

PROJECT STORIES

A collection of works that
presents the human but also
animal dimension of the projects
implemented by Programme

2021

WELCOME

With great pleasure, we present the stories of selected projects implemented under the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 collected in this publication. Projects are not just indicators, budgets, reports and payments. Although these are inseparable elements, above all, each project contains specific ideas, values and dreams of people implementing them, as well as the stories of those who benefited from their implementation.

We want to bring some of them closer to you through „Project stories” – a series in which we present the human but also animal dimension of our projects. The cycle was introduced prior on our Programme website. Now, to collect these works in one place, we have prepared this brochure and warmly encourage you to read.

This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union, under Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the Joint Technical Secretariat and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

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To find a real home...

Rzeszów and Vynohradiv – animal-friendly cities

SECURITY / Priority 3.1 Support to the development of health protection and social services

Project budget 667 841.20 EUR PBU co-financing 601 057.08 EUR

Lead beneficiary Center of Investment and Development Vynohradiv City Council of the Transcarpathian Region (UA)

Project partners Animal Protection Organization in Rzeszów (PL); Vynohradiv City Council (UA)

Distrustful glare. Black, sad eyes looking from behind bars. The neighbors are more fortunate – most of them have a chance for adoption. She has a faint chance – expecting her offspring. She was found in the forest, a few kilometers from the city. Despite the advertisements, no one came for her ... She is 3 years old and is called Prima – only recently, as this was the name given by the new keepers from „Kundelek” shelter in Rzeszów. The little black female dog is slowly getting used to them, but like most dogs living here, she cannot get used to bars and concrete. Most often, they came here from warm houses and apartments, where there were windows, panes, balconies, and carpets. The members of the Rzeszów Animal Protection Association want to create the similar conditions.

These animals are not wild, they were brought up by man. There are different reasons they ended up in the shelter – they have strayed, lost or been abandoned by their people. So if a dog such as this will be here under home conditions, it will take on home habits, it will be eager to seek contact with people and would like to have them as his keepers. Man will eagerly take a dog like that. Nobody wants to take a difficult dog from the shelter – explains Halina Derwisz, president of the Association.

Thanks to the financial support of the European Union, under the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 the project „Rzeszów and Vynohradiv – animal-friendly cities” will be implemented. In this project 35 internal boxes for the dogs of the shelter will be modernized, a veterinary surgery room will be constructed, equipment for treatment and sterilization will be purchased and a bathtub for washing animals will be built. A „chipping” action will also be organized, i.e. free implantation of 1000 free chips for pets, which in case of loss will make it easier to find. Owners of pets will be able to voluntarily submit them to this simple treatment, resembling an injection. The data from the chips will be entered to the national and European databases.

As part of the project, 4 veterinary offices have agreed to conduct the free „chipping”. These offices will perform the „chipping” and we will enter the data. We are also launching an informational campaign encouraging people to „chip” their animals – adds Katarzyna Pokrzywa, the project coordinator.

Similar activities will be carried out by the project leader, in the city of Vynohradiv in the Ukrainian Transcarpathia. A shelter with several boxes for animals will be built there. A veterinary clinic will also be established on site. Currently, the pet owners from this area, must travel several kilometers to the veterinarian. An informational campaign will also take place, and a group of 15 volunteers and veterinarians will receive training in Poland. The Ukrainian leader chose a Polish partner from among several candidates. Before making the decision, the project initiators visited such institutions in Lublin and Sanok.

However, over 20 years of experience of the shelter in Rzeszów and its animal care system were recognized to be exemplary. Here, up to 96% of animals find a new owner. The Association organizes numerous actions: walks with dogs led by volunteers, the so-called “weekend adoptions”, educational activities for schools, online adoption office and many others. Thanks to these, the inhabitants of the region are eager to visit the shelter, and then take over the care of the chosen dogs. Because the care of homeless animals is the task of local governments, the shelter, on a daily basis, is maintained by the subsidies from the city of Rzeszów and agreements with neighboring municipalities. However, these funds would not be sufficient for the planned investments, therefore the PL-BY-UA Programme assistance is very valuable.

More about the *CBC4animals* project can be found [here](#).



White elephant of the Carpathians

Adaptation of former observatory on the Pip Ivan mountain to the needs of alpine rescue service training center

SECURITY / Priority 3.2 Addressing common security challenges

Project budget 1 170 269.82 EUR PBU co-financing 1 053 242.84 EUR

Lead beneficiary State Higher Educational Establishment Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (UA)

Project partners Mountain Volunteer Search and Rescue Bieszczady Group (PL); Department of State Emergency Service of Ukraine in Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast (UA); University of Warsaw (PL)

There is always a story behind each PBU project. Sometimes these are the stories of people whose lives had been strongly influenced by the projects. There are also the stories of people who brought these changes into their regions, committed and passionate about their mission. In some cases, the places are the true heroes of our stories. Places, which can tell much about the turbulent history of cross-border land, connected with the destinies of people, who lived here. We have a pleasure to present the story about a very special place, which is now the venue of our security-related project. We hope that this project will mark the beginning of the new story, the story of revival and serving the people.

When travelling in Ukrainian Carpathians, across Chornohora range, you will be surprised to see a large interestingly shaped building on the top of the mountain. This local landmark is the observatory of Pip Ivan Mountain, built in the 30th of the past century and neglected for more than 70 years.

Its genius loci is continuously attracting travelers. It inspires artists and writers. A deserted observatory in the mountains is a key location of the novel Twelve hoops by Yuriy Andruk-hovych, Top down. A book of fears by Tanya Malarchuk and White Elephant by Mariya Rymar. „White Elephant” is a local name for the observatory because its building, covered with ice and snow resembles a giant animal. “White elephant” also means a valuable but useless thing. It was a sad fate of this magnificent building – being abandoned and deteriorating with time and neglect.

In the first half of the 20th century, Pip Ivan was chosen as a location of an ambitious project of the Polish government (at that time it was the territory of the Second Polish Republic) – the astronomic observatory. The construction started in 1936 being a large and complex undertaking. In total, nearly 800 tons of construction materials had to be delivered from the railway station Vorokhta to the site on Pip Ivan (about 70 km). In two years, a building shaped like a mirror image of letter L was erected on the top of the mountain. It was described as “monumental”. The walls made from limestone blocks were 1.5 meters thick. The building had five floors, 43 rooms and 57 windows and was equipped with the use of most advanced technologies of these days. Astronomical and Meteorological Observatory named after Marshal Józef Piłsudski was opened on July 29th, 1938. Władysław Midowicz, geographer and meteorologist, a native of Mykulychyn village was appointed a director of the Observatory. He moved to the Observatory together with his wife and five-year-old son.

Unfortunately, the Observatory functioned for one year only. On September 1st, 1939 World War II broke out. On September 18th all the staff had to leave the building. All valuable equipment and documents were removed or destroyed. Władysław Midowicz immigrated to Hungary, then he lived in Indonesia and Australia but he always had Observatory keys with him. On his death bed, he gave them to prof. Kreinery with the instructions to transfer them to the University of Warsaw. This is where they are kept, waiting for opening new doors to the rebuilt Observatory.

It was only in the 2000-s that the issue of Observatory revitalization was raised for discussion again. Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw and Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University generated a common vision of its future. Their idea was not only to reconstruct the building but to give it a new meaning – to serve for education and research purposes and contribute to people’s safety in the mountains.

The idea found support in Ukrainian and Polish governments. Step by step the funds were secured and renovation works started. First of all, the building was cleared from the garbage, the layer reached human height! Reconstruction works included, in particular, replacement of floors and roof framing. The roof was covered with brass plate. The stone fencing and gate appeared. Several rooms were adapted for temporary accommodation.

Since 2017 a rescue station has been functioning here. Rescue workers of the 4th specialized search-and-rescue team of State Emergency Service in Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast permanently live here, working in shifts. In this way, Pip Ivan Observatory is now considered to be the highest inhabited place in Ukraine.

The project “Adaptation of former observatory on the Pop Ivan Mountain to the needs of alpine rescue service training centre” (PIMReC), funded within Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020, is the next significant step in the revitalization of this unique place. The project was designed by Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, the University of Warsaw, the Emergency Service in Ivano-Frankivsk oblast and Mountain Volunteer Search and Rescue Bieszczady Group. The project will help to create a highly efficient 24/7 alpine rescue point and a trainings centre.

“Along with being an important research facility, it will be one of the best alpine rescue schools, where the rescuers will be trained and the crews created to work in the observatory.” – explains Igor Tsependa, the rector of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University.

This aim will be achieved through the renovation of premises and their adaptation to the purposes of rescue point and a training

facility. Also, Polish and Ukrainian mountain rescuers will participate in joint trainings with a focus on up-to-date rescue techniques in various weather conditions. The project team also plans to create a sustainable system of emergency response. To this end, the electronic services platform will be created to serve for the exchange of information and know-how between Polish and Ukrainian rescue teams at the same time helping tourists to ensure safe hiking in the mountains. The above mentioned activities will improve the professional level of high mountain rescuers and volunteers, contribute to the development of comprehensive high mountain rescue system and increase the awareness of safety issues in the cross-border community.

Jan Malicki, the Director of Center for Eastern European Studies, observes: When I visited the Observatory for the first time in 2007, only the most optimistic people could believe it would be renovated one day. The Observatory means a lot to him, as well as to Igor Tsependa, as well as to many other people – scientists, researchers, rescuers and volunteers. They are proud to contribute to its revival. They hope that their joint efforts will help to make this remarkable tourist attraction more accessible and safe and that more people will be able to discover it.

More about the PIMReC project can be found [here](#).



Carpathians – a common challenge

Adaptation of former observatory on the Pip Ivan mountain to the needs of alpine rescue service training center

SECURITY / Priority 3.2 Addressing common security challenges

Project budget 1 864 110.39 EUR PBU co-financing 1 677 699.34 EUR

Lead beneficiary SOS-Rescue Foundation (PL)

Project partners Lviv Regional Control and Rescue Service of Tourist-sports Association of Ukraine (UA); Mountain Volunteer Search and Rescue – Bieszczady Group (PL); Ustrzyki Dolne Commune (PL)

A clear May day tempted to wander. Especially since Gorgany is one of the most beautiful and wildest ranges of the Ukrainian Carpathians. So, Natalia decided to go alone into the mountains, because in the Polish West Pomerania, where she lives on a daily basis, there are no such landscapes ... She chose the Chomiak Pass and the Siniak mountain which is 1665 meters high. Everything went well until on the summit she sprained her ankle. She tried to return along the same route, but she got lost in the dwarf mountain pine, and the day began to shift towards the end ... Luck in misfortune, she found the mobile network coverage and she called her boyfriend in Poland, and he then informed the Bieszczady Group of the Mountain Volunteer Search and Rescue (GOPR). It was already after 8 pm. The Polish rescuers sent a link to the „RATUNEK” („RESCUE”) application to the Natalia’s phone number. After several attempts to search for coverage, she managed to install it. From that moment, the rescuers, although stationed in Poland, were able to determine her location in Ukraine with an accuracy of up to several meters.

