

## **Annex**

### **to the agenda point 1 of the General Assembly of the Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives of 31 May 2023**

#### **Agenda 1.4: 2022 Reports of CESCI Carpathia and CESCI Balkans**

Honourable General Assembly,

We summarised the 2022 annual reports of our central European networking partners, the CESCI Carpathia from Slovakia and the CESCI Balkans from Serbia.

##### **1.4.1 2022 Activity Report of CESCI Balkans**

Although the financial capacities of the organisation were limited during this period, it maintained its main activities and was working effectively on supporting cross-border cooperation in the Balkans on the following instances.

- **Support to the second-phase evaluation of the 2014-2020 Interreg-IPA Hungary-Serbia Cross-Border Cooperation Programme**

CESCI Balkans took part in the second-phase evaluation of the 2014-2020 Interreg-IPA HU-SRB CBC Programme by supporting the evaluation process carried out in cooperation with CESCI Budapest office, such as interviewing, data collection and by performing various activities carried out in Serbia;

- preparation of interviews with the Serbian programme authorities;
- preparation of interviews with the Serbian experts according to the priorities of the programme;
- preparation of interviews with the Serbian beneficiaries;
- participation in the preparation of questionnaires in Serbian language;
- a comprehensive overview of the factors that influence the effects of the programme in a positive or in a negative way on the Serbian side of the programme area;
- an overview of the Serbian grants influencing the impact of the programme;
- preparation of data collection in Serbia for CESCI's cross-border territorial impact assessment system;
- preparation of the processing of information and data in the monitoring system of the programme.

- **Leadership Academy Programme for Cross-Border Cooperation 2022: Serbia-Bulgaria border region**

For the fifth consecutive year, CESCI Balkans provides local support to the implementation of the Leadership Academy Programme for cross-border cooperation in the Balkans, in collaboration with the Council of Europe's Centre of Expertise for Good Governance.

The following activities and initiatives were carried out successfully:

- *Online workshop for validation, evaluation of the sustainability of the new Memorandum (20.09.2022)*

This event aimed to have all interested parties agreeing in the process that was going to be adopted, both for the proper conclusion of the Academy part and for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by all stakeholders.

- *Workshops in Serbia (Piroć, 03.10.2022) and in Bulgaria (Sofia, 04.10.2022)*

Building on the previously implemented stages of the Leadership Academy Programme, the in-presence workshops were held in the form of an open seminar, with participants from local and regional administration, as well as civil society representatives.

The activities were focused on:

1. The presentation of the draft version of the Political declaration / Memorandum of Understanding and its illustrations in accordance with the identified priorities as well as the bureaucratic constraints and expectations.
2. The discussion of developing a feasible Strategic Plan for the border region's long-term sustainable development.
3. The completion of a legal roadmap for the institutionalisation of cross-border cooperation.
4. A special emphasis was placed on the possibility of achieving economic, social, and territorial cohesion, with all participants actively sharing their thoughts and experiences about identified and anticipated obstacles, as well as suggested solutions to overcome these obstacles.



- *Final event – Strategic Cooperation Event, Sofia (23-25.11.2022)*

30 participants from both countries were actively involved in the two and a half days final event of the fourth stage of the Leadership Academy Programme within the Serbia-Bulgaria region. This event consisted of workshops and the formal signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Political Declaration by 9 municipalities and several civil society actors. At the signing ceremony, the Ambassador of Serbia to the Republic of Bulgaria, H.E. Prof. Dr. Željko Jović, congratulated participants and stressed that developing cross-border links between neighbouring communities is key to creating a safe and sustainable future for the youth of the region. Ms Sanda Šimić from the Ministry of European Integration in Belgrade acknowledged the support of the Council of Europe in promoting cross-border cooperation and contributing to the European integration process in Serbia.



- *Legal Roadmap - Background paper for the institutional development in the Serbian-Bulgarian Nišava Euroregion.*

The Legal Roadmap outlined the legal possibilities for institutional development of the border area analysing two options: under international law (on the basis of the Madrid Outline Convention) and EU law (in the format of an EGTC).

