



In co-operation with:



Regional Development
Agency, Korca



Center for Inter-Balkan
Cooperation, Kozani



Regional Enterprise
Support Agency, Bitola

2nd Council Meeting
Bitola, 15 - 16 June 2005

**TRANS-FRONTIER INSTITUTION BUILDING PROJECT FOR THE PRESPA/OHRID REGION
2003-2005
TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EUROREGION**

Working Group Report

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I. Background

The Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion Council is the steering body of the Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion. It consists of fifteen members and equally represents each border community (of Albania, Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) participating in the Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion. Each side is represented by five members from associations of local and regional authorities, development agencies and (in one case) chambers of commerce consisting on each side of the borders.

The Euroregion Council met on 01 June and from 15 - 16 June 2005 to discuss the regional development priorities for Prespa/Ohrid that had been suggested by the Euroregion member associations. Involved in the elaboration of the Euroregion development priorities were also administrative experts from those local and regional authorities participating in the Euroregion and representatives of various Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion working groups (Higher Education, NGO Network, Tourