

Newsletter April 2022

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Romania-Ukraine Programme was present at the meeting with the European Commission!

The progress made, and also limitations and concerns of the Romania – Ukraine Programme beneficiaries were discussed with the European Commission.

"We must act in full solidarity."

Slawomir Tokarski, Director EU REGIO Interreg

ENI cross border programs cooperating with Ukraine met **in Brussels on April, 6th**, with representatives of DG REGIO and DG NEAR of the European Commission, and TESIM experts. The meeting, held in a hybrid format, aimed to provide a joint response to CBC programs' concerns and needs, following the unprecedented situation in Ukraine.

As expected, Russia's military aggression against Ukraine led to multiple negative effects on the cooperation projects between Romania and Ukraine, and the reunion with high officials from the Commission aimed to prepare European support measures for our beneficiaries.

In line with the EU solidarity, the meeting gathered around the table experts from **all the programs and countries cooperating with Ukraine**

and the Republic of Moldova.

Participants discussed the major difficulties and risks faced by the cooperation programs and their beneficiaries, such as limitation of spendings following enactment of the martial law in Ukraine, devaluation of the national currency, significant increase of prices, adding to those related to continuity of operations in terms of human and logistical resources.

To assist the projects in these difficult times and support their implementation, Romania – Ukraine Programme along with other programs put forth a wide **range of proposals** to enable adjustment of project activities to the actual context, even to initiate new ones, make full use of savings and increase the grant values, if the program bodies will so decide. Flexibility of approaches was the **main message** of the European Commission to the programs,

strongly required in these changed cooperation circumstances, while tailor-made solutions would be an appropriate response to the particular situation of each and every project.

During the reunion, it was also discussed the progress of 2021-2027 programming and EC officials reaffirmed that fast submission and adoption of 2021-2027 Interreg NEXT programs would be a powerful message of strengthened solidarity and support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

The European Commission and the five cross-border cooperation programs between EU Member States and Ukraine are multiplying efforts to increase their assistance to the country, to find common solutions and remain together in facing the challenges ahead.

As a long-term partner for a wide spectrum of organizations and institutions in the neighboring country, Romania-Ukraine Programme will **#standwithukraine** and strive to further support its projects and the beneficiaries all along the way.

Programme bodies will continue to explore practical ways to their support in this most difficult situation, thus reducing the negative effects on the cooperation taking place in the region.

Photos source: tesim-enicbc



RO-UA Programme Branch Offices are up and running!

The branch offices in Ukraine are operational and ready to assist the beneficiaries, in spite of the current situation.



Our Branch Offices in Chernivtsi and Odesa are **active and operational** to support the Ukrainian grant beneficiaries and facilitate the efforts that the program is making to **mitigate the effects of Russia's invasion in Ukraine on our cooperation projects.**

Given the circumstances, the Managing Authority and the Joint Technical Secretariat are doing all diligences to maintain close connection with the experts in Chernivtsi and Odesa so as the Programme continues and full support is available on the ground, nearby our beneficiaries.

Although their work is mostly done remotely,

experts assistance is provided on **visibility or implementation topics**, including issues stemming from the current limitations in Ukraine or any unpredicted blocking situation. It is their first duty to promptly and fully inform the Program, so as rapid response is given and solutions are found in support of our partners in Ukraine.

Particular attention will also be to maintain open communication with the National Authority within the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, and with the Control Contact Point within the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine for the best solutions supporting projects during this period.



Solidarity with Ukraine!

Cross-border partnerships are strong and reliable, and today are facilitating cooperation actions in the support of the refugees!

The last 15 years of continued activities and tangible results in the framework of our cooperation projects are even more visible now.

Partnerships, connections and friendship between people, along with cross-border institutional cooperation, have further strengthened the solidarity and support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.



Our beneficiaries in the cross-border cooperation projects have gone through and continue to go through difficult times, primarily at humanitarian level, but no less in their daily activities. It has been a fracture in continuing the life as we all know it, and this is where good neighborliness **has built bridges to help.**

There was no time for hesitation, people jumped into action to rescue other people, and together with them the authorities reacted and got organized quite rapidly. People felt the

despair of their colleagues and responded promptly to the call of aid of those with whom they worked oftentimes in so many Romanian-Ukrainian projects.

