

Enhancing Cooperation -Newsletter

of the IPA CBC Programmes Montenegro-Albania and Montenegro-Kosovo 2014-2020

> August 2022

PHOTO CREDIT: ETNO ROOM LUBNICE (BERANE) - WORKSHOP WITH JOURNALISTS

CONTENT

The fourteenth issue of the newsletter brings you information on activities and events implemented within both IPA Cross-border Cooperation (CBC) Programmes Montenegro - Albania and Montenegro - Kosovo* 2014-2020. The programmes and project activities are funded by the European Union.

Please find below more information on the programmes.

IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania 2014-2020

The global objective of the programme is to promote/strengthen good neighbourly relations and socioeconomic development of the border regions, through valorising its touristic potentials, an environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive economic development, with respect for its common cultural and natural heritage.

Click here for more information.

IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Kosovo 2014-2020

The global objective of the programme is to improve the standard and quality of living of the people in the programme area through the environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive economic development of the region, with respect for its common cultural and natural heritage.

Click here for more information.

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* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.







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Cross-border workshop for journalists organised

The Joint Technical Secretariat organised two cross-border workshops for journalists within MNE-ALB and MNE-KOS Programmes, with the support of the Operating Structures of the Programmes, Ministry of European Affairs of Montenegro, Ministry of Finance of Montenegro - CFCU, State Agency of Strategic Programming and Coordination of the Republic of Albania and Ministry of Local Government of Kosovo.

The workshop for the MNE-ALB Programme was held on 24th June 2022 and included the visit to projects that were/are being implemented in Municipalities of Berane and Petnjica. The journalists were accompanied during the promotional event by Sanja Todorović, Head of Joint Technical Secretariat and Nikola Đonović, Project Officer of the Joint Technical Secretariat. In order to promote the results of the projects financed under the IPA II

Cross-border Cooperation Programme Montenegro - Albania, the workshop was organised as a promotional tour for journalists from Montenegro that enabled them to visit projects and their achievements on the field and to discuss with projects stakeholders and final beneficiaries on the importance of this projects, cross-border cooperation and support of EU for local communities.



During the workshop, the journalist had opportunity to visit the outputs that have been achieved within the projects contracted under 1st and 2nd CfP under the IPA CBC Programme Montenegro-Albania, i.e. Augmenting Cooperation – From Christian Antiquities Towards Enhanced Tourism; Preserving cultural landscape of Albania and Montenegro; Tourism hubs for better tourism offer in less advantaged mountainous areas; Local cuisine as tourism offer of cross-border region; and Young Montenegrins and Albanians in Raspberry Crops.

In the Museum of Polimje, the journalists visited the museum exhibition, where the artefacts form the archaeological site Donja Ržanica are exhibited. The artefacts that now became part of the permanent exhibition of the museum were excavated as part of the project Augmenting Cooperation – From Christian Antiquities Towards Enhanced Tourism. Moreover, journalists interviewed and discussed the project



achievements with the director of the museum, Violeta Folić, archaeologist expert and curator of the museum, Predrag Lutovac and the Mayor of Municipality of Berane Vuko Todorović.



The conclusions drawn from the conversation were that EU funds for the North and CBC cooperation contributes to the development of the tourism sector in the Municipality of Berane and to the valorisation of the cultural heritage in the region. After this, the participants visited the archaeological site Tumbarice in Donja Ržanica and the excavated remains of the Tumba City.



Following the visit of the location in Tumbarice, the journalists visited the Etno Room that was renovated as part of the project Preserving cultural landscape of Albania and Montenegro and interviewed the representative of the Regional Development Agency for Bjelasica, Komovi and Prokletije, Radojka Šćekić and discussed about the cultural heritage of the area and the added value it brings to rural tourism.



Moreover, the importance of supporting rural families and their efforts to stay in the North of Montenegro and work in their households was underlined. After a short break, the journey continued toward the rural household of the family Kljajić that are beneficiaries of the project Local cuisine as tourism offer of cross-border region. At their household, journalists talked with the family Kljajić and discuss on challenges and benefits of rural tourism and the important role that it plays for the families living in the area.



Finally, the journalists were hosted by Ziko Alilović, Secretary of the Municipality of Petnjica. With the journalists it was discussed on the importance of EU funds for the employment sector in Petnjica and the impact the project had on the beneficiaries, as 20 new raspberry plantations were created as part of the project Young Montenegrins and Albanians in Raspberry Crops.



After the interview, the participants visited the plantation of raspberries of the family household Agović, one of the project beneficiaries and talked about the benefits that the local population has from growing raspberries, and discussed on possibilities of improving the placement of the products.

As part of the MNE-KOS Programme the workshop was held on 1st July 2022 and included the visit to projects that were/are being implemented in Municipalities of Gusinje, Plav and Andrijevica. The journalists were accompanied during the promotional event by Sanja Todorović, Head of Joint Technical Secretariat, Almir Čaušević, Project Officers of the Joint Technical Secretariat and Stefan Bulatović, representative of Ministry of European Affairs of Montenegro.



During the workshop, the journalist had opportunity to visit the outputs that have been achieved within the projects contracted under 1st and 2nd CfP under the IPA CBC Programme Montenegro-Kosovo, i.e. Eco and Outdoor Tourism Actions of the Balkan Alps; Accursed mountains exquisite outdoor destination; Cross border joint initiatives for better waste management; Tourism hubs for better tourism offer in less advantaged mountainous areas; Transhumance – new tourism offer of Kosovo and Montenegro; and Culture heritage – Treasure of Cross Border Region.



In the Municipality of Gusinje the journalists visited the Info Centre established within the project Culture heritage – Treasure of Cross Border Region and obtained detailed information from project beneficiaries on the activities that have been conducted and that are foreseen within the project. In addition, they visited the Tourism Organisation of Gusinje were they have been informed on the implemented projects and had the possibility to see equipment and promotional materials produced within the projects Eco and Outdoor Tourism Actions of the Balkan Alps and Accursed mountains – exquisite outdoor destination.



Journalists also discussed with the Mayor of Municipality of Gusinje Anela Čekić and other local officials how cross-border cooperation and EU funds contributed to the development of the tourism sector in Gusinje and got acquainted with new produced touristic offer "How to spend 1, 4 or 7 days in Prokletije". After a short break, the journey continued toward Municipality of Plav where they visited the Recycling Yard in Plav, that was established within the project Cross border joint initiatives for better waste management was organised.



The journalist discussed about the recycling process which was established for the first time in North Montenegro, management of the recycling yard and other related topics with the director of Public Utility Company of Plav, Ervin Tošić. The journalists took the opportunity to obtain information on the quantity of the waste that is being recycled, methods of collection and the way of usage of the waste for selling purposes.



After Municipality of Plav, the next venue was at Municipality of Andrijevica, where the local authorities hosted the journalists. The journalists had the opportunity to discuss on impact of the project Tourism hubs for better tourism offer in less advantaged mountainous

areas with the deputy-mayor of Andrijevica Vesko Raketić, project manager Miodrag Ivanović, as well as with other local stakeholders.



Once the meeting in the municipal building was finished, the journalist travelled to Krivi do (mountain area above Andrijevica) and visited the Tourism/Mountaineer hut which was reconstructed within above mentioned project. At the venue in Krivi do, the journalists have been informed by project manager Miodrag Ivanović on the management plan of the hut, joint trails that will be established in order to connect Krivi Do tourism hut with the hut that has been established in Bjeshket e Belegut in Kosovo, as well as on capacities and the services that will be offered in the hut.



Finally, the journalists were hosted by family Asanović who are the owners of the katun in Bačko Brdo and are one of the households that were the final beneficiaries of the project *Transhumance – new tourism* offer of Kosovo and Montenegro. At the venue in Bačko Brdo, Dalibor Šekularac from Regional Development Agency for Bjelasica, Komovi and Prokletije, as project beneficiary, provided information on the area and results that derived from the project. During the traditional lunch that was organised by household Asanović, the journalists had the opportunity to discuss and obtain more information on the project from its final beneficiaries.



News on projects financed under the 2nd CfP IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania

Workshops for youth on medicinal and aromatic plants

Three workshops were organized for high school students and students in Plav, as part of the project *Promoting Sustainable Use of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants for Livelihood Improvement and Biodiversity Conservation.* The project is implemented by the Municipality of Plav in cooperation with the Municipality of Tropoja, as well as with the NGO Democratic Integration and Development Center and the NGO Albanian Alps.



Namely, formal basic and advanced training workshops for high school students and university students on medicinal and aromatic herbs were held in Plav during June. The aim of the workshop, held at the "Bećo Bašić" secondary school in Plav, was to raise awareness between these young people about medicinal and aromatic plants. Participants showed high interest for learning more on medicinal and aromatic plants that grow in this areas.



Young people from the area of the municipality of Plav were trained on the types of medicinal and aromatic plants of this area, as well as the ways of their proper and sustainable collection.