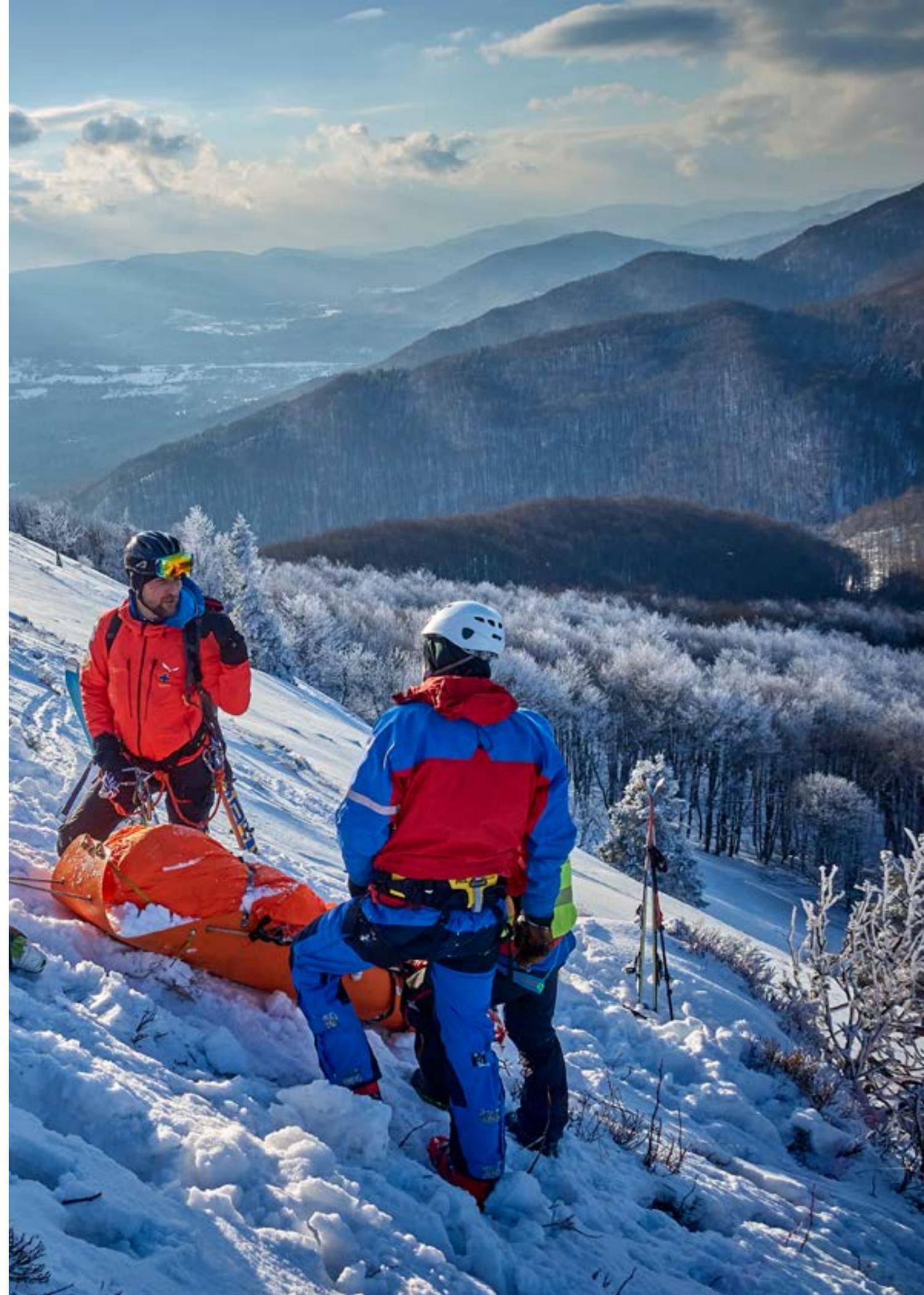
But how to help when being on the other side of the border, hundreds of kilometers from the missing girl? The decision was made quickly: – „We have to call Ukrainian rescuers!”, with whom the Bieszczady Group of GOPR has been cooperating for 3 years. The response was also immediate – two Ukrainian teams set out from Jaremczka and Worochta. When they arrived, it was already 1:25 at night, and before they could bring the victim down it was 5:20 in the morning. The girl, dressed by the hosts, returned happily to Poland.

The accident was real, we only changed the tourist’s name. There are several such accidents in the Polish Bieszczady Mountains and the Ukrainian part of the Carpathians, because there are more and more tourists who want to get to know this part of Europe. In many places, these wild, vast mountains pass through national borders, which makes search and rescue operations a real challenge. To grapple with this, it is necessary to create, train and cooperate with the entire network of emergency services in both countries.

The Polish-Ukrainian mountain rescue system in a great part is being created thanks to the support of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020. One of the key projects currently implemented by rescuers from both sides of the border is the „S.O.S. – Rescue – the Training Center for Organizing and Operating Cross-border Rescue Actions” project. The project value is over 1.86 MEUR, including EU funding of almost 1.68 MEUR.

For this amount, a center will be built in the adapted building of a former school in Równia near Ustrzyki Dolne (The Bieszczady Mountains), where rescuers from both countries will train. A coordination center will be created there, a GOPR duty office, modern equipped training and simulation rooms for medical and rescue training. There will also be a place for the regeneration of the rescuers and care for victims. An operational vehicle to coordinate operations in the mountains, medical, avalanche, evacuation equipment, and even specialized clothing, electric bicycles and 2 drones with a thermal imaging camera will be purchased.

More about the *SOSRescue* project can be found [here](#).



Rosettes – nontraditional way of tradition

The World of Carpathian Rosettes – Activities for Preserving the Cultural Uniqueness of the Carpathians

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 1 543 329.05 EUR PBU co-financing 1 376 340.85 EUR

Lead beneficiary Association for Development and Promotion of Podkarpacie “Pro Carpathia” (PL)

Project partners Podkarpacie Voivodeship (PL); Centre for Regional Development (UA); Association of self-governments “Euroregion Carpathians – Ukraine” (UA); Department of Tourism and Resorts of Lviv Regional State Administration (UA); Agency of Regional Development and Crossborder cooperation “Transcarpathia” (UA); Communal Institution of Lviv Regional Council Administration of Historical-cultural Reserve “Tustan” (UA); Kolochava Village Council (UA); NGO Social Center “Etalon” (UA); Kosiv District Council (UA); The East European State Higher School in Przemyśl (PL);

He’s always been enchanted by the beauty that surrounded him and the way things were made from simple materials. His land, Hutsulshchyna, in the Eastern Carpathians, has always been abundant in talented craftsmen and artists. Was it because of the beautiful mountain landscapes, unique traditions, cherished for the centuries or was the love for the beautiful something innate in the local people? Whatever the answer may be, it became a centre of cultural pilgrimage in the 19-th century, when artists, writers and musicians came here for inspiration. He was lucky indeed to be a part of this realm and to do what he enjoys the most – artistic ceramics.

Serhiy Dutka is a countryman of Lysets village, Ivano-Frankivsk region. From a young age he has loved drawing and his parents have encouraged his talent. He entered Kosiv College of Applied and Decorative Arts specializing in „artistic ceramics” and continued his studies at the Kosiv Institute of Fine and Applied Arts. He combined creative work with teaching at the College at the beginning but at some point decided to devote his life wholly to art, so he quit teaching. Serhiy opened a ceramic workhouse in the village of Rozhniv, exhibited and sold his works, conducted workshops. He built his pottery kiln with his own hands.

The moment of waiting for the final products from the kiln is like waiting for gifts from St. Nicholas. There is always an element of surprise, magic in it. – says Serhiy.

„Nontraditionaltraditional” is the name of one of Serhiy Dutka’s solo exhibitions, and it is the most accurate word to describe whole his art. His works resemble old Kosiv ceramics with its glaze and yellowish-greens, but the subject of his works is unconventional. Fantastic animals, even dinosaurs, as well as familiar household things presented at his creations are interpreted in new ways. The artist believes that traditional art should not be conserved; it is essential to rethink and modernize it. He also finds the importance of constant development, moving forward and interactive communication with other artists. For this purpose, in 2018, Serhiy organized the international ceramists’ plain air event in Kosiv, entitled „Zolote Horno”. This occasion gave not only an incredible impetus to artists’ development but also fostered the promotion of local artistic ceramics. It was a great chance to tell the world about this unique land too.

Life in the Hutsulshchyna in the 21-st century is not a fairy tale. This region suffers from many problems of today such

as pollution, urbanization, migration, high unemployment. The number of people, who can make a living from crafts and agriculture is declining, young people often move to bigger cities to never return. Traditional crafts can be lost within next decades.

Fortunately, thanks to Hutsulshchyna lovers, the land has the chance to develop as a tourist destination and cultural centre. It was their initiative to create the Centre of Carpathian Culture in Kosiv, creative and artistic space at the intersection of history and today. The Centre will become a platform for artists’ dialogue, interaction and generation of new ideas as well as the promotion of cultural values. „The World of Carpathian Rosettes – Activities for Preserving the Cultural Uniqueness of the Carpathians (*ROSETTES*)” project is an opportunity for Serhiy and other talented artists or craftsmen on both sides of the border.

In Kosiv, there is a huge need for a contemporary cultural and creative space. It will generate new vision, new trends, high artistic culture, and creative economy based on the interpretation of the existing heritage. – says Roksolana Barchuk, the Head of the Affairs of the Kosiv District Council.

The Kosiv Centre will be located in the reconstructed premises of „Hutsulshchyna” Enterprise, which was once the largest artisan carpet enterprise in Europe, closed in the early 1990-s. Within the project, the former place will get new life: an exhibition hall, a multi-functional conference hall, rooms for folk crafts workshops, an office, a lounge area. Similar centres will be set up on other sides of the border – in Ukraine: Kolochava (Zakarpattia oblast) and Urych (Lviv oblast) as well as in Bystry in Poland (Podkarpackie Voivodeship).

... In August 2019, Serhiy held first workshop on ceramics within the *ROSETTES* project. He demonstrated all the steps of how traditional ceramic tiles and plates are produced, explained the specific colours of Kosiv, Pistin and Kutya ceramics, and also gave everyone the opportunity to try their hands in pottery: to make their unique bowl or cup, and to design a plate.

