‘PROMOTION OF A COMMON HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF POLAND AND UKRAINE – ‘FORTRESS OF PRZEMYŚL’

<table>
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<th>Umbrella project lead partner (LPU)</th>
<th>Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland/ PL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Micro-projects</td>
<td>10 PL-UA partnership projects</td>
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<td>Total budget</td>
<td>541 772,63 €</td>
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<td>Programme contribution</td>
<td>487 595,36 €</td>
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<td>Duration</td>
<td>12 months (from 01/01/2014)</td>
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<td>Project ref. number</td>
<td>IPBU.03.02.00-18-826/12</td>
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The project concept was built around one of the most prominent landmarks of the Polish-Ukrainian borderland - ‘Fortress of Przemyśl’, made up of 47 forts (41 in Poland and 6 – in Ukraine) built before the World War I.

The target area of the project (Mostyska Rayon in the Lviv Oblast and Przemyśl poviat of Podkarpacie Voivodeship) are characterised by unsatisfactory level of socio-economic development. The regions face the urgent problem of the search for new sources to support their competitiveness, growing the welfare of residents and forming the unique competitive advantages of the areas. In this situation, ‘Cultural segment of economy’ based on culture resources of territories on both sides of the border may become a catalyst for local development. The historical and cultural object ‘Fortress of Przemyśl’ is regarded as a key element of tourist potential in target regions and every effort should be made to benefit from it in the most effective way. The unique cross-border group of fortifications - ‘Fortress of Przemyśl’ - is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the target regions. It goes through the defence structures making a 45-kilometer circle around the city of Przemyśl and consist of 47 forts, the whole tourist infrastructure is located on Polish territory. In Ukraine, the promotion of ‘Fortress of Przemyśl’ started in 2009 through the annual art festival ‘Fort Mission’.

The project idea was formed by potential participants in 2011 during the meetings of authorities of Mostyska Rayon Council, Starostwo of Przemyśl and Association of the Carpathian Euroregion Poland. As a result of those meetings, a circle of potential participants (partners of particular micro-projects) from Polish and Ukrainian sides was determined.
Finally, 22 organisations (11 from Poland including the lead partner of the umbrella project and 11 from Ukraine) were selected for participation in the umbrella project. Overall objective of the project is assistance in social and economic development of border areas in Przemyśl county in Poland and Mostyska Rayon in Ukraine by promotion of infrastructure of the ‘Fortress of Przemyśl’.

The activities undertaken by the micro-project partners are focused on promotion of ‘Fortress of Przemyśl’ area and include, inter alia, development of mechanism for the establishment of the cross-border micro-region ‘Borderland forts’ and elaboration of its promotion strategy, development of cross-border cooperation programme for Mostyska Rayon and Przemyśl powiat, support for entrepreneurship in the tourism sector through workshops, consultations and developing a specialised IT tool, organising events for the promotion of regional cuisine and folk crafts, conducting historical re-enactments, organising joint sports events and promotion of healthy lifestyle, support for tourist guides and potential guides through i.a. practical and theoretical courses, development of information resources and the dissemination of knowledge about history and traditions of the target regions by various means of information, implementation of the cross-border Polish-Ukrainian youth volunteering programme and cooperation of schools in the field of cultivation of joint historical and cultural heritage of Poland and Ukraine.

The umbrella project which integrates the activities of 10 micro-projects provides an opportunity to make an effective promotion of the object ‘Fortress of Przemyśl’ in Poland, Ukraine and the whole of Europe by joint efforts to initiate a set of joint actions in different fields of social life directed at a common goal – the improvement of the quality of life of local residents.
Locations and roles of the partners in the project
What determined your choice of theme for the umbrella project?

The Fortress of Przemyśl itself is one of the most important historical tourist attractions in this part of Europe. It should be added that its potential from a promotional point of view is used to a very limited extent and from a tourist point of view the product is simply dead. Moreover, it brings a multidimensional charge of cognitive emotions. It refers to the times when the Eastern Lesser Poland, or Galicia with Lviv as the capital city belonged to one state unit of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This period, rightly or not, is associated with peaceful co-existence of nations and religions of Central Europe. It is exactly this myth which means that, despite its military nature and blood-filled history, the Fortress of Przemyśl can be a significant element of building positive associations with the history of these lands. Another important factor to include the Fortress of Przemyśl in mutual actions is the fact that the buildings - forts of the Fortress are physically located on both sides of Polish and Ukrainian border. Hence, there are no doubts as to the cross-border DNA of the project.

How does the project supplement the policy of the Euroregion?

Actually it can be said that now the value of the project is much higher than when the application was submitted during the call for proposals. It is caused by the fact that in the meantime the Carpathian Euroregion has started the implementation of a huge programme called ‘Alpine - Carpathian Cooperation Bridge’ co-financed by the Swiss Confederation. Within the framework of this project, inspired by Swiss experiences, we have started the development and implementation of the Carpathia Brand Strategy. It is a major undertaking, the essence of which is the creation of an international brand, this being a tool
supporting social and economic development of the Carpathian area. The Carpathia Brand has strong commercial and economic character, even though in its essence it relates to the sphere of experience resulting from tourism. Besides, the Carpathia Brand is constructed in a manner of so-called ‘house of brands’. It means that the name and logo Carpathia will contain sub-brands - flagship Carpathian tourist products. There is no need for special research or imagination to realise that the Fortress of Przemyśl is one of such leading brands in the Carpathian basket and this umbrella project started in a perfect moment.

**Strong partnership is necessary for these kinds of actions. How do you perceive that issue now and in the future?**

The realisation of the project will, in fact, be a test of the partnership arrangement which realises it. One way or another we will build a strong consortium with the Fortress as its centre and we want to be its guardian. In that sense the project has already brought us benefits. Attitude based on the partnership is an axiom for us - Euroregion is a partnership. As a philosophy of operating and as organisation. However, in this case something else matters. This ‘thing’ is the status of Ukraine as a country that is a strategic partner for Poland. Also in the Euroregion we try to fill this partnership with content on a local and regional level. It encounters many difficulties. The proposed solutions within the framework of the European financial instruments are not always satisfactory for us. Despite this we identify and support those directions of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation which hold the biggest promise of success. Creation of the Carpathia Brand and strong brands of places is exactly such direction. Hence, I don’t want to say that in passing, but in a sense in an unintentional manner ‘Cross-border promotion of forts of the Fortress of Przemyśl’ became our first, pilot project of Polish-Ukrainian component of the Carpathia Brand.

**Focal points of the project:**

- New tourist signs
- Fairs, exhibitions and conferences
- GPS maps of cross-border cultural tourism
- Promotion strategy for “Borderland Forts”
- Seminars, workshops and study visits
- Multimedia virtual tour in 4 languages
- Cross-border network of gastronomic business
- Nordic walking, ski and snowboard competitions
- Internet access for 2000 people
- International volunteers work camps for youth
- Historical re-enactment
- Guidebook about regional cuisine and crafts
- Basketball tournaments
- Bike show