The project strives to improve the protection of biodiversity and endangered medicinal and aromatic plants in the target area through the improvement of knowledge, collection practices and plant processing practices and contribute to the sustainable use of the potential of medicinal and aromatic plants for the local economies of the project area.

Training and exercises on protection and rescue in case of fire held

With the support of the European Union within the project *Disasters do not know borders 2*, a cross-border demonstration exercise on fire protection and rescue was held in Podgorica on June 3, 2022, in which 35 rescuers from Montenegro and Albania checked and showed preparedness to respond to this disaster.



The exercise was organised following the four-day training of rescuers from these two countries, which included theoretical and practical part, during which they learned about modern methods of protection and rescue in case of fire. The trainers were fire officers and instructors of the Fire Brigade Association of the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County with decades of experience in this field in Croatia - Nikola Tramontana, Dario Gauš, Siniša Kauzlarić and Igor Hrelja.



Activities of the project SOLUTION

During June 2022, as part of activities of the SOLUTION project, the third sampling campaign of water and sediment in Albanian part of Shkodra lake was organized by project partner University of Tirana.

Moreover, from 27th June to 1st July 2022, a training was organized at the Center for Ecotoxicological Research Podgorica for the staff of the University of Tirana, Faculty of Natural Sciences in relation to the analyzes of the determination of metals in water and sediments with the newest techniques. Also, University of Tirana staff were trained for the determination of nutrients such as total phosphorus and phosphates in water.

In addition, on 8th July, the first round table was held in Shkoder in which gathered participants from the Local and Regional Environmental and

Health Institutions of Shkoder, the Shkoder Regional Research and Scientific Institutions, Shkoder Municipality, Prefecture and local NGOs.



After the presentation of the project activities and its preliminary results, a discussion was held on the topics Lake Skadar/ Shkoder pollution and improvement of ecological balances and scientific researches in environment.



The project Skadar Lake withOut chemicaL pollUTION - SOLUTION is implemented by the Centre for Ecotoxicological Research Montenegro, University of Tirana and Association Green Centre from Albania.

Cross-Border Forum of Future Cooperation held

On July 6th the Cross-Border Forum of Future Cooperation was held in Podgorica as part of the Work4Youth project. Youth from Albania and Montenegro had the opportunity to communicate, discuss and exchange experience, as well as receive recommendations from experts for the further development of their business ideas.



The forum was concluded with practical advice and information on tools that can be used when talking with investors.



As part of the promotional activitites the project contiued to promote the supported youth enteprise ideas. Check out some of the supported youth enterprises here.

The project Work4Youth is implemented by the Partners Albania for Change and Development, Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid (Montenegro) and NGO Youth Intellectuals - Hope.

Promotional activities in Albania and Montenegro

As part of activities of the project Montenegro and Albania towards Zero Waste during June a cleaning campaign in Margegaj was organized. This was done as par of the camapign to mark the opening of the tourist season in Valbona.





In Montenegro, during July, 150 interested households and restaurants in Gusinje received composters. Namely, composters were given to inhabitants of Višnjevo, Kruševo, Koljenovići, Vusanje, Martinovići i Dosuđe. This was done as part of the educational door-to-door campaign on composting and prevention of organic waste.



Fair for employment of persons with disabilities held within the A.C.C.E.N.T. project

As part of the A.C.C.E.N.T. project, a fair for the employment of persons with disabilities was organized on 28th July in Bar. The aim of the event was to connect all important actors from the public, civil and private sectors with persons with disabilities in order to provide them with information on employment opportunities, training and education.



The fair was opened by the Archbishop of Bar, Rok Gjonlleshaj, president of Caritas of the Archdiocese of Bar. According to the coordinator of the project Marko Đelović, through the fair the right of PWDs to employment was promoted and the intention was to make the public better acquainted with employment opportunities and models of work and social integration of PWDs. "The fair promotes examples of good practice in the employment of PWDs. Through the presented examples of good practice, the project aims to contribute to the creation of sustainable employment models for this target group in the employment of PWDs and the achievement of EU standards for this area. The fair combines informative, educational and exhibition aspects", he explained at the opening of the fair.



The participants were also welcomed by Julija Bici, representative of Caritas Albania, which is one of the partners in the project. The fair brought together, in addition to the exhibitors and visitors, representatives of institutions that deal with issues of importance for improving the position of people with disabilities. The Head of the Delegation Ambassador Oana Cristina Popa welcomed the participants and praised activities and projects that deal with vulnerable groups. "I hope that the fair that I opened today in Bar will offer chances, jobs and improve the lives of members of some of our most vulnerable groups", she added.