Kosiv is amazing, ceramics makes you fall in love with it, and the atmosphere and mountains make you come back here again. – one of the participants shared her impressions. But this is only the beginning of the longer story about Rosettes...

More about the *ROSETTES* project can be found [here](#).



Tyzenhauz – the Great Architect of Hrodna and Sokółka

Tyzenhauz Trail – creation of a tourist route to promote cultural and historical heritage of two cities: Sokółka and Hrodna

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history			
Project budget	2 139 254.66 EUR	PBU co-financing	1 925 329.19 EUR
Lead beneficiary	Sokółka Commune (PL)		
Project partners	Education, Sports and Tourism Department of Hrodna City Executive (BY); Hrodna District Unit of Social Organization Tourism-Sport National Association (BY)		

The story about this famous politician and statesman of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania started in 18th century. Antoni Tyzenhauz was born in 1733 in a noble family. He studied at the Jesuit University of Vilnius. As a young man, Antoni served the powerful Polish family – Czartoryski in their court at Wołczyn village (Kamianets district, Brest oblast nowadays). At that time, Tyzenhauz made a friendship with Stanisław August Poniatowski, later King of Poland and Lithuania. The future lord was born and educated also at Wołczyn, as he was blood-related to Czartoryski. When Poniatowski was elected to the throne of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1764), Antoni Tyzenhauz was appointed the Court Treasurer of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Starosta of Hrodna, and the administrator of royal estates. He was still very young, aged only 32 years old!

Young Court Treasurer was a man with a huge passion so very soon he energetically began to implement various reforms to increase productivity and economic power of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth. He took care of communication and therefore paved roads, drained marshes, dug canals, and also brisksed water transport on the Nemunas river. The most active he was in the Hrodna and Sokółka, which those time were in one region.

In Sokółka Tyzenhauz set up at least 23 factories producing textile, paper, jewelry, tools, furniture, carriages. Inspired by the Age of Enlightenment he also opened schools for midwives, physicians, veterinarians, accountants, engineers, even ballet dancers. He established a botanical garden, theatre, ballet, orchestra, publishing house and even the brewery. In Hrodna, Starosta built, besides his main residence, the center of his economic initiatives with a large building complex and planned an entire borough, named Horodnica. Among the most significant buildings located there were: Tyzenhauz Palace (destroyed during the First World War), Palace of the Vice Administrator, musical school, theatre and forest administration house.

Antoni Tyzenhauz managed to gain considerable political influence too. At a certain moment in history, he was even considered to be the second man after the King. But after a few failures of his factories, in 1780 the nobles fault Tyzenhauz of using treasury money for his private affairs. Very soon he was relieved of his duties by King Poniatowski, his privileges were revoked and properties were confiscated. Disgraced, Antoni Tyzenhauz left his little homeland and died in 1785 in Warsaw.

Despite the sad end of this story, Antoni Tyzenhauz is now considered one of the most significant figures in the history of the Polish-Belarussian cross-border region. The Starosta was an important reformer, who saw the potential and improved substantially the well-being of the area, but most of all its residents. He influenced many places in the region – calm and small towns like Sokółka as well as bigger cities like Hrodna. After two and a half ages, the reminiscences of his work are still alive. That is why he is remembered as “the Great Architect”.

The figure of Antoni Tysenhauz and his impressive life activity became the invention for the authors of the PBU project “Tyzenhauz Trail – creation of a tourist route to promote cultural and historical heritage of two cities: Sokółka and Hrodna”. The area of Tyzenhauz strongest activity is nowadays shared by two countries: Poland and Belarus, thus the activities reminding common history are planned on both sides of the border, creating a “cross-border bridge” connecting as well as promoting both cities and countries.

Renovated historical buildings related to “the Great Architect” in Sokółka and Hrodna will convey the atmosphere of the 18th century. Now they will be dedicated to cultural, educational, and tourism purposes. In the old former Palace of the Vice Administrator in Hrodna, an exhibition gallery, a meeting room, and a music salon will be created. In the aged tenement house in Sokółka, we will see an exhibition and a conference room, have a unique opportunity to try educational and handicraft workshops, and visit the special chamber of Antoni Tyzenhauz. The new information points established in Sokółka and re-equipped in Hrodna will serve fresh joint tourist offers, the tourists will also benefit from up-to-date infrastructure and services.

But the most expected part of the investment is construction of „Tyzenhauz Trail”. Almost 60 km cross-border bike route from Sokółka to Hrodna will be officially opened just after the old-new buildings will be renovated and ready to operate. This one-of-a-kind historical trail via Kuźnica-Bruzgi border crossing point (PL-BY) will cover the main sights of the region reminding the life of the Starosta Tyzenhauz. Sokółka and Hrodna natives as well as visiting tourists could take part in cycling tours and even borrow bicycles free of charge.

And those more reflective will have a chance to stop for a while, rest and dream on the “Tyzenhauz benches”. In Hrodna, the bench is accompanied by Tyzenhauz holding the map of the city and in Sokółka – by King Poniatowski and his Court Treasurer holding a map of Sokółka. There we could forget about the present and get lost in thoughts back, in the times of 18th century. . .

More about the **TYZENHAUZ** project can be found [here](#).

Transgraniczny Szlak Rowerowy Tyzenhauza
Трансгранічны веласіпедны шлях Тызенгауза
Cross-border bike route of Tyzenhauz

ca 1:50 000

LEGENDA

PL-BY-UA 2014-2020
 This map was created with the financial support of the European Union within the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020

TYZENHAUZ TRAIL

Allies with autism

Development of cross-border cooperation in helping people with autism on the Polish-Belarusian borderlands

SECURITY / Priority 3.1 Support to the development of health protection and social services

Project budget 2 365 036.62 EUR PBU co-financing 2 001 913.84 EUR

Lead beneficiary Association for Assistance to Autistic Children and Youth and the Youth and Children of the related disorders "COMMON WORLD" (PL)

Project partners Education Department of the Leninsky District Administration of the City of Brest (BY)

First, he often cried, had sleeping problems and lost his sense of balance. Apparently it was nothing to worry about, after all it happens to newborns. The doctors would always say: *He will grow out of it, everything will be all right, an overzealous mother.*

When he was 2, he put his hand into a fire and watched. He didn't even scream. After this incident, eventually, the doctors made the correct diagnosis: „Autism“. At that time, according to the statistics, cases such as these were 1 per 10 000 births. The first reaction: *It's too bad that this happened to my child* – recalls the mother of 19-year-old Jakub, Anna Chwałek. Straight after – mobilization:

There are certainly some institutions: kindergartens, schools, centers, where I will get help, where Jakub could learn normally, grow among other children. Research, phone calls, visits to Warsaw and... nothing.

Optionally, several hours of special exercises per week – the rest of the time the child would have to spend at home. In the hometown of Biała Podlaska, near the Polish-Belarusian border, there was no such specialized center at all. At the beginning, Anna got help from one of Warsaw's foundations. Once a quarter, she traveled with her son almost 200 km to the capital, where he had some exercises. The rest of them he had to perform with his mother at home as „homework“. It was, however, insufficient to ensure the boy's proper development, especially since he and his needs had been growing.

Encouraged by the foundation in Warsaw, she began to think about establishing an association in Biała Podlaska and creating a specialized center there. It would ensure a multi-stage development from childhood to adulthood, for people with autism and related disorders.

I needed time to reach this decision, it took me 2 years. I left my professional career for the association. I found parents with similar problems, a few allies. And that's how it had really begun – says Anna.

Nowadays, thanks to the „Common World“ Association in Biała Podlaska, there is a diagnostic and therapy center for children and adolescents with autism and Asperger's syndrome, as well as a kindergarten and a primary school. These institutions give support to almost 200 people from the city and the northern part of the Lubelskie Voivodeship. Nevertheless, the children are growing, as well as the numbers in medical statistics are increasing dramatically.

It is estimated that today 1 in 150 born children, or even 1 in 80, have similar problems. Parents, relatives, guardians and others around them have to also deal with these problems... Becoming an adult is a problem as well. There is nothing waiting for those young people, there are no systemic solutions on how to look after them and how – at least in part – to enable them to stand on their own two feet. Therefore, the next step is needed – the construction of a School Preparing for Employment and Environmental Self-help House and House of Permanent Residence for Adults with Autism. The Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020 will help to take this important step.

The „Common World“ association has engaged partners from the other side of the border, because the same problem exists in the Brest Oblast in Belarus – lack of access to specialist care for people with autism and lack of support for their families. As a part of the joint project titled „Development of cross-border cooperation in helping people with autism on the Polish-Belarusian borderlands“, a Specialist Center for Helping People with ASD will be created in the adapted and renovated rooms of a special school in Brest near the Bug River. It will be the first center in the entire country. Moreover, both parties are planning purchase of furniture and IT equipment, joint events to exchange experiences: conferences, training sessions and study visits, as well as sport and recreation events for the proteges. These investments and activities will result in improvement of living conditions of about half a million inhabitants of the Lubelskie Voivodeship and the Brest Oblast. From now on, every family in which a child with autism or related disorders will be born, will be able to find professional help and care. At the same time, the experts will obtain new knowledge and skills which will result in a more effective therapy for the proteges.

More about the *DcbCforAutism* project can be found [here](#).



Ivanka's bike

B(L)ike Roztocze together in spite of borders

HERITAGE / Priority 1.2 Promotion and preservation of natural heritage

Project budget 2 011 060.97 EUR PBU co-financing 1 809 954.87 EUR

Lead beneficiary Zamość Commune (PL)

Project partners Lubelskie Voivodeship (PL); Roztocze National Park (PL); Yavorivskiy National Natural Park (UA); Association of self-governments "Euroregion Carpathians – Ukraine" (UA); Department of Ecology and Natural Resources of Lviv Oblast State Administration (UA)

Ivanka's first bike was built by her father out of old parts of other bikes. She painted it bright orange. Since that day she became a rightful member of village kids' gang. They would go everywhere on their bikes – to each other's place, to the lake, to the forest, to the Zolochiv Castle. A bike was a part of every kid's life, it made them feel free and empowered. Later, she had other bikes – from big and awkward „Ukraina” to an elegant city bike.

When Ivanka started her studies at Lviv University, her life changed completely. It wasn't easy to cope with the fast rhythm of the city life; she found herself far from her favorite places, from lush greenery which surrounded her in the countryside.

Then, one day she decided to get back in the saddle and started her trips to the city outskirts. She was surprised to discover so many beautiful green places, even within the city. She also took longer trips to nearby towns, a bit off the beaten track. Sometimes they were quite difficult to reach, because roads in the area are not very bicycle friendly and it was not easy to plan a trip to a new destination. She had a couple of friends who joined her during her trips.