- *Strategic Plan and Action plan of cross-border cooperation*

In relation to the above-mentioned activities and results, all the elements of the Strategic Plan and the Action plan for cross-border cooperation in the area were created. Extensive work was carried out to jointly map all the obstacles, solutions, priorities, activities and relevant stakeholders.

- **Study on "The concept of the enlargement of the Pannon EGTC to the Western Balkans"**

CESCI Balkans was assigned to develop a Study on "The concept of the enlargement of the Pannon EGTC to the Western Balkans". The analysis answered the following questions:

- What advantages does the opening of the Western Balkans bring to the Pannon EGTC?
- Evaluation of the regulatory environment determining the involvement of institutional institutions
- Evaluation of the regulatory environment
- The concept of the expansion of the Pannon EGTC to the Western Balkans, with a preliminary outline of the possible further directions of institutional development for strengthening of the role of the EGTC.

#### **1.4.2 2022 Activity Report of CESCI Carpathia**

- **Projects managed by the association in 2022**

- NatGate - Narrow gauge railways as unique gates to nature and cultural heritage
  - Partnership: Children Railway Košice, Nagybörzsöny Község Önkormányzata,
  - The budget: 409 590 € was increased to 525 352 €
  - The 2-year project started on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, and will be terminated in May 2023
  - SK Outputs – reconstructed: two open summer wagons (one called "Nyiregyháza"), electric locomotive, steam locomotive Katka, railway tracks, E-shop created
  - HU Outputs – reconstructed locomotive C-50, historic passenger wagon called "Kassa", open air theatre near St. Stephen church built, public lightning, film
- "The support of coordinating and implementing capacities of regional development in the district of Revúca",
  - Partnership – 3 towns: Revúca, Jelšava, Tornaľa
  - Budget: 498 423 €;
  - The project started on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, and was ended on May 31, 2023
  - Outputs:
    - development plans for all towns prepared,
    - improved capacities for regional planning and development,
    - 5 projects intentions prepared,
    - tens of consultations provided to municipalities in the district of Revúca

- **Educational activities**

- "The educational course" – the climate education for elementary and secondary schools in the Košice region,

- the content of the course: Ecology, Waste-basics, Waste sorting, Circle economy, Sustainable development and course for teachers "How to improve environmental accountability of students"
  - Project was implemented on five schools:
    - Márai Sándor Magyar Tanítási Nyelvi Gimnázium és Alapiskola Košice
    - Spojená škola, Opatovská Košice
    - Obchodná akadémia Polárna Košice
    - Stredná priemyselná škola technická, Spišská Nová Ves
    - Gymnázium Šrobárova Košice
  - Elaboration of "The Workbook on social economy" ("Kézikönyv Társadalmi Vállalkozás"), a guide for public sector officials both in Slovak and Hungarian language
    - The content:
      - Social entrepreneurship on local, regional and national level,
      - Legislative framework for social entrepreneurship,
      - Planning tools and methods in social business,
      - Specifics of social planning in comparison with other forms of business,
      - Best practices
- **Project development**
- Project "Promotion of legal accessibility across the Slovak-Hungarian border - #Access" financed from the Hungary-Slovakia INTERREG A program 2021 -2027 targeting cross-border legal and administrative obstacles,
    - Partnership: CESCI (Lead), CESCI-Carpathia
    - Two parts: Monitoring and management of obstacles
    - Budget - HU:1 052 409 €, SK: 699 888 €
- **Other activities**
- Promotion and networking
    - The international 61th ERSA congress,
    - The conference "Crossborder Spatial monitoring", Budapest
    - The "RegioFórum Gemer" 2022, Revúca,
    - The Transparency International Slovakia seminar 2022, Stará Lesná
  - Other
    - Consultations given to the Catholic Charity about management of Ukrainian people – free
    - Elaboration of "The report about the status of family in the city of Košice"
    - Participation at the seminar ""Public school of regional self-government" organized by The Transparency International Slovakia in Stará Lesná as a special guest at the opening discussion