The fair was also attended by the state secretary in the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Edina Dešić, as well as the President of the Municipality of Bar, Dušan Raičević, the Director of the Regional Employment Office, Rozafa Zmijani, and the Director of Social Services in the Municipality of Shkodra, Filip Vilja. After the introductory speeches the participants of the ceremony and citizens visited the stands of the fair and learned more on employment opportunities, training and education for this vulnerable group.

The project A.C.C.E.N.T.- Accessibility, Civic Conscience, Employment for Persons with Disabilities, as a New TREND is implemented by the Caritas of Bar's Archdiocese (Montenegro), Caritas Albania, NGO Project Hope (Albania) and Association of Paraplegics Bar (Montenegro).

Exchange of students between Montenegro and Albania

As part of the activities of the project Pathways to Career Development a group of students from the Secondary Vocational School "Hamdi Bushati" together with their teachers, visited the High School "Bratstvo - Jedinstvo" in Ulcini to exchange experiences related to youth and business sector.



During this visit, students from both schools presented winning projects and discussed the challenges and obstacles in opening small businesses by young people, shared positive experiences of involvement in the project, teaching practices, attending professional courses, etc. Teachers of both schools also exchanged good practices they have built in relations with the business sector, in creating teaching platforms, etc.



Moreover, as part of promotional activities the Local Youth Employment Plan was presented on 30th June to the officials of the Municipality of Ulcinj, public institutions and other actors. Check out the local TV report here.

News on projects financed under the 2nd CfP IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Kosovo

Farmers from Montenegro visit Kosovo

From 22nd-24th June, 2022, a three-day study visit to Kosovo was organized for a group of farmers from Montenegro, during which they had the opportunity to gain experience in the sector of aromatic



medicinal plants and meet the beneficiaries of grants that were selected for the cultivation of aromatic medicinal plants through the project Creating employment in agriculture.

The visits were carried out in the area where the project is being implemented, namely in the municipality of Peja and Istog, where the companies that deal with the cultivation, collection, processing and export of aromatic medicinal plants were visited, such as: "AgroProduct" Shpk, "Organic Herb" Shpk , "Erblin Beqiraj" B.I., then the blueberry growing and exporting company "Boost Berries", as well as the raspberry grower Nehat Bajraktari.



In the companies, the group of farmers from Montenegro were informed about the history and the work of these companies, and their development from year to year, then with activities that take place in the sector of medicinal and aromatic plants and small fruits, collection capacity, cultivation and processing up to the preparation of products for export to the European market. In these companies, they also discussed and exchanged experinece with students who had done practical work through the project and are now regular employees of the companies.

Transhumance - new tourism offer of Kosovo and Montenegro

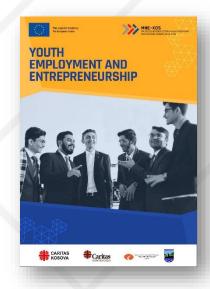
Promotional activities for the promotion of the new touristic offer in the CBC area are ongoing. In Kosovo, in the recent years the mountain tourism in Kosovo is flourishing. Thanks to the project activities, the mountain farmers and their stables now have the capacity and are welcoming tourists, who can then undertake many activities that are attractive also to adrenaline junkies. For more details check out the brochure here.



The project Transhumance is led by Initiative for Agricultural Development of Kosovo (IADK) in partnership with Regional **Development Angency** for Prokletije, Bjelasica and Komovi.

Activities within the project PRAXIS

During this period, the project team of PRAXIS developed the publication Youth employment and entrepreneurship. The publication provides key information related to environment for youth entrepreneurship, policy challenges on youth employment, career guidance, etc. Check out the publication here.



In addition, on 20th of June 2022, the project team organized a Job Discovery visit for the 14 students from the University "Fehmi

Agani" in Gjakove, to the companies in Kline (Kosovo). The students visited two well known companies "Ginza" Sh.P.K. and "8 brothers" that deal with production and processing of doors and windows. The visit was a good opportunity to see the equipment, facilities, to get information about the working conditions, but also an opportunity for the employers to provide direct information about their companies, products, services and the skills they required for their employee.



PRAXIS project is implemented by Caritas Kosovo, Caritas Montenegro, QAKP Gjon Nikolle Kazazi - Gjakove and Municipality of Berane. The project strives to support pupils and students and unemployed youth through career guidance and counselling sessions.

