

Report by CSTP Poland

Institution building (Priority area I)

In 2022, clear progress was made in expanding the basic structure of cooperation on the Slovak side. After changes in the Statute of the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland, 14 local governments from Slovakia joined the organization by October 2022. Among them are both towns and municipalities in eastern Slovakia from the Carpathian area. It is assumed that by the end of the year another 10 local governments will join the Euroregion. Between September and October, 12 Ukrainian local governments joined the Carpathian Euroregion, including large cities such as Stryi, Drohobych and Sambir. Strengthening the organizational foundations of the Euroregion will have a positive impact on the actual possibilities of achieving the objectives of the CSTP in the future.

In July 2022, the Ministry of the Environment sent information to the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention about entrusting the function of the CSTP Slovakia to the Association of Towns and Villages of Slovakia (ZMOS). Thus, another Centre was created within the CSTP network. Currently, CSTP Poland and ZMOS are preparing a work plan for 2023.

Cross-border Functional Areas (Priority area I)

Another field of structural activities is the issue of creating Cross-border Functional Areas in the Carpathian Region. In this regard, from November 2021 teams responsible for the preparation of the Strategy will be established, on the basis of which cross-border Integrated Territorial Investments will be designed. It is expected that due to the specificity of cross-border areas in the Carpathian Region, sustainable tourism will be the main development profile in the CBFA. It was agreed with foreign partners that starting from January 2023, the development of strategies for each of the CBFAs will begin.

Small Project Fund INTERREG PL-SK 2021-2028 (Priority area I)

On the 23th of October 2021 the Polish-Slovak Working Group on the INTERREG PL-SK 2021-2027 Program made a decision related to the system of implementation of small project funds on the Polish-Slovak border. On the basis of this decision, the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland will be responsible for managing the fund in the priority 4.6 "Increasing the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation". This means an opportunity to financially support public sector and non-governmental entities from the field of implementation of projects supporting sustainable tourism. The Euroregion plans to open the first call for proposals in the second quarter of 2023.

Cooperation with higher education institutions in the Carpathian region (Priority area I)

In 2022, the Carpathian Euroregion established the Scientific Council of the Carpathian Euroregion. The council consists of professors – representatives of universities from Krakow (Jagiellonian University, University of Agriculture, Cracow University of Technology) and from Katowice (Academy of Physical Education). The Council is headed by prof. Andrzej Szarata - Dean of the Faculty of Civil Engineering of the Cracow University of Technology. The role of the Council is to support the Euroregion and the CSTP in the field of analyses, research and projects.

Carpathian Tourism Observatory (Priority area II)

In the second priority area the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland performs intensive conceptual and organizational activities. The establishment of a professional Carpathian Tourism Observatory (CTO) is a goal of strategic importance. In this respect the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland cooperates with the Institute of Tourism/ HES-SO Valais -Wallis in Sierre, Switzerland, which developed and implemented the Territorial Model of Tourism Observatory (<https://www.tourobs.ch/>). In Poland, the main partners of the Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland are the Statistical Office in Rzeszow and the Cracow University of Technology. The Statistical Office, using its resources, experience and cooperative ties with statistical offices of the Carpathian countries, supports the CSTP in developing the functionality and architecture of the CTO system. "In the years 2018-2020 the Statistical Office in Rzeszow, together with 7 European countries, implemented the international project ESSnet Big Data II: Workpackage J - Innovative tourism statistics. The aim of the project was to create, based on the integration of data from various sources, the concept of a prototype system for monitoring changes in tourism. In the course of the project, the model was developed to link data sources in the field of tourism for both the demand side (related to tourist travels) and the supply side (related to accommodation facilities). The prototype uses data from statistical and administrative sources, as well as from websites obtained using the author's web scraping method. As a result of the analysis of online resources, high information potential of booking and airline websites was demonstrated, which have a large amount of data changing in real mode. On their basis, among other things, quick estimates in the field of tourism were prepared and the space-time disaggregation method of travels of Polish residents to overseas countries was developed. The solutions can be used and developed as part of the tasks performed by the Carpathian Tourism Observatory". In 2022, the Euroregion started cooperation with VISA in the preparation of schemes for the use of information from payment cards for the Observatory.