When a friend of her told her about the training for bicycle guides taking place within the project B(L)ike Roztocze together in spite of borders, Ivanka thought "Why not?" and enrolled. While the first day it was mostly listening about different aspects of guiding, safety, working with tourist groups, the second day they had to test a 60-km bicycle route, stopping at the most prominent landmarks such as Zhovkva, Hlynsk, Krekhiv, Fiyna, Dubrovysya, Bryukhovychi and ended in Lviv. There was also an easier option – a 30-km route. After some hesitations she took the second one as the 60-km group looked... well, a bit fitter than herself. The easy route wasn't very easy, too. She was proud to complete this challenge and to discover new opportunities, which made it possible to combine the most important things in her life:

For me, as an ecologist, biking lifestyle has a special meaning. A bike is not only the most eco-friendly transport, but it can bring you closer to nature. Besides, it gives you this feeling of freedom... Like you can go everywhere, wind blowing in your face, the sky above you...

Bikes and nature were two foundation stones of the PLU-ARoztocze project. We have beautiful places we wanted to show to the world, such as Roztoche, which is cross-border protected area. - says Oksana Vityk, one of the project initiators.

We wanted to make it more accessible for visitors and pro-

mote it without causing damage to nature. Biking is an excellent way to discover this area, it is also something that can unite people from different countries and different backgrounds. It helps to achieve another project goal, which is to make local people more aware of environmental issues and promote eco-friendly lifestyle.

Indeed, people's awareness is a crucial element of any „green” project. In case of Roztoche, it is important that both local people and visitors should value and care for the environment. Active young people, like Ivanka do not only benefit from the project – they contribute into its success acting as role models, promoting particular lifestyle and attitudes.

A large part of the project is improvement of tourist infrastructure. At the present time, the works on building and upgrading of a 327 km cycle route on both sides of the border is under way. Along the route, the travellers would be able to use the cyclist's service points and other facilities. Also, numerous events, such as cycling tours, workshops and educational meetings are organized to promote eco-attitudes among the visitors. Joint efforts of Polish-Ukrainian project team will result in an attractive tourist product – „together in spite of borders”.

... Meanwhile, Ivanka is busy finishing her thesis for the Master's Degree in Ecology. But the certificate of a bicycle guide is already in her pocket and her head is full of ideas of future biking trips. She is looking forward to spring, when a new round of interesting biking events is going to start. And of course, she is going to take a 60-km route this time.

By the way, all bike lovers are invited to join!

More about the *PLUARoztocze* project can be found [here](#).



Fighting for children's life

Better Access to Medical Services in the Cross-border Region

SECURITY / Priority 3.1 Support to the development of health protection and social services

Project budget 1 104 148.80 EUR PBU co-financing 993 733.92 EUR

Lead beneficiary Healthcare Institution "Brest Regional Pediatric Hospital" (BY)

Project partners Independent Public Health Care Centre in Łosice (PL)

Arseny and his family live in Lahišyn, a small urban village in Pinsk District in Belarus. Arseny is the youngest child in the family, he was born 10 months ago – the parents were happy to have the baby despite of some rare fetal abnormalities detected during the pregnancy. From the very beginning they were determined to do whatever is in their power to fight for the life of their son. And it was a conscious choice of the family.

After the birth Arseny was diagnosed with Pfeiffer syndrome, an extremely rare genetic disease. Due to mutations in his genes, the boy's bones cannot develop normally, which can cause various grave consequences for further growth and development of the child.

Pfeiffer syndrome affects one in 100,000 newborns. Such special patients are nursed first at intensive care, then in the department for premature infants. These babies often need specific care and treatment as they can breathe and receive nutrition only through special medical equipment. Lives of these little patients many times depend on continuous supply of oxygen.

This example is just one of many complex medical conditions that doctors of Brest Oblast Children's Hospital face in their work every day. It is extremely important for young patients to receive high quality medical care, including palliative care. Moreover, the parents experiencing children serious diseases are also in dire need of psychological counselling.

Every year there are more and more children with difficult diagnoses, who need professional medical care. In 2016 there were 84 such children in Brest Oblast, whereas in 2019 the number has nearly doubled and is 160. Hospitals did not have stationary palliative wards in their intensive care unit.

Children hospitals from Brest and Łosice together decided to create better conditions for their little patients. In Brest Oblast Children's Hospital will conduct the modernization of the oxygen supply system and major repairs in the oxygen station room together with new accessories necessary for the station functioning. The hospital in Łosice will obtain specialistic equipment for the qualitative diagnosis of neoplasm formation and heart diseases. Additionally the exchange study tours for Belarusian and Polish doctors will be also organized, including workshops on working with sick children. Trainings and experience-sharing are seen as a very important element in the quality of medical services, the internships will allow doctors to share their knowledge, learn from their colleagues and improve the qualifications

of medical personnel.

The work of the intensive care units, surgery blocks and newborn nursing units (for premature babies) directly depends on the oxygen supply system. The project will help to expand the range of services rendered by the hospital, it will also provide help to more patients – says Siarhei Koushyk, the head physician of Brest Oblast Children's Hospital.

The modernization of the oxygen system for Brest Oblast Children's Hospital have already begun. There are 5 new stationary places for palliative care with special medical equipment today. A club of psychological support and counselling for parents of young patients has being created – the activities involve the relatives of sick children, volunteers, psychologists and other specialists.

At the age of 10 months babies begin to actively explore the world around them, so Arseny does too – he reaches for toys and tries to smile at his mom. Arseny's case is extremely rare, but even in this situation he and his family should receive the best possible support in their fighting for life. They are full of hope, that doctors will be able to improve the quality of their son life as well as of hundreds of other children and families. Thanks to the relations with other parents in the same situation and psychological support from the hospital they strongly believe their family can be happy again. Patients in palliative care can suffer from severe and incurable chronic diseases, but if they get appropriate medical care their life expectancy can be much longer.

More about the **BAMS** project can be found [here](#).



A water highway between Drahičyn and Drohiczyn

Bug Unites Us – creation of two cross-border touristic kayak trails

HERITAGE / Priority 1.2 Promotion and preservation of natural heritage

Project budget 1 414 765.86 EUR PBU co-financing 1 273 289.27 EUR

Lead beneficiary Drohiczyn Commune (PL)

Project partners Sokal District Council (UA); Drahičyn District Executive Committee (BY)

For more than thirty years Nikolai Garastyuk led and promoted sports and tourism in the Drahičyn district, located on the western part of Belarusian Paliessie, in the basin of the river Dnieper. In the late nineties of 20th century, as member of Belarusian delegation, he was lucky to take part in a tourist rally in Poland. The program of the trip was designed for 5 days – kayaking or a cycling tour. Both, the kayaking and cycling routes, began in Biała Podlaska. By a twist of fate, Nikolai decided to kayaking. The water route ran along the Krzna River (left tributary of the Western Bug) to the Bug River and further along the river towards a Polish town Drohiczyn. The whole trail Nikolai was sincerely enjoying these outdoor activities and was excited by this type of active tourism. And after many days rafting, he came up with an idea to make a kayaking route in his area as well.

Nikolai had been toying with this thought for a long time, but it took him 20 years to bring it to life. The realization of the idea began thanks to Rafał Siwek – the main initiator, director of the municipal cultural center in the Polish Drohiczyn. Rafał, actively involved in promoting a healthy lifestyle and developing tourist kayaking tours in Poland, sought like-minded people from the other side of the border and finally met Nikolai Garastyuk, who gladly joined the project. Together they created an unique idea of the cross-border touristic route on the territory of three border regions in Poland, Belarus and Ukraine. Nikolai's twenty-year-old dream began to come true.

It is worth mentioning that the tourist traffic in these areas today is quite poor. The low level of accompanying infrastructure (especially lack of information boards, signage, dustbins, rain and rest sheds, view towers and platforms), the insufficient number of destination signs for kayakers and other tourists, as well as general lack of information about the region's attractions did not allow to use the potential of the surroundings of the Bug River to the full extent.

Two tourist trails for kayaking planned by partners will unite Drahičyn and Drohiczyn. New water trails will be offered to the visitors along the river Bug, together with proper signage, information points, megaphones and building almost 40 resting spots along. First kayak trail will lead from Verkhobuzh (UA) to Wyszaków (PL) (ca. 700 km), another one from Bielin to Brest in Belarus, along the Dniepro-Bug Canal and Muchaviec River (ca. 100 km). Moreover, three Centres of Kayak Tourism will be created in Sokal (UA), Bielin (BY) and Drohiczyn (PL) promoting natural heritage and kayak tourism in the area. Visitors will be able to rent there kayaks and necessary equipment free of charge, choose the most suitable kayak in outdoor pool, attend kayak workshops,

shows and excursions. Additionally, the Centre in Drohiczyn will create a museum of kayaking and unique kayak simulator for young, elderly or disabled visitors, where they could try themselves in a dry environment. All Centres will be equipped with portable electronic translation devices for foreign tourists. To fully explore the beauty of the landscapes 8 observation towers will be constructed as well. The creators of the project are sure – kayaking routes will become a new cross-border brand.

The trail along the Dnieper-Bug Canal will remind tourists the history of this significant cultural and natural heritage and it may become the bright touristic pearl of the region. First part of the Canal was officially opened by the last Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ruler Stanisław August Poniatowski. It was called the Royal Canal and it had strategic importance in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, as it was the only navigable inland waterway connecting the Baltic and Black Seas.

The new kayak trails, leading through the borderline of Ukraine, Belarus and Poland, will enable the nature-loving people to discover the untouched beauty of the Bug river on the cross-border area. And our hero, Nikolai Garastyuk, is already planning a joint kayaking tour with his friends from Poland and Ukraine. But now, after 20 years, he will have the opportunity to enjoy all the delights of active water tourism also in his native land, paddling along the Bug and the Dnieper-Bug Canal.

More about the *BugUnitesUs* project can be found [here](#).



Carpathian food adventure

Reproduction and preservation of culinary traditions for the promotion of culture heritage of mountainous cross-border regions

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 57 590.00 EUR PBU co-financing 51 750.00 EUR

Lead beneficiary Mountains Guides Association "ROVIN" (UA)

Project partners Local Tourist Organisation in Przemyśl (PL)

Why don't we stop for a while, it's time for dinner. Let's eat before it gets cold! – Yaroslava hurries us up. She is impatient because our discussion has taken too long. In the twinkle of an eye the table is covered with an embroidered tablecloth and the dishes start appearing. Their names sound unfamiliar to most of us – "oshchypok", "knysh", "machanka", "tarchanyky", "liutyi syr", "kyselytsia". The feast begins and for quite a while everyone is silently enjoying their meal. Then we start talking, complimenting the hostess for her cooking, discussing the dishes and recipes. Amazingly, even traditional "pyrohy" taste differently with soft, melting dough, dark with rye flour. Yaroslava's face is shining with pleasure and pride. It is like something significant is taking place in her house in the moment.

