

# **With cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of Ukrainian borders,**

Termin: 2020-10-18 - 2021-12-05

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Instytucja zamawiająca: Visegrad Group

Numer projektu: 22020131

According to Art. 446–448 of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement (in effect since 2017) its Parties undertake to facilitate cross-border

cooperation (CBC) and improve the relevant legal frames. In Ukraine, CBC is ruled by the Constitutional provisions (1996), the laws on

local self-government (1997), on local state administrations (1999) and on cross-border cooperation (2004, amended in 2018). This legal

framework together with provisions, set during the decentralisation reform (started in 2014), would facilitate beneficial cross-border

activities of local authorities and civil society. Yet, the legal norms shall be further developed, some gaps and contradictory provisions

weaken the local actors' willingness (who are not well aware of the CBC opportunities) to participate in CBC. However, as the European

practice proves, CBC could enhance the spread of deliberative techniques in local decision-making, adaptation of European values &

policies and improve the environment for mutual trust building through the so-called 'paradiplomacy of local actors', briefly, by the

Europeanisation of the borders. Due to the missing legal harmonisation and the lack of information, the CBC activity level between

Visegrad countries and Ukraine is very low, with a focus on exploitation of Ukrainian labour force (between 2004 and 2017 4,8 million

citizens left Ukraine - UNO) and on tackling smuggling - without any development impacts on the Ukrainian border regions. The project

will promote the decisive "break" to support CBC.

The general objective is to contribute to the Europeanisation of the Ukrainian borders with Visegrad countries by adaptation of European

standards, methods and values in the field of CBC. The specific objective is to boost CBC by improving its conditions at

national (legal

background), regional and local (capacity development) level. For the sake of better legal background, the partners will analyse the current

frames and, in cooperation with officials of the Ukrainian state power agencies, will draft textual recommendations on amendments of

acting legislation to be passed to the Government, the Parliament, the European Commission – Support Group for UA and the Association

Council. The process will be accompanied with expert meetings and discussions; the final results will be presented at the international

conference organised by the Košice Platform in Prešov. In parallel, also regional and local actors' capacities should be developed in order to

enable them to actively participate in CB activities and use the benefits of the improved conditions. Therefore, the partners will develop a

training material and organise the first training on CBC in Uzhgorod with the following thematic components: legal-institutional and

economic background of CBC; European policy background; citizens' involvement in CBC; paradiplomacy of regional and local actors;

intercultural cooperation; governance of CBC; joint CB planning; project development; fundraising. The targeted participants are the

representatives of Ukrainian local and regional authorities located along the joint Visegrad borders.