EtnoCarpathia Project (Priority area III)

Source of funding:

- European Regional Development Fund, Cross-border Cooperation Program Interreg V-A Poland-Slovakia 2014-2020.
- Financed by the National Institute of Liberty - Civil Society Development Center from the funds of the Civic Organization Development Program for the years 2018-2030 (until the end of 2021).

Completion period: 01.11.2019-31.10.2022.

Project Partners:

- Municipal Cultural Center in Vranov (PP1)
- District Museum in Rzeszow (PP2)

Total value of the project: EUR 844,701.74 EUR (100%), SEKP: EUR 515,370.00

Idea and short description of the project:

The main idea of the project was to develop and promote the cultural heritage of the Polish-Slovak borderland through the development of the EtnoCarpathia tourist product based on the resources of the Carpathian culture. Traditional folk culture of the ethnographic groups existing in the area of the borderland until World War II is an important factor of tourism development in the Carpathian

Mountains. Therefore, the activities planned in the project were aimed at increasing the attractiveness and recognizability of the borderland through the use of cultural heritage resources of 7 Carpathian cultures from Poland and Slovakia (Pogorzans, Dolinians, Lemkos, Boykos, inhabitants of former Šariš, Zemplin and Zamagurie regions). The EtnoCarpathia product was developed under a common, already existing international Carpathian brand and offers tourists the opportunity to get to know the authenticity and multiculturalism of the Polish-Slovak part of the Carpathian Mountains, diverse crafts and unique traditions. As part of the project, the website <https://etno.visitcarpathia.com/> was created. It is a compendium of knowledge about 7 cultures of the Polish-Slovak borderland and a promoting tool of the tourist product. It is a pro-development instrument which is constantly updated with new content and may include information about ethnographic cultures of other Carpathian countries in the future. The website is also connected with a dedicated mobile app. Moreover, the inventory of ethnographic resources was carried out and publications were created. The CarpathiaEtnoDesign competition for young designers was organized, which was the opportunity to meet "old and new", combining traditional design and modern trends, and also actively involved young people in the project. Handicraft workshops (Lemko necklaces (krywulka), Boyko necklaces (sylianka), felting, cross-stitch embroidery) addressed to all enthusiasts of Carpathian crafts or local artists, photography workshops on product photography or those concerning modern marketing tools, as well as information meetings on the creation and importance of territorial brands. In addition, the project was promoted during events like EtnoWeekend, study tour of Polish and Slovak journalists and bloggers, an international conference.

"Between the Fiords and the Carpathian Mountains - the platform for the exchange of experiences in tourism education" (Priority area III)

Source of funding: "Education" program under the Norwegian and EEA funds in Poland (Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area - Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)

Completion period: 01.02.2022-31.01.2024

Project Partners:

- Bronislaw Markiewicz State Higher School of Technology and Economics in Jaroslaw (PWSTE)
- Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland
- Nord University

Total value of the project: EUR 229,370.00 (100%), SEKP: EUR 36,585.00

Idea and short description of the project:

The project aims to increase the quality of higher and secondary vocational education in tourism in the border area of the Polish part of the Carpathian Euroregion, using Norwegian models. The activities of the project will ensure raising the level of knowledge both of students, pupils (thanks to new curricula at the professional level) and people working in the tourism sector (participation in quality circles). Through the organization of periodic meetings, cooperation between the education and tourism sectors in the region will be strengthened. On the other hand, through the transfer of knowledge and innovation, ensured by ongoing cooperation with the Norwegian partner and participation in the study visit, local entrepreneurship of the sector will be strengthened. The project will also influence the strengthening of professional competences of the region's tourism sector staff and managers, as well as will ensure the exchange of good practices. Innovative elements of the project will include

professional education programs in tourism on the basis of Norwegian models and ensuring the implementation of "Carpathia" brand strategy. In addition, the project will include innovative meetings such as co-creations stimulating cooperation between students and representatives of the tourism sector and meetings such as quality circles aimed at raising the level of knowledge of people involved in management and service of the tourism sector in the Carpathian Euroregion. Groups of target recipients of the project include: staff and students of the PWSTE, staff and students of secondary vocational schools, representatives of the tourism sector (tourist organizations, associations, facilities, departments of offices), tourists visiting the border area of the Carpathian Euroregion, teaching staff from other vocational schools in the project area, centers and sections related to the development of education, as well as local governments from border areas.