It has always been important for my family to have good food in our house. Even if the life was hard at the times, both parents working all day long in kolkhoz and around the house. My grandma was the one who did all kitchen magic. She often sang while cooking and you know what? Some of the songs were about food, about our traditional dishes, as the one about two girls who were discussing their cooking on the way to village dances.

The nature and the years of turbulent history were not too kind to Boykos, the Carpathian ethnic group, now inhabiting mountainous areas of three Ukrainian oblasts and Podkarpacie Voivodeship in Poland. Mountains, mean soils, scarce land plots and harsh weather most time of the year are signature features of areas where Boykos live. They had to create their authentic food culture based on what their land gave them: mostly potatoes, cabbage, beans, peas, rye and oats (for wheat would not grow here), flaxen oil, essentially dairy products (including cheeses), occasionally meat, including game. All that enriched with local dainties – forest mushrooms, fish caught in the mountain rivers, berries and herbs. Simple as they were, these products gave way to fantasy of local people, who became masters in making cheeses and preparing meat dishes (especially smoked meat).

They know how to cook a great variety of mushrooms, their recipes of potato and cabbage dishes are countless, same as their bakery and desserts made with the addition of honey, hazelnuts and blueberries. These meals are not only delectable, but they tell the story of this land, its people and traditions. Food culture is an essential part of Boyko folklore with special dishes served only at particular holidays (like "kerechun" on Christmas Eve), food and kitchen rituals, numerous food-related superstitions and finally, songs mentioning the traditional dishes.

Our children are dying for pizza and burgers and many of my friends are really into modern cosmopolitan cuisine, always eager to try exotic products and follow fashionable food bloggers. But one day we bring them to the Carpathians, they try local home-cooked dishes and their approach changes. They discover something new and they want to explore more. – shares her thoughts Liubov Horbatsio, a project coordinator.

We wanted to make Boyko Cuisine popular because local food is an essential element of each travel experience; it's also a great way to diversify tourist offer and generate possible source of income for the locals. But personally I believe that culinary heritage is valuable for its own sake and it deserves to be integrated in our daily lives being both healthy and affordable.

The project team is now collecting old recipes and related information to compile a cookbook. The recipes are also posted regularly on social media: Автентична Бойківська кухня/Kuchnia Wojkowska (Facebook) and @mountain_taste (Instagram). This year the partners from both countries plan to organize a culinary festival, where Boyko housewives will treat everyone with local specialties.

Of course, in the work we do, the experience and skills of the people who continue the tradition, are priceless. Such people, Boyko men and women, are our stars. – says Liubov.

Yaroslava Petrykiv, or just "Pani Slava", one of such "stars", seems to be the one with the nature-born gift for cooking. She did not hesitate about which profession to choose after secondary school – she was trained as a cook in a vocational school and worked at canteens and cafes. Even when she didn't have a regular job she was able to earn her living cooking at weddings, growing and selling strawberries. Then, one day she was offered to organize "Boyko dinners" for tourists. The offer came from a guide, who took people from Lviv and Truskavets spas for short trips to the Carpathians. It opened a new page in her life. She has had guests from all over the world since then. The dinners turned into little shows with music, singing and laughing. As her "parties" grew more popular she became aware how valuable is her knowledge, her memories and skills. But also, how important is common eating.

Sometimes I can see tears in people's eyes. It occurred to me that large family gatherings, when people can eat, talk and sing together are quite rare nowadays. In big cities people sometimes live without even knowing their neighbors. Elderly people are often lonely, their children always busy at work. They don't have many chances to gather at a table have a good laugh and sing together. This is something we give to the people. They come home with our recipes and our songs, taking a part of the Carpathians with them!

Although the project is covering all parts of Boykos' residence in Ukraine and Poland, the project team decided to hold the major activities in Dovhe village of Drohobych raion, which is a bit off the beaten track in the Carpathians. They wanted to promote these less touristic but extremely interesting places with beautiful nature and living spirit of the past, to enrich the experience of visitors with tasting traditional Boyko cuisine and to encourage local housewives, farmers and small producers to make full use of their talents.

More about the *MountainTaste* project can be found [here](#).



Touching the Past

Invisible heritage: exchange and implementation of good practice in access to culture for persons with a visual impairment

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 60 852.00 EUR PBU co-financing 54 766.80 EUR

Lead beneficiary The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (PL)

Project partners Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University (UA)

Three lines drawn on a sheet of paper. Two horizontal, one vertical. The first is a platform to which you must climb. The vertical one is a handrail that you must hold. The second horizontal line is a seat on which you must sit not to fall over. Together they make ... the bus. This is how a child blind from birth, who has no memory of any images, shapes, colours, because they have NEVER seen them, imagines it. This drawing still deeply touches prof. Bogusław Marek, who devoted his scientific activity to the blind and visually impaired.

There is still another drawing which moves me. It was made by a 16-year-old girl, also blind from birth – a kind of circle with a zigzag in the middle, and a lot of lines scattered around. It turned out that they were arms, legs and hair, completely disconnected from each other. The girl had no idea how to merge them together, what a man looks like...

And these are just the first steps, in a foreign world made for those who were lucky enough to be born with healthy eyes.

I can only associate colours with items or ideas. I associate black with sadness, but also with elegance, e.g. an elegant dress. I know the sea is blue, but the tones are completely abstract to me... – says Izabela, who is blind from birth. She comes from Warsaw but is studying in Lublin. Luckily, from childhood, she could enjoy a good education for the blind. However, contact with art: museums, galleries, architecture is still a major problem.

Generally, this is not very well organized. In museums, it is forbidden to touch the exhibits. Sometimes during visits for the blind we could touch something, but it required a special permit from the institution and only thanks to our teachers we were able to obtain them. The only place where I came across the exhibits prepared for us was the Museum of the History of the City of Lublin.

This is an institution with which prof. Bogusław Marek – initiator and coordinator of the *TouchingThePast* project – had cooperated before. Mr. Marek specializes in teaching English to the blind, he is the Plenipotentiary of the Rector of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL) for Students with Disabilities and at the same time Director of the University Centre for the Activation of People with Disabilities. He shared his experiences, among others in India, Nepal and Japan. His work was appreciated even by the Queen Elizabeth II, from whom he received the Order of the British Empire. His project implemented within the

Programme will allow him to share his extensive knowledge and experience with neighbours from across the eastern border.

I chose Ivano-frankivsk in Ukraine because it lies quite close. I also checked on the website what monuments were there and that's how it all started...

The invitation for cooperation sent by the KUL was accepted by the Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University in Ukraine. At the beginning, the partners had to answer the question: how to bring art and monuments to the blind – not only tactile sculptures, but also flat two-dimensional paintings, small jewellery, coins or high architecture?

Even the very notion of perspective without explanation was an abstraction for me... – says Izabela who hopes that the venture will help people like her.

Therefore, the authors of the project decided to adapt selected exhibits and historic objects to the needs of people with visual impairments. Only in the Lubelskie Voivodeship there are about 4,000 such people. As part of the project, i.a. three-dimensional models of buildings, tactile graphics and so-called „talking” images and diagrams will be prepared.

Special software makes that a person pressing a selected part of a drawing hears a verbal comment on that... – explains prof. Marek.

Audio-descriptive texts and special Braille guides will also be prepared. Tourist guides and museum staff in both cities will be trained to guide the blind and visually impaired people. The disabled will also undergo training to help them perceive art. Finally, they will have an opportunity to test the tourist offer prepared for them, and the closing conference will sum up all activities provided within the project.

The project authors hope that the partnership established within the project between Lublin and Ivanofrankivsk will give rise to many further activities. A good example of selected museums will encourage other museums, art galleries and cultural centres to prepare for the reception of people with disabilities, especially the blind and visually impaired.

However, for all this to come true, in a joint project they first had to draw the first three lines...

More about the *TouchingThePast* project can be found [here](#).



From the river's perspective

Bug Unites Us – creation of two cross-border touristic kayak trails

HERITAGE / Priority 1.2 Promotion and preservation of natural heritage

Project budget 1 414 765.86 EUR PBU co-financing 1 273 289.27 EUR

Lead beneficiary Drohiczyn Commune (PL)

Project partners Sokal District Council (UA); Drahičyn District Executive Committee (BY)

Like nothing – a modest hull and paddles. With this – blisters on the hands, sore arms, soaked clothes, uncomfortable life vests. But how many unique and exceptional experiences in return! Kayaking enthusiasts could talk about it endlessly...

Kayaking is very close to nature – animals peak out of the bushes, birds take off. We can observe our villages, towns and cities from a completely different perspective, from the river's perspective. Traveling down the river, we never know what we will see just around the bend. The landscape is constantly changing, it's never the same and that is amazing – with every sentence, Rafał Siwek, a keen kayaker, becomes more and more enthusiastic...

On the tri-border of Poland, Belarus and Ukraine there are plenty of places to go kayaking. The flowing waters of the Bug of almost 800 kilometres, together with its tributaries form hundreds of meanders, sandy slopes and beaches, opening views of vast, untouched spaces. This network of rivers, like an intricate necklace, combines pearls of architecture, virgin nature and a common rich history.

Kayaking teaches us how to commune with nature without any interference. We are dependent on the direction of the river and this is exciting. Secondly, it teaches how to interact with other people – kayaking connects people! – says Aleksandra, a participant of the Bug River trip „500 kayaks”, which was born to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Podlaskie Voivodeship.

It gives a great satisfaction from overcoming your own weaknesses. It's a great form of relaxation on the water, it's also a good integration and lesson of cooperation – adds her friend Katarzyna.

Following the interest of tourists, kayaking enthusiasts from the Polish Drohiczyn decided to do something more. When they were visiting the nearby Sokal, also on the Bug River, it turned out that the Ukrainian partners had a similar idea for development of tourism in the area. Without thinking too long, they decided to join forces. They also invited Belarusians from the nearby village of Bielin, from where – throughout the Dniepr-Bug Canal and the Muchavec River connecting the Black Sea with the Baltic Sea – the Bug River can be reached. In this way, one of a few, three-sided, Polish-Ukrainian-Belarusian project was created to mark and promote over 800 kilometres of the water trail called „Bug unites us”. About 400 shipping signs will appear on the banks, rest areas will be created with informational boards and maps, rubbish bins and huge wooden tubes, inside of

which people will be able to sit and listen to the sounds of nature. Eight observation towers will also be built, from the height of which tourists will be able to explore the beauty of the surrounding area.

