovakia and Central Europe with emphasis on the history of Ruthenians and Ukrainians in this area);

**Alexander Mušíka** – Slovak expert, CSPS SAS und Prešov university, [alexander.musinka@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.musinka@gmail.com) (cultural anthropologist, in the long term, he has been dealing with the issue of Roma and Ruthenian-Ukrainians, primarily in Slovakia, from a historical and cultural-anthropological point of view.);

**Eduard Nežinský** – Slovak expert, CSPS SAS, [progenez@savba.sk](mailto:progenez@savba.sk) (The research activity is focused on analysing time series and applying optimization techniques to assess eco-efficiency and welfare.);

**Zlatica Sáposová** – Slovak expert, CSPS SAS, [saposova@saske.sk](mailto:saposova@saske.sk) (historian, research focused on issue of ethnic minorities living in Slovakia in 20th century and national policy of Hungarian governments and political elite in 20th and 21st century.);

**Ivana Studená** – Slovak expert, CSPS SAS, [progistu@saske.sk](mailto:progistu@saske.sk) (focused on interdisciplinary research in the area of human capital, human resource development and analyses of learning processes at individual and organisational levels, labour market development, strategic analyses of economic policies for sustainable economic and social development at national and local levels);

**Lars Georg Fordal** – Norwegian expert, Head of the Norwegian Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes.

**Rune Gjertin Rafaelsen** – Norwegian expert, journalist and Head of Independent Barents Observer.

**Atle Staalesen** – Norwegian expert, journalist and Head of Independent Barents Observer.

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UKRAINIAN EXPERT TEAM: **Volodymyr Prykhodko, Dmytro Miroshnikov, Jevhen Jaščenko, Oleh Pilipenko**. They are experienced professionals who have had long experience with working in non-profit organizations, civil service and research. In terms of professional focus they mainly deal with economic, sociological, legal and historical aspects of cross-border relations.



## A piece from analyses...

### BARENTS MODEL ANALYSIS AND SURVEY RESULTS

A team of experts focused on examples of good practice of cross-border cooperation on the Eastern border of the European Union. They specifically mapped and analysed the development of cooperation among Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia through the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and Barents Regional Council. As part of the project we analysed both institutions as an example of good practice and as a result attempt to use this analysis as a tool for further discussion on how to institutionalise and deepen the cooperation between Slovak and Ukrainian border regions.

*Barents Euro-Arctic Council* is the organ of the Foreign Affairs Ministries of Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Denmark, European Commission and Russia. It provides efficient macro-political support and transborder cooperation management in the Barents region.

*Barents Regional Council* is an institution of heads of border regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. It provides a *systematic and tight cooperation of border areas in solving common problems of TBC*.

*International Barents Secretariat* is a standing technical body dealing with proper organizational support of multilateral transborder cooperation. Its office is located in the Norwegian town of Kirkenes.

*The Norwegian Barents Secretariat* is a permanent executive and administrative body, coordinates transborder cooperation of the northern provinces of Norway: Nordland, Troms and Finnmark with partners in neighboring countries and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries of Norway, which allocate funds for special grant programs in the areas of regional development, health, culture etc.





The results of long-term analyses of the potential of cooperation and the results of the project solution indicate the need to create specialized international, regional and national structures and authorities and to strengthen the commitments of the governments not only of Slovakia and Ukraine, but also other regional stakeholders - Hungary, Romania, Poland, Czech Republic, and the European Commission. A joint declaration with a vision of co-operation could be a step in the right direction.

## The experts' work

The intensive work of the experts along with many working meetings resulted in creating both the analytical material entitled "From analyses to interventions: Innovative approach to fostering cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Ukraine" and "Practical recommendations and proposals". All these outputs are available not only in printed form in English, Slovak and Ukrainian language but freely accessible on the project website [www.cbciinnovations.sk/documents](http://www.cbciinnovations.sk/documents).

