

Project: Network for co-operation and democratic participation of citizens in the Adriatic-Balkan-Region – CAPE-AB

Progress report I

Reporting period: 1st July 2016 – 31st November 2016

Date of the report: 31st November 2016

The Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities started implementing the project "Network for cooperation and democratic participation for citizens in the Adriatic-Balkan area" CAPE-AB within the Europe for Citizens programme from 1st July 2015. The aim of the Project is to improve intercultural understanding and cooperation at the local level, support for democratic participation and improve the capacity for international cooperation. The project is being implemented in partnership with 7 regional authorities and associations of towns and municipalities established in following countries:

- Land Steiermark, Austria, acting as applicant Organization,
- Auxilium pro Regionibus Europae in Rebus Culutalibus, Austria,
- Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia, Slovenia,
- Economic Region Development Agency, Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- Varazdinska Zupanija, Croatia,
- Cumunita' montana della carnia, Italy,
- Self-Government Office of Vas County, Hungary

The project foresees organization of 8 workshops (one per partner country and 2 in Austria), final conference, development of best practice reader and individual consultations for ensuring the funding opportunities for already developed project ideas.

The Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities organized the international workshop on EU programmes and funding opportunities for municipalities and their local partners. The workshop aimed to familiarize potential applicants with the possibilities of funding local initiatives, in particular through the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020. Also, the twinning importance is addressed, especially in the sense of EU perspective of the Republic of Serbia. The workshop was mostly targeting the representatives working on the project management issues of those municipalities with the established twinning with the local governments from the project partner countries. In order to extend the workshop benefits to other EU countries, the representatives of French embassy in Serbia also participated.

In order to disseminate the workshop results to all other local governments in Serbia and raise their awareness and skills on available EU funds for local initiatives, with special emphasis on transnational cooperation, twinning and citizens participation, the information both on project itself and the workshop held are posted at the SCTM website, Facebook page and will be disseminated through SCTM e-bulletin (to be sent in more than 3.000 addresses including all local municipalities and their institutions).

The project implementation, and especially the workshop held, raised the importance and benefits of networking between the local authorities of EU and Balkan countries as well as exchange of information and experiences in implementing the EU values, with the emphasis to the intercultural understanding, international cooperation and citizens participation. With raised awareness on existing EU funds and application procedures, participating municipalities as well as the ones indirectly informed will act as stimulants for new funds absorption by local actors. The SCTM will continue to support the capacity building of the local self-governments in respect to the benefits of the transnational cooperation, intercultural understanding and twinning, with the respect to the EU integration process, including the utilization and absorption of available EU funds.



Workshop summary

In the welcoming speech SCTM' Secretary General, Mr. Djordje Stanicic, presented the SCTM role in the EU integration process and international cooperation. As a National local governments association, one of main objectives is to support its members in establishing the cooperation with the local government from different countries. The focus is on experience exchange, knowledge and skills development in respect to applying EU practices, participation in different international organizations as well as absorption of the available EU funds. In that respect, the SCTM has a long term practice in town twinning or networking. Hereafter, the SCTM sees its participation in different EU organizations as an important mechanism for advocating local interests and deepening international cooperation especially in the Congress of local and regional authorities of Council of Europe as well as in Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union (JCC). Especially are being active in the Council of European municipalities and regions (CEMR) and the National Association of local and regional authorities of the Southeast Europe (NALAS). Mr Stanicic, invited the participants to take the active role in their local government in utilizing established partnerships especially in absorption of available funds towards stimulating local development.

Following, Mrs Christa Eisner, welcomed participants in the name of the Project lead partner, Land Steiermark and province of Styria. Mr Eisner stressed the importance of the already established good cooperation between the Province of Styria and Vojvodina, established in 2003 reflected in the area of economy development issues, education on faculty level and exchange of students. As follow-up, in 2009 and 2013 cooperation on the level of Parliaments has been established.

Working part of the workshop started with the presentation of the Europe for Citizens programme 2014-2020 by the contact point in Serbia, Mrs Marina Tadic, from the Office for cooperation with civil society, Government of the Republic of Serbia. Besides the general information on the programme, the participants were introduced with the Programme priorities, structure, measures, application procedures and deadlines as well as the experiences of the Republic of Serbia in respect to the utilization of funds.

Then, the project leader, Mr Georg Müllner, presented the objectives of the project CAPE-AB, activities, organization and expected project results.

The most interactive part of the workshop was on the presentation of the Application form for the Europe for citizens' programme by Mr Müllner. The most valuable information for the participants were the experiences in application development, project idea development followed with the identification of project activities, as well as the project selection procedure. Nevertheless, usual mistakes made during the application process have been presented.

After presenting the Europe for Citizens programme, two examples of good practices of the transnational cooperation and citizen's involvement have been presented. First was on the established Women's network for future of Europe, implemented by the Municipality of Savski Venac. The second one was on the „Thematic Town Twinning for Community Organizing“ aiming for raising awareness on the methodology for organizing within the community towards joint influence on decision-making process in their local communities. Besides the objectives and results made, the presentations tackled the challenges of the transnational cooperation especially through the Europe for Citizens programme.

In order to foster the transnational cooperation in managing local initiatives, the ERASMUS+ programme was also presented. The focus was on the programmes Serbian municipalities are eligible for, both as a partner and as a lead applicant. The programmes for cooperation in the area of education and young were presented.

Workshop
on project development for EU funded programs:
Europe for citizens 2014-2020, Programme for Employment and Social Innovation - "EASI"
and ERASMUS +

Belgrade 16th November 2016
 SCTM premises, Makedonska 22, 8th floor

9.30-10.00	Registration
10.00 – 10.15	Official opening - Djordje Stanicic, Secretary General of the SCTM - Christa Eisner from the Department of European and Foreign Affairs, Land Steiermark
10.15 - 10.45	Presentation of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014 - 2020 - Marina Tadic, The Office for cooperation with civil society, Government of the Republic of Serbia
10.45 - 11.15	Project CAPE-AB - Georg Müllner, project leader The possibility of support to transnational cooperation of municipalities in the years 2016-2017
11.15 - 11.30	Coffee break
11.30 - 12.15	Building projects - developing ideas for municipalities - Georg Müllner, project leader <i>How to apply?</i> <i>(key questions during filling the application, how to present the project idea, how to convince evaluator, 10 key mistakes during the writing of project)</i>
12.15 - 12.45	Good practice cases for co-operation and participation on municipality level <i>Women's Network for Future of Europe, Municipality of Savski Venac</i> <i>Thematic Town Twinning for Community Organizing, PROSPERO</i>
12.45 – 13.00	Reflections and discussion
13.00 - 13.20	Presentations of the programme EaSi -Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Issues - About the program, how to apply, examples of good practices
13.20 – 13.40	Presentations of the programme ERASMUS + -Tempus Foundation - About the program, how to apply, examples of good practices
13.40 - 14.00	Discussions, questions and answers, evaluation
14.00 - 14.20	"Project counseling office" -Georg Müllner, project leader
14.00	Lunch