Investments for better tourism in Montenegro and Kosovo

The Municipality of Andrijevica, in cooperation with Municipality of Decan and MAA "Shkelzen Haradinaj" from Kosovo, are implementing the project Tourism hubs for better tourism offer in less advantaged mountainous areas. The project is focused on the development of rural tourism and will result in establishment of two touristic hubs in both countries along with establishment of katun routes that will engage households in provision of tourism services.



Currently the project partners are actively working in adaptation and construction of mountain lodges in Krivi do (Montenegro) and Bjeshket e Belegut (Kosovo).



The works in Montenegro are completed and the lodge is equipped and fully operational. In Kosovo, construction works are still ongoing and are expected to be completed by November 2022. The partners initiated the phase of signalisation of trails and establishing of thematic routes.



Culture heritage - Treasure of Cross Border Region

A series of activities were held as part of the project *Culture heritage – Treasure of Cross Border Region* that is implemented by twining municipalities, Municipality of Peja and Municipality of Gusinje. The project aim is to contribute to valorisation of cultural heritage of Prokletije region by establishing new cultural routes and trails as new touristic product and offer in the targeted area.



On 17th May a joint training was held in Gusinje for the representatives of the municipalities and tourism organisations. Namely, the touristic offers of Peja and Gusinje were presented and the participants had the chance to discuss on how to improve the touristic conditions based on their experiences so far.



In addition, during May an Art Colony was organised in Kosovo where different artists participated in creating artworks related to the cultural heritage of Peja. After the held colony, the paintings of 10 culture heritage assets created during the Art Colony in Kosovo were exhibited during July at the Art Gallery (House of Culture) premises in Peja.



In Gusinje, during august, 10 viewpoints have been installed at attractive tourist locations that are linked with cultural heritage of this region.



Finally, the distribution process of promotional materials to the heritage sites along the cultural trail and project stakeholders has started and is still ongoing.

Follow the project activities in the dedicated Facebook page.

Cross-border cooperation programmes presented at the European Projects Fair

The Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro, in cooperation with the Ministry of European Affairs, organized a European Projects Fair on 28th May in the yard of Petrović Castle in Podgorica. The event that was held as part of the Europe Month celebration, was an opportunity for visitors to learn about projects implemented by institutions, municipalities, companies, universities and the NGO sector. Moreover, the event was an opportunity for discussions with potential applicants to talk about upcoming activities and calls for proposals.



The event was opened by the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro, Nina Drakić, the Vice-President of the Government of Montenegro and the Minister of European Affairs, Jovana Marović and the Ambassador of the EU to Montenegro, Oana Cristina Popa.

"Having seen these stands, I am convinced that we have significantly improved the capacities for using European support, but we still need to work on strengthening them. This fair significantly helps the visibility of EU projects among our citizens. This is the essence of the European integration process, that our citizens have concrete benefits. This was achieved through numerous projects that strengthened the rule of law, environmental protection, education and healthcare. We will continue to

work on strengthening the capacities of all institutions and users of EU programs in order to implement them as efficiently as possible", said the Vice-President and Minister Marović.



The achievements of the programmes Montenegro-Albania and Montenegro-Kosovo were promoted at the stand and information was provided to citizens by the representatives of the Ministry of European Affairs and Joint Technical Secretariat of the Cross-border Cooperation Programmes Montenegro - Albania and Montenegro - Kosovo.



State Secretary Mašković meets Minister Krasnići in Montenegro

On 20th July State Secretary and National IPA Coordinator in the Ministry of European Affairs, Aleksandar Mašković, met with the Minister of Local Self-Government Administration of the Republic of Kosovo, Elbert Krasniqi.



The meeting was organised in order to discuss current implementation of programme and project activities in the IPA CBC Programme Montenegro – Kosovo. Following their conversation it was concluded that Montenegro and Kosovo will continue to cooperate through the upcoming IPA III Programme, where 8.4 million euros will be available for projects in the area of encouraging employment of vulnerable groups and sustainable tourism.



During his stay in Montenegro, Minister of Local Government Administration Elbert Krasniqi visited also the programme area and projects financed under the IPA CBC Programme Montenegro – Kosovo. From the visits organised it was concluded that the projects carried out between the municipalities of Andrijevica - Decan, Peja - Gusinje and Plav - Gjakova, strengthen cross-border and inter-institutional cooperation and open perspectives for solving common problems.





>>> Operating structures of the programmes (click on the icon to visit the website)





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