One of the first recommended step is **to support the idea of implementing the so-called Carpathian Summit which would create a framework for further cross-border development.** In order to strengthen cross-border cooperation and establish its institutional framework, the Summit of representatives of Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic, the European Commission and Ukraine could, in the event of a consensus, adopt a joint declaration that would lay the foundations for more effective cooperation and define commitments relating to its support and development.

Among others, recommendations consider the possibility of creation of specialized international regional institutions for cross-border cooperation:

- **The Carpathian Cooperation Forum** - a body of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the participating countries - for macro-political support and regulation of cross-border cooperation;

■ **The Carpathian Regional Forum** – a body of the representatives of border regions - for systematic, practical cooperation of border areas, its management and solution of potential problems;

■ **International Carpathian Secretariat** - standing authority of representatives of participating countries - for organizational and technical support for multilateral cross-border cooperation.

The ultimate goal could be to create an international structure in the Carpathian region (Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Ukraine) and, on the basis of the experience of Nordic cross-border cooperation and its institutions, prepare or implement the optimal form of cooperation. Compared with the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the role of the European Commission could be more fundamental and ultimately could lead to a member's status in the planned institutional structures.

*In view of the analysis of past experience and examples of best practice, it is clear that institutionalised, planned and practically oriented cooperation between Ukraine and*

*Slovakia could help increase its level, improve coordination between various initiatives and boost progress in border regions on both sides of the border.*

The results of the Scandinavian experience and cooperation development potential indicate **the three main directions of necessary interventions:**

- 1. Development of a wider framework of cooperation in the Carpathian region,**
- 2. Active support of the governments of Ukraine and Slovakia as well as the institutions of the European Union,**
- 3. The transition from ad hoc projects and initiatives to coordination and stabilization of systematic cooperation.**



“GRANTS EHP AND NORWAY – COOPERATION WITH COMMON VALUES”

The EEA Grants and Norway Grants represent the contribution of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to reducing economic and social disparities and to strengthening bilateral relations with 16 EU countries in Central and Southern Europe and the Baltics.



Project team's recommendations in summary:

## **I. POLICY FRAMEWORK AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT**

I.1 Strategic commitment and support of the Carpathian region

I.2 Development of Slovak-Ukrainian cooperation in strengthening the European Union and in the context of development of the Carpathian region

I.3 A more active role of Slovakia within domestic policy and the European Union

I.4 Supporting development of cooperation on the side of Ukrainian government

I.5 Transfer of knowledge from the Barents Euro-Arctic area: Learning from the best

I.6 Search for sustainable solutions:

Towards institutionalisation of cooperation

## **II. TECHNICAL AND PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

II.1 Development based on local knowledge and experience: Search for synergies in diversity

II.2 Strategy and legal framework support

II.3 Diversified financing and support: Cooperation as an asset, not a liability

II.4 Involvement of civil society

II.5... For more recommendations and institutionalization of cooperation you can read in the publication "Practical recommendations and proposals" or on the website [www.cbccinnovations.sk](http://www.cbccinnovations.sk)



## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

**14<sup>th</sup> October 2016** (Košice) – press conference and opening project presentation with participation of media, Edward Bureš - a representative from the Municipal government of Košice for cross-border cooperation - and Ukrainian partners.



**28<sup>th</sup> October 2016** (Uzghorod) – press conference and opening project presentation organised by Ukrainian partner - the Institute for transborder cooperation.



**08<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2016** (Kirkenes) – delegation of Ukrainian partner and **08<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2017** (Kirkenes) – experts from CSPS SAS visited Kirkenes in Norway and met with representatives from International Barents Secretariat, Norwegian Barents Secretariat and with the mayor of Sor-Varanger Municipality - Rune Rafaelsen.

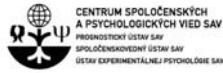


**16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017** (Stará Lesná) - international conference about project results involving all project partners from Slovakia, Ukraine and Norway.



More information about project activities are on the website [www.cbccinnovations.sk](http://www.cbccinnovations.sk)

## Project partners:



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