Rapid coordination of volunteers was possible due to links and contacts established over the years, but what mattered the most was the **trust**. A trust that has been built in years of cooperation, be it at institutional or personal level, but also in the communities along both sides of the border.

Romania's border is the EU longest border with Ukraine!

Involvement of the border counties was extraordinary. Firefighters, border guards, gendarmes, policemen, customs officers, doctors and veterinarians carried out aid missions in support of citizens arriving from the conflict area, both at border crossings points from Siret (**Suceava**), Isaccea (**Tulcea**), Halmeu (**Satu Mare**), Solotvino (**Maramures**), Rădăuți Prut, Stâncă Costești (**Botosani**), as well as in their vicinity.



After years of setting the groundwork through fruitful cross-border friendship in joint projects, local administrations and organizations are standing in solidarity with their Ukrainian partners as they **find resources to help the people in need**.

The **Smart4Youth** project has set up a voluntary support service in Suceava (Romania) to help refugees in transit or willing to relocate, while their partner school in Chernivtsi (Ukraine) has become shelter for more than 170 refugees, a third of which are children. Looking to distract them a bit from the terrible war, the teachers made room for drawing workshops and fun activities.

Similarly, the "Family" Regional Training and Rehabilitation Center in Chernivtsi, to be also found in **SpeEd-2-Labour Market** project, carried out in partnership with Suceava County Council, was converted into a volunteer center delivering online classes to different age groups and assuring a safe place for refugees.

What was intended to be a partnership aimed at saving cultural heritage and identity, has beautifully turned into a humanitarian one.



The Hutsul Ukrainians Foundation in Romania has been collecting essential goods since the first days of the conflict while keeping permanent contact with Romanian and Ukrainian authorities so that donations can reach their destination. Shortly before the outbreak of conflict, they organized an event with Hutsul ethnic groups from Bistra (Romania) and Rakhiv (Ukraine) to promote the common culture through **ProHutsul** project, and now they are engaged in facilitating supplies to their neighbors.



Siret border crossing point and Suceava County have become an important **transit hub**. Local authorities have managed to organize, in extremely short time, all the facilities for food, shelter, care & counseling necessary to those fleeing the war in Ukraine.

"We are tired, but we can't afford to give up. We are grateful for all the support from the local community and the international volunteers, and for the commitment and solidarity they have proven."

- **Adrian Popoiu, Mayor of Siret.**"



Similarly, **Suceava County Council** has permanently supported their neighbors across the border, starting from placing signs in Ukrainian language to facilitate car transit in the county. They were engaged in providing safe transport from Siret border crossing to refugee centers or to other departure points. It was all possible with the help of the Emergency Situations Inspectorate, including the emergency vehicles purchased in our projects.

The first **European Logistics Center** to receive, store, manage and transfer the humanitarian assistance provided by EU Member States to Ukraine was established in Suceava, under the coordination of Romanian civil protection structures.

From implementing European projects, to receiving tons of humanitarian aid at the European HUB!

The HUB staff includes the Ukrainian civil protection service that partners the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations and Suceava Inspectorate, in **BRIDGE** large infrastructure project.



Ukrainian local authorities in Solotvino (Zakarpattia) and the Romanian ones in Sighetu Marmăției (Maramures), formerly cooperating in various fields as **Emergency Situations, Fighting Organized Crime, Health** are adding now humanitarian features to their cooperation with the support of the Romanian Consulate in Solotvino.

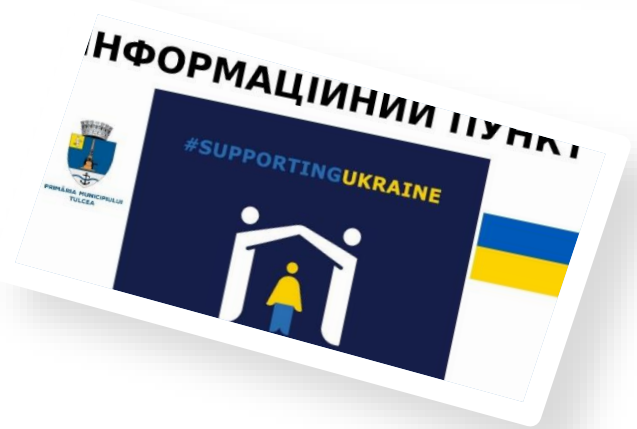
Another testimony of continued cooperation between Rakhiv (Ukraine) - Baia Sprie (Romania) comes from **MedSocioRehab** project, when partners met at the border to hand over the supplies collected for the people exposed to the blasts of the war.