Kayak tourism centers were created in Sokal, Bielin and Drohiczyn. The ones in Ukraine and Belarus, they will act primarily as informational points and equipment rentals, while on the Polish side the center houses exhibits of the Kayaking Museum previously operating in Drohiczyn, a kayak simulator and a tent with a pool for testing kayaks.

We have also purchased 10 kayaks, each one different: from a free-style kayak for exercising sport “swings”, through a children's kayak, sea, expeditionary kayak, etc. All so that visitors can see and test different types of equipment – emphasizes Rafał Siwek, who exercises the project manager role.

Warsaw didn't do it, Poznań didn't do it, no big city did it, only Drohiczyn managed – sums up proudly.

The promotion of the trail will be enhanced by international kayaking expeditions, publications, participation in tourism fairs, a website, a special e-application and a computer game. The authors of the project hope that along with the creation of the trail, agritourism farms and equipment rentals on the riverside as well as companies organizing professional kayaking and other events will develop.

Interestingly, there are already two places on the external EU border between Poland, Belarus and Ukraine, where during the tourist season you can get a border check and cross the border through the waterway, as part of kayaking or canoeing trip: on the Augustów Canal and in Brest on the Bug River. The creators of the “Bug Unites Us” trail dream that another such place will be created in Gołębie, a small village on the Polish-Ukrainian border. But this is a topic for a new story and maybe for another project...

More about the *BugUnitesUs* project can be found [here](#).



Dog service

Strengthening the capacity of the dog service of the Customs Authorities of the Republic of Belarus and Republic of Poland

BORDERS / Priority 4.2 Improvement of border management operations, customs and visas procedures

Project budget 221 820.00 EUR PBU co-financing 199 638.00 EUR

Lead beneficiary Minsk Central Custom House (BY)

Project partners Revenue Administration Regional Office in Białystok (PL); Brest Custom House (BY); Hrodna Regional Custom House (BY); Homiel Custom House (BY); Minsk Regional Custom House (BY); State Customs Committee of the Republic of Belarus (BY)

A shuttle bus arrived at the International Car Checkpoint „Brest”. Passengers were slowly passing the customs control, it is a common procedure. But this time there was something exceptional:

a working dog named Kamelia put herself in a specific position

– that was a signal about the possible presence of narcotics or psychotropic substances. In a few minutes the drugs were found in the pocket of one of the passengers in a closed zip pack. The sniff of a working dog met expectations, as always.

Black labrador-retriever has been working with Alexei Protopopov, the senior inspector of the canine department of the Brest Customs since 2018. During this period, the inspector and his dog managed to uncover about 20 cases of drugs smuggling across the border. Few times the inspector and Kamelia were recognized as the best team of the year and became the winners of competitions in drugs detecting. The performance of their team is really impressive.

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of attempts of smuggling narcotic substances across borders, trafficking of these prohibited goods has usually international character. Therefore, the Belarusian and Polish customs services cooperate in fighting against such illegal actions. The *DogService* project supported solutions to these problems at the Belarusian-Polish border: sniffer dogs.

The sharp sniff of these dogs always allows for detecting drugs and psychotropics. But it needs a lot of training and good working conditions for cynological services to prepare a dog for this unique and hard work.

The presence of mobile units of cynologists helps to reduce criminal activities in the border area and supports the overall security of people living in the region. For this purpose, vehicles for transportation of service dogs and cynologists were purchased on both sides of the Belarusian-Polish border within the *DogService* project. All these cars were additionally equipped with inspection kits. Now, if the assistance from cynological services is urgently needed, they can be quickly delivered to inspection sites. Training for staff from both countries on how to share their experiences related to customs control with working dogs, dog care and working dog techniques has also been an important component of the project. Twenty canine specialists got training in Poland and Belarus on detecting tobacco products and drugs.

Thanks to the work of such service dogs as Kamelia, customs control procedure is accelerated, as well as transport queues are reduced. Further cooperation between the cynological services of both countries will contribute to more efficient use of service dogs, development of their training methods and, in the end, the effectiveness of the border controls.

More information on the *DogService* project can be found [here](#).



Carpathian bee

Carpathian bee — joint actions for preservation of unique natural heritage in Ukrainian-Polish borderland

HERITAGE / Priority 1.2 Promotion and preservation of natural heritage

Project budget 66 665.00 EUR PBU co-financing 59 989.50 EUR

Lead beneficiary Non-government organization Association of Beekeeper “Carpathian eco-apiary” (UA)

Project partners Kolochava Village Council (UA); Association of self-governments “Euroregion Carpathians - Ukraine” (UA); Association for Development and Promotion of Podkarpacie “Pro Carpathia” (PL)

You can meet them everywhere in the Carpathians, even if you get to mountain tops. They may be invisible, but if you look closer, you will see they are everywhere where the flowers are blooming. In fact, colourful abundance of Carpathian wild flowers would disappear without them. They have been living here for many years, even before the people came. They are resilient, hard-working and good-tempered. They do much good to people but people do not always return the same that is given.

The heroes of this story are small greyish bees, called a “Carpathian bee” or a “Karpotka”. What makes them so special?

Carpathian bee can survive long periods of cold weather and is extremely productive, making the most of short periods of warm weather. It is not aggressive – some beekeepers do not even wear special protection gear to approach them. Being aboriginal species to this area, it used to dominate in the Carpathians for a long time, being a part of local life in which beekeeping played an important role. The monument to Carpathian bee erected in Vuchkove village in Zakarpattia, Ukraine, commemorates this tiny animal as an element of local heritage woven into Carpathian culture and lifestyle.

In the 20th century the situation of Carpathian bee changed. In Soviet times, in the course of agricultural experiments, it was taken as far as to Siberia and crossed with other bee species. At the same time, other bee species appeared in the Carpathians. Nowadays, different kinds of bees are available on sale and local farmers are always ready to experiment, tempted by the sellers’ promises to increase productivity... Unfortunately, this resulted in the decline of pure Carpathian bee population and wide dissemination of hybrid species as well as spread of diseases, unknown before. Other threats include pollution and decline in professional education for beekeepers. Moreover, it is worth to mention, that working with bees demands patience and is not always rewarded with high profit.

Still, there are people in the Carpathians for whom beekeeping is a real passion and who are determined to save the breed of Carpathian bees and promoting local beekeeping. They make unique, ecologically pure honey and other products such as cosmetics, medicines or candles. Some collect old items, related to beekeeping or provide services such as workshops or even “sleeping on beehives” therapy. They decided to address these challenges by initiating *CarpathianBee* project, which was designed and is being implemented together with partners from Ukraine and Poland.

“No one of my family had to do anything with bees. And no

farm of any kind was to become my profession – I studied law. My adventure with bees started... in the library. A book entitled Carpathian bee got into my hands by pure chance. The title spoke to me as Kosiv in the Carpathians is my native place. I was 15 then, and now I can say I have been dealing with bees more than half of my life.” Viktor Andrusiak, the Head of NGO Association of beekeepers “Carpathian Eco-apiary”, does not look like a stereotypical Ukrainian beekeeper. *“Nor any of my friend beekeepers do”* – laughs Viktor, “we are innovative, dynamic and open to new things.”

One of such “new things” is a “smart hive” – the beehive monitored and managed through a mobile application, which is one of the elements of the project. Other ideas proposed by the project are “attractive apiaries” in Kolochava and Kosiv, tourist “honey” trails, open events, blogging and, most importantly, activities for preservation of the breed.

“The project allowed us to do something, which has never been done before. Preservation of the species is technically complex, requiring comprehensive approach and joint efforts of many people in different parts of the Carpathians. Main project venues are located high in the mountains, which is ideal place for breeding as it prevents crossing with other species and is free from large-scale farming therefore from chemical contamination.” – explains Victor.

Scientific and monitoring expeditions to high-altitude apiaries of the Carpathian region helped to study the breed composition and determine the level of variability of the breed during different seasons. Also, nucleus beehives and queen rearing system have been purchased and are being distributed among local beekeepers in order to engage more people in preservation of the breed. Additionally, promotion of beekeeping and bee products as a tourist attraction on both sides of the border will stimulate micro-businesses and local communities. Carpathian beekeeping traditions are extremely interesting to explore and honey is a good souvenir to take home!

...Recently, an unusual village has appeared in Zakarpattia, Ukraine. There are charming wooden houses in traditional Carpathian style, including a mill, a school and a church. This village is inhabited by bee families, not people. This amazing place with miniature houses, filled with the smell of honey and sounds of bees buzz quickly became popular both with tourists and local people. It is one of the two „attractive apiaries”, which are ready to welcome tourist, as well as three Carpathian “honey trails”. Next year, Carpathian Honey Festival will gather people interested in beekeeping and Carpathian traditional culture and all honey-lovers.

You are invited, too!

More information on the *CarpathianBee* project can be found [here](#).



Hidden from sight

Improvement of epidemiological safety at the Polish-Belarusian border area

SECURITY / Priority 3.1 Support to the development of health protection and social services

Project budget 2 871 512.00 EUR PBU co-financing 2 119 111.00 EUR

Lead beneficiary Regional Specialist Hospital in Biata Podlaska (PL)

Project partners Brest Regional Hospital (BY)

What are the associations that an ordinary person has with the word „hospital“?

The first thought is the place where it is better not to get into. And what think about it people for whom it is a daily work, people for whom the hospital itself is a huge part of life? The medics consider the fight for patients' health and life the main goal of their work. This is what their efforts are concentrated on. These are the two main and obvious sides of the health care system – patients and medics.

But the proper functioning of every health care institution, and primarily the hospital, requires also a lot of work of many other people, providing maybe not that visible but essential keeping over functioning of this complex system of saving lives. The heroine of our story is such a person – says Kristina Vyacheslavovna Semenova.

For a long time, being the deputy chief of the hospital responsible for the technical issues and construction, her main concern was to create appropriate conditions for patients and doctors. The greatest challenge in achieving that were always limited financial sources. Looking for various solutions, Kristina came across the EU funded cross-border programmes and realized that despite all the possible difficulties, she must try that opportunity for the hospital development. She was the one who initiated a full-fledged partnership between healthcare institutions from Brest and Biata Podlaska (Poland) and their applying with a joint project in the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine CBC Programme 2007-2013. The project appeared to be successful and received a grant from the Programme.

The activities within the first project were related to cardiology, an area where statistics on cardiovascular diseases dictate the need for improvement. At that time, Kristina accompanied all stages of the project implementation up to the approval of its final report. From the very beginning, one of her greatest efforts was ensuring good communication between project partners, what was supported by her knowledge of the Polish language. Indeed, the project succeeded and creation of the strong partnership was the foundation of cooperation under subsequent Programme edition for 2014-2020.

This is how the *EpidSafe* project was born, the idea of which is to reduce the risk of mass outbreaks of infectious diseases, primarily such as Hepatitis C virus or HIV/AIDS. Within the project, the Regional Specialist Hospital in Biata Podlaska supplies medical and laboratory equipment and develops a special system for sending biological material, medicines and documents by means of compressed air. The equipping of a modern diagnostic laboratory in the

Department of Infectious Diseases (Brest Regional Clinical Hospital), which was one of the activities planned in the project, proved to be extremely on time in 2020. Doctors have always been recognizing the importance of epidemiological safety and working with infectious diseases, but no one could have thought that epidemiology would become so relevant. *EpidSafe* project came in handy – the new diagnostic equipment strongly strengthened the capacity of the hospital during the coronavirus pandemic. Except for current testing on Covid-19, this laboratory is normally involved in screening the population for hepatitis C.

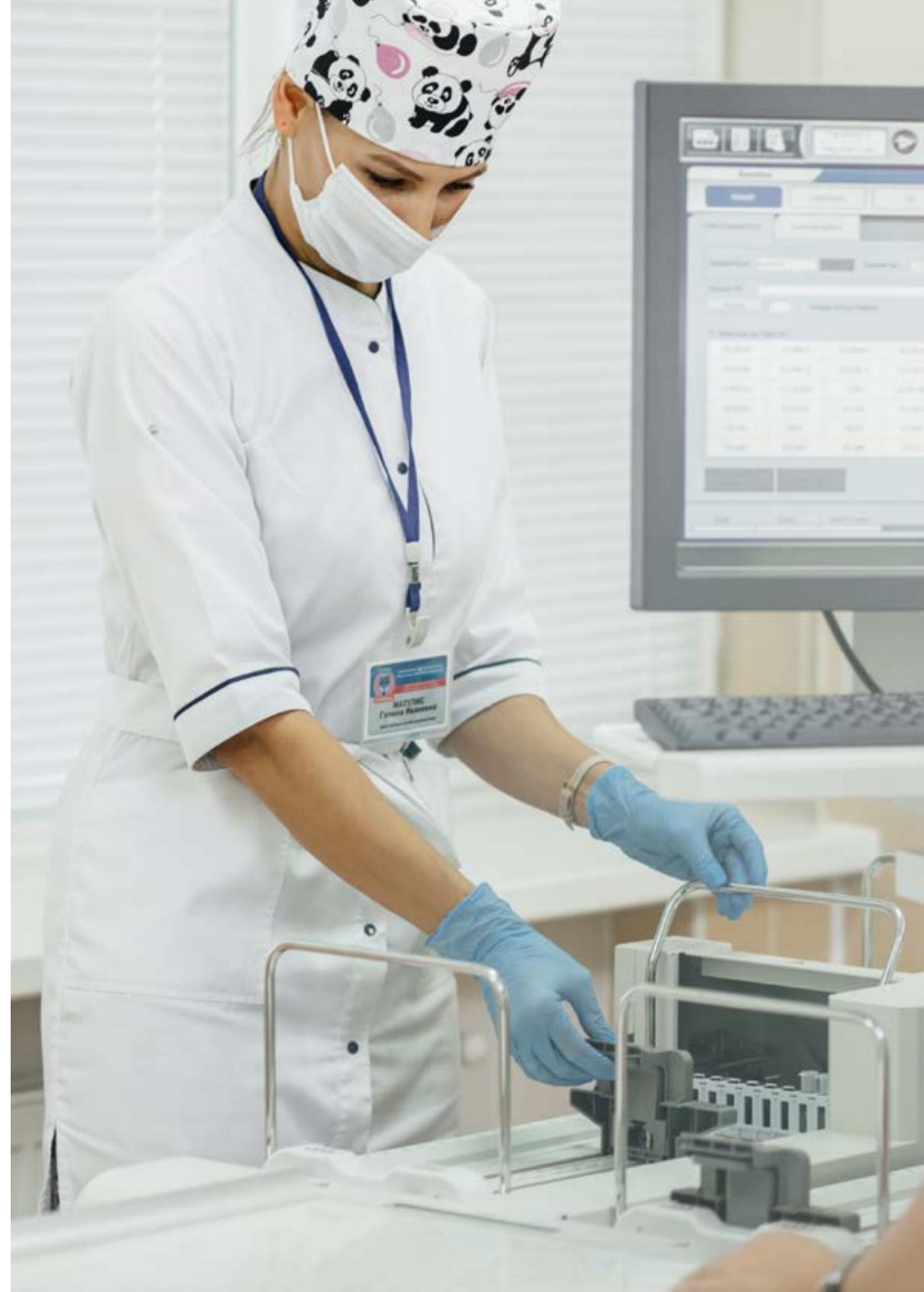
Can you imagine what screening is? People come in, not even thinking and suspecting any diseases. In 70 of 1000 screened patients, the test detects changes in the liver and then we send them for further detailed diagnosis and assistance. And here, of course, a great role is played by infrastructure – when we have a modern diagnostic laboratory there are tests, free screening for the population, elastography. – explains Kristina Vyacheslavovna.

The liver does not hurt and there are no symptoms of disease. That's why we used to say: hidden infections but nevertheless dangerous. – confirms Andrey Shestyuk, Head of the Surgery and Transplantation Department of the Brest Hospital

Moreover, as part of the project, trainings on highly dangerous infectious diseases as well as workshops for general practitioners and nurses are being provided to staff of medical institutions from both countries.

Joint projects have started a great friendship because it is not even so much a partnership as a really strong friendship. The most valuable thing from our projects is that we are really friends and can call each other to consult and resolve some difficult situation behind which a person's life stands. This is priceless. – summarizes Kristina Vyacheslavovna and nothing more has to be added.

More information on the *EpidSafe* project can be found [here](#).



No Wi-Fi, no touch...

4 Seasons – cross-border tourism routes

HERITAGE / Priority 1.2 Promotion and preservation of natural heritage

Project budget 65 970.00 EUR PBU co-financing 59 373.00 EUR

Lead beneficiary Volyn Oblast Business Support Fund (UA)

Project partners Cieszanów Commune (PL)

Such places are referred to as „the end of the world”. Or possibly it is „the world’s beginning”?... It all depends on the point of view, because for many people so many things begin here ...

It began in Gorajec, a new life for Marcin Piotrowski, a boy from Tomaszów Lubelski and his wife Marina Sestavili, an Estonian girl with Georgian, Polish and Russian roots. They met at university, and then in the tiny Gorajec with only 35 inhabitants, on the Polish-Ukrainian border, they spotted an old school building in need of renovation and dreamt of turning it into a tourist guesthouse. Surrounded by hectares of meadows and forests, a kilometer to the nearest house, while through the windows an elderly neighbour of extraordinary beauty – a sixteenth-century wooden orthodox church – looks in.

Fuelled by their energy, the „Folkowisko” festival was also initiated in Gorajec. That melting pot of cultures for several years now gathers hundreds of guests from many countries: Japan, Mexico, Canada, China, Spain, Italy, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and Bulgaria and was awarded with the European EFFE title (Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe) next to such prestigious events as Camerimage or Wratislavia Cantans. It is accompanied by workshops of dying crafts and meetings with the unspoiled nature.

And with people who are very friendly here, non-commercial towards reality and still have time for others.

This is how it begins in Gorajec, a new life – the „slow life” of numerous busy city people who are looking for a respite from the big city rush, smog and noise, who want to free themselves from tight corset of large corporations and equally stifling walls of blocks of flats. Arriving in Gorajec, they breathe deeply the fresh air, sighing with relief: – No Wi-Fi, no touch ...

This is how it began here, the dream of new ventures:

We don't want people to come to us only for concerts, but also to participate in the workshops and rallies that take place in the area. During hiking, biking and canoeing trips, they can get to know the flora and fauna of this place and understand its phenomenon, not to mention having fun – excites Marcin Piotrowski during the conversation.

And it began with a meeting:

We met in October 2017 in Rzeszów at the Annual Event of the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine Programme organized under the slogan „Cross-border Warm-up”. – recalls Olga Shvorak, from the Volyn Regional Business Support Fund, and Marcin adds:

It just sparked somehow during integration, joint off-road trips. A team that likes such a touristic atmosphere gathered there, we talked a little, exchanged contacts and then, during a joint brainstorming session, we assessed our strengths and weaknesses, determined what we needed – we knew that what we and they wanted was to act in tourism.

The partners also came to the conclusion that they want to attract tourists all year round. The very idea for the title of the project appeared a bit by accident, notes Olga:

When we were already returning home, admiring the beautiful landscapes of Podlasie, a sign „4 SEASONS” flashed above the road. This is how the idea to create a micro-project emerged, because there are 3 national parks in the Volyn Oblast: „Szacki”, „Pripyat-Stochód”, „Cuman Forest”. The Volyn region is heavily wooded, with numerous lakes, rivers and swamps, it has remarkable ethnographic, historical and cultural values. It can be visited and explored in all seasons!

They put their ideas into a joint project. In order to involve the inhabitants in their activities, competitions for tourist routes for 4 seasons were announced on both sides of the border. From among many original applications, Marcin and the team of the Cieszanów commune chose the following routes on the Polish side: ornithological, running, mushrooming and ... PGR (former state farms).

This idea surprised me, but it is my favourite. Even in winter, you can drive to state farms and see what life was like there in the past.

Information boards with QR codes will be placed along the routes, a joint trilingual tourist guide and brochure will be published, and 9 short promotional films will be created. People from Ukraine and Poland participated in the „Tourist Mixer” – a meeting aimed at exchanging ideas and refining new tourist products under the supervision of experts. The partners admit that many new ideas for the future have already arisen during this cooperation.

I always believed that the world begins here and that is where it sets off for an adventure. – concludes Marcin.

More information on the [4_Seasons](#) project can be found [here](#).



Hidden treasures of the Carpathians

Wooden Churches — the hidden giants of common tourism destination „Carpathians”

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 66 585.00 EUR PBU co-financing 59 926.50 EUR

Lead beneficiary Agency of Regional Development and Cross-border Cooperation “Transcarpathia” of Zakarpattia Oblast Council (UA)

Project partners Kresy Museum in Lubaczów (PL)

This wooden church, dark with age, is graceful and slender, it impresses with its refinement and thoughtfulness of design. The unknown master, who built it about 250 years ago, apparently did not graduate from any architectural school, did not know the words „baroque” and „gothic”. And yet his creation is stunning.

It reflects our countryman’s vision of the universe, the absolute of his understanding... This work came from the soul of the man who, in his love for God, sought to create the best thing he could only imagine.

Mykhailo Pryimych, Doctor of Arts, the lecturer at the Uzhhorod Academy of Arts (Ukraine), can talk for hours about wooden sacred architecture, to which he devoted most of his academic career. This passion started in his childhood – there was a beautiful old church in his village, almost ruined now. Today, he shares his knowledge working as an expert in the *WoodenTreasure* project, implemented jointly by the partners from Zakarpattia Oblast (UA) and Podkarpackie Voivodeship (PL).

These churches are unique in their proportions, we can apply the principle of the golden ratio to them – the master’s eye was so “trained” by the beauty of nature that he had a perfect sense of it.

Zakarpattia is unique in having 5 styles of wooden architecture represented here – Boyko, Lemko, Hutsul, Maramures Gothic and Baroque. This kind of diversity cannot be found anywhere in Europe. There are more than a hundred wooden churches here. Many interesting landmarks are also located on the other side of the border, in Poland. Each of them has its own story, shrouded in legends, inextricably linked to the destinies of people. But these monuments are not only the objects of our pride but also our pain because they are being destroyed – not only by time and nature but also by people’s negligence.

The biggest enemies of wooden churches are the people who destroy them, make incorrect repairs, for example, cover them with tin. A tin-covered church is doomed! People do not realize the value of what they possess.

Many tourists travelling in these cross-border areas do not realize their value or rather they simply do not know about the existence of the beautiful and particularly interesting landmarks located there like the ancient Uzhok church with unique “Roman” design, Shelestiv Church in Uzhgorod – the

best example of Lemko architecture in Zakarpattia, Strukiv Church in Yasinya – a sample of Hutsul architecture, or churches in Pylypets and Bukovets with a beautiful iconostasis, to name just a few.

Contemplating this beauty, touching it, is a special, new experience that can greatly enrich modern people, especially the inhabitants of large cities. Mykhailo Pryimych is convinced, that:

... For someone who lives in the environment of fiberglass, smoothed surfaces, the natural material itself has an extraordinary aesthetic value – he can see its beauty, touch the natural material. We lack this contact with nature these days.

The stories associated with the construction of these unusual buildings are not less interesting. For example, some churches were built without a single nail (or with the use of wooden “nails”) in such a way that many of them could be moved from one place to another if necessary. The wood itself was carefully selected and prepared ensuring this seemingly fragile material to survive for many centuries.

The creators of the *WoodenTreasure* project see their task in drawing attention to these hidden treasures of the Carpathians. The topics of preservation and use of wooden sacred architecture were discussed during joint, Polish-Ukrainian seminars. In order to create high-quality visual materials later used for promotional purposes, series of events for photographers were organized which resulted in joint photo exhibitions in both countries. Virtual tours of 12 selected churches will have also been developed soon and it is so worth to take a tour, as there are stunning. All these activities will let people, both locals and tourists, discover the value of wooden architecture, to give it due respect, support and protection.

More information on the *WoodenTreasure* project can be found [here](#).



Smart roads – smart citizens

Improvement the transport accessibility in Brest and Biła Podlaska

ACCESSIBILITY / Priority 2.1 Improvement and development of transport services and infrastructure

Project budget 2 492 738.23 EUR PBU co-financing 2 243 464.41 EUR

Lead beneficiary The Road Maintenance Company in Brest (BY)

Project partners City of Biła Podlaska (PL)

Probably each of us dreams of living in a modern and technological city where you can quickly get from one place to another. However, a modern “smart” city should not only be technologically advanced but also green and comfortable for the life of its inhabitants. The concept of „smart city” has captured the minds of urban planners for centuries, developing more and more ideas for making life easier and more comfortable. A special place in this concept holds the transport system and environmentally friendly solutions, as being mobile is one of the priorities of living in a fast-developing city. We want to act quickly and be dynamic.

Maxim and Ekaterina are native Brest dwellers, and also recently a married couple leading an active lifestyle. In summer they get used to cycling, swimming, hiking while wintertime means skiing in the Carpathians. During the off-season, Maxim and Ekaterina always find opportunities for other sports. These young people are green-minded and lead an eco-friendly lifestyle, so the decision to go car-free and use bicycles was not difficult.

It is not easy to be green in the city, but we try to minimize our impact on the environment and take care of it – says Maxim.

In winter, they use public transport and find it has many advantages, from environmental aspects to saving the family budget. Maxim emphasizes that he is very satisfied with the public transport in Brest. He gets to work in half an hour, the bus arrives according to the schedule, and is comfortable. However, it wasn't always this way. Now more than three months ago, the road to work took him much longer. The change came after the installation of a new intelligent transport system which was recently introduced in Brest. This solution released traffic in the city by redistributing its flow. Thanks to the operation of the city lights, traffic congestion has decreased significantly. The couple, as an active cycling enthusiast, is especially pleased with the new bicycle paths located in a special “green zone” of intersections, because Brest sorely missed them! They even took part in workshops on safe cycling and first aid, which they found surprisingly interesting and useful.

We are very happy about such positive changes in the road traffic of our city and we hope that soon every intersection in Brest will have such a “green zone”! – says Ekaterina.

The creation of an intelligent transport system in Brest became possible thanks to the implementation of the

OurBetterStreet project within the Programme. The idea of the project was to improve the transport infrastructure and increase the level of accessibility of the Brest – Biła Podlaska border region. The transport infrastructure in Brest and Biła Podlaska was improved by the modernization of local roads (11.3 km and 1.6 km, respectively). In addition, in Brest, reconstruction works of seven intersections on Varshavskoye highway, Moskovskaya street, and Respublika avenue has been completed, and the built-in intelligent transport system allows to shorten the travel time by fine-tuning the traffic regime. How does it work? On the heaviest sections of roads, sensors are built into the carriageway to show the number of vehicles, breakdown by passenger cars, trucks and buses. In this way, traffic was redistributed from more congested highways to roads with less traffic. As a result, fewer exhaust gases are released into the environment. The project partners from Poland renovated two intersections on No. 2 highway in Biła Podlaska, added nine additional lanes and two roundabouts. Also within the project, the road structure with a drainage system was renovated, new sidewalks were laid, road lighting and road signs were installed.

Many of the border's indigenous residents from Belarus and Poland, including Maxim and Ekaterina, still believe that small actions make a small but significant contribution to the preservation of the environment of their hometown.

More about the *OurBetterStreet* project can be found [here](#).



Galician oil stories

Oil cradle of Europe: the forgotten history of Poland and Ukraine

HERITAGE / Priority 1.1 Promotion of local culture and history

Project budget 66 659.00 EUR PBU co-financing 59 993.10 EUR

Lead beneficiary Boryslav City Council (UA)

Project partners Sanok Commune (PL)

Did you know that oil extraction in Galicia once ranked third place in the world? Did you know Boryslav ozokerite was used to insulate the first underwater transatlantic telegraph cables between Europe and the United States? Did you know a small town of Boryslav used to have its own British Consulate? Did you know Rockefeller and Nobel owned several oil wells in Boryslav?

Today's Boryslav is not what it used to be – a depressive post-industrial town with oil facilities located everywhere next to dwelling houses, with a few old villas which have seen better days. The water is polluted by oil and methane is another threat to people's lives and health. Although oil extraction is insignificant these days it still constitutes 80% of the town's income. Labour migration has increased strongly during recent two decades.

Albertyna Buchynska devoted her life to the study of the Earth – Geology. She was born in Stebnyk, a small mining town in Lviv oblast, she was a part of this environment from early childhood. However, her occupations were not limited to science or industry - she initiated many projects and was involved with various activities popularizing geology among the wide audience, such as Geotourism trips in Western Ukraine, Geology classes for children, to name just a few. The aspect of people's relations with the Earth is the most fascinating to her.

These stories are something I love more than pure science – she confesses.

As a coordinator of *OilCradle* project, Albertyna is working now on the promotion of the towns, which have much in common with her native place. Sanok in Poland and Boryslav in Ukraine, both once rich and vibrating oil cities, changed dramatically as their most important resources drained out. But they still have something valuable to offer – their history.

Tourism can become a chance for survival of such cities – destroyed and unique at the same time. No doubt, geology and industrial heritage are the most important assets: like nowhere else in Ukraine, oil wells, both old and new, are a part of today's cityscape, including a famous №298 (Oil City) well. Today, the task is to make it also a good place to live, to make local people aware of their past and committed to its future. This is something the *OilCradle* project team is positive about.

Boryslav has even more to offer – you can visit Jan Zeh's pharmacy and buy a tiny bottle of oil as a souvenir. There

are beautiful old churches, in particular, St. Anna's church, which is an important pilgrimage destination. The city park has been recently renovated and has many sport and recreation facilities including the largest open-air workout gym in Western Ukraine, a rope park and a lake. There is even a children's playground built in the shape of an oil pump!

Lives of many prominent people are connected with this town including Ivan Franko, who portrayed the life of local workers in his classical novel "Boryslav is laughing", an Ukrainian-Brazilian poet and translator Vira Vovk and a French film director Maurice Regamey. The town's location in the outskirts of the Carpathian mountains is excellent for active tourism, a newly built ski facility called Bukovytsia making it even more attractive in wintertime. Close neighbourhood to SPA resorts of Truskavets and Skhidnytsia, to ancient fortress Tustan and a historical town of Drohobych makes it a must visit place for everyone exploring this part of Ukraine.

The challenge is to make this town visible, to make people speak about it.

By erecting monuments to Jan Zeh in Boryslav and Ignacy Łukasiewicz in Strachocina near Sanok, the *OilCradle* project is going to bring back memories of legendary creators of kerosene lamp and pioneers of oil extraction, who deserve due recognition and should be commemorated in historical "oil places". The monuments will become new landmarks on the tourist maps of the towns. Remarkably, a kerosene lamp was chosen for the project logo as it marked an important milestone of the town's development. Kerosene from Boryslav lighted the houses all over Europe, kerosene lamp is now one of the Lviv symbols due the fact it was actually invented there. It proves that the history of science is not boring. It was created by live people and it once made a huge impact on everyday life.

Interestingly, the posts about the past of the Boryslav, with black and white photographs that we publish on our Facebook page draw people's attention and often provoke discussions. It means people are really interested in their town's history.

Albertyna's vision of the future of the towns is optimistic. She can see positive changes, which has taken place recently and working on new projects and initiatives. Besides, the local community is quite active and committed to the towns' development.

I feel proud for being able to contribute to the development of this amazing place.

More about the *OilCradle* project can be found [here](#).



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