Large infrastructure cross-border projects prove again their utility and value in these unprecedented times!

Expansion of the sewerage system in Izmail, Odessa region in the frame of **CLEAN RIVER** large infrastructure project became highly useful in the current context since the population of Izmail city has increased by approx. 30% due to the massive influx of refugees.

At the same time, the power generators purchased by **CBC HEALTH** large infrastructure projects are ready to be used by Izmail Hospital and Maternity Hospital, if escalation of the conflict in the area will affect the power supply.

*"Cross-border projects solve real problems in the region, even in times of war, as we live today."
Valentin Stroia - Izmail City Council*



Tulcea County Council, taking part in both **CBC HEALTH** and **CLEAN RIVER** large infrastructure projects, contributes to the system of distribution centers for receiving and delivering national and international humanitarian aid. Currently, this **REGIONAL HUB** serves the Ukrainian cities of Izmail and Odesa in the Odesa region, but also other regions in the upper part of Ukraine, or Ukrainian citizens who entered Romania and found a temporary residence in Tulcea County.



"Our partners are our friends, thanks to whom we have developed this humanitarian hub, proving that although we are not physically on the territory of Ukraine, we can take to a higher level the traditional partnerships with our friends in Romania." Valentin Stroia - Izmail City Council

Isaccea border crossing point was transited by thousands of Ukrainian refugees by ferry on the Danube. Everyone was helped with emergency supplies, from food to hygiene products, diapers or milk powder, donations being available directly at the border or in the accommodation centers. Transport facilities for safe travel to Bucharest were also provided.



"In the first two weeks, the whole community of Isaccea was extremely responsive to the wave of refugees. We were 24/7 present at the border crossing point with our fellow citizens, who provided the necessary assistance to the refugees and received them in their homes." **Anastase Moraru - Mayor of Isaccea** (beneficiary of **CBCConnect Trans** project)

The peaceful time collaboration was also strengthened by University of Suceava and its Ukrainian partners in several cooperation projects (**RESFOR, CBCSmart Energy, HECROSS, PREPOD**). Since the beginning of the military aggression against Ukraine, "Stefan cel Mare" University of Suceava, with the help of volunteer professors and students, has supported the local authorities in providing assistance to fleeing families.

Students who attended the summer schools of the universities of Suceava and Odesa, now volunteer in the border and refugee centers, as interpreters for the Ukrainian and Russian languages!

Beneficiaries of **UNIV.E.R-U** project, professors at Odesa National Polytechnic University came to Romania, are housed by the University and teach online courses to students from Ukraine, but also engage in activities within the project. A conference was held on April 15-16, where the project team was together in front of students from Suceava and Odessa.



The USV Cross-Border Cooperation Center and the Ukrainian partners are working together on a database that centralizes the location of students and academic staff involved in the project, the type of support they need or their travel intentions.



A solidarity shop was opened at the university and offers free goods to Ukrainian citizens, being visited daily by about 100 refugee families from Suceava area. Romanian ethnics from Chernivtsi volunteer here, and they were those who, during peaceful times, have participated to the courses held in Ukraine within the **CREAFuture** educational project (Botosani).

Botosani City Hall has been engaged in the fight for the safety of Ukrainian citizens who have been forced to leave their homeland. An ongoing dialogue has been launched with their Ivano-Frankivsk partners on the **ROOTS** project. As a sign of solidarity, donations were made for non-perishable food and milk powder for children, medical kits and medicines, as well as for electricity generators to the municipality of Ivano-Frankivsk.

Botoșani County Council also supported partners from abroad, allocating amounts from the budget reserve fund to help foreign citizens or relocated families in special situations who come from areas with armed conflict.





Although we live times of war, we have some good news from cross-border projects!

Civil protection equipment – early warning systems - has been delivered to the **Natural and Man-Made Disasters project** and will provide additional protection to the community in Mămăliga, Chernivtsi region (Ukraine).

Border beneficiaries are in the front line!

Sighetu Marmatei Border Police Inspectorate has initiated a permanent call center in Ukrainian language, to provide information and support to citizens who have been severely affected by the consequences of the conflict and want to leave their country. The call center is active in all customs points between Romania and Ukraine.

Satu Mare City Hall has joined the partner cities in Ukraine and support the refugees entering the country through border crossings points. Satu Mare Municipality is beneficiary of several cross-border projects, including **CBC Crime** aiming to expand the video surveillance system in Satu Mare, Romania, and the development of a new system in Uzhgorod, Ukraine, all the more useful in these times of massive urban concentration when, for example, in Transcarpathia, the population has grown by more than 300,000 refugees fleeing the war.



The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine has been going on for more than a month and a half, while **Maramures County Council**, leader in **ALThERA** project, mobilized to provide all the support that the neighbors across the Tisza needed. Together with partner NGOs, civil society and local governments, they continue to help Ukraine.



There are countless initiatives, donations, platforms ready to help refugees coming from conflict-affected areas. Many of the programme beneficiaries have initiated humanitarian deliveries to their partners, some of them have even managed to organize regional logistics HUBs, which provide huge amounts of international aid on a weekly basis.

Regional Office for Cross Border Cooperation, hosting the Joint Technical Secretariat of the program, is based in Suceava, the county with the highest number of refugees since the beginning of the military conflict and has been heavily involved in current crisis activities. RO CBC office engaged in facilitating contacts between international organizations, wishing to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, and local partner organizations or logistics hubs where Ukrainian and Romanian authorities work together with volunteers, as HelpUkraineRomania, Siret and the Hubs of Isaccea and Tulcea.



All actions managed throughout **the cross-border cooperation community express deep solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.**

The results of the projects are the results of the Programme and the very proof that cross-border cooperation fostered by Romania and Ukraine have brought added value to the border regions, together with solutions to real problems.





7th European Congress of Local Governments took place in Poland

The Executive Director of the **Cross Border Regional Cooperation Office** hosting the **JTS** in Suceava, Mr. Cezar Grozavu, participated during April 11 and 12 to the international event - 7th European Congress of Local Governments, in Poland.

The event was an opportunity to discuss how cities and regions' management strategies have changed, as well as to explore ways to address the unprecedented situation in Europe.

Mr. Grozavu had a presentation in the dedicated panel of "**Regional Cooperation at the Eastern Border of the EU**" highlighting the benefits of the Romania-Ukraine Programme for the local communities.

The discussion panel was shared with Iryna Hrymak, Chairwoman of Lviv Regional Council (**UA**), Halyna Lytvyn, Member of the board Euroregion Carpathians - Ukraine (**UA**), Wojciech Gizicki, Associate professor, Vice-dean

at The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (**PL**), Leszek Buller, Director of the Center of European Projects (**PL**) and explored ways to support Ukrainian regions in these difficult times. Partnerships with EU regions and cities are a priority for the regional economic and social development,

The cooperation of cities and regions of Europe has a significant impact on the economy. **The European Congress of Local Governments is the largest platform for dialogue in Central and Eastern Europe** on EU policy development, economic development perspectives and contemporary challenges.

More than 60 events were held around 4 thematic paths, each consisting of: thematic blocks, panel discussions, workshops, lectures, presentations. The Congress gave the opportunity for regional representatives to discuss ways of increasing the effectiveness in using EU funds for the green transition, share

experience and make contacts. This year's Congress was held under the slogan "**Building a Community of the Future**".

European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) and co-financed by the participating countries in the Programme. The Programme is dedicated to the border areas between Romania and Ukraine and will contribute to the overall objective of the European Neighborhood Instrument: progress towards an area of prosperity and good neighborliness for the benefit of Member States and non-EU members through cross-border cooperation actions.

www.ro-ua.net/en/



This Programme is funded
by the European Union



Romania-Ukraine
ENI-CROSS BORDER COOPERATION

The European Union is made up of 27 Member States who have decided to gradually link together their knowhow, resources and destinies. Together, during a period of enlargement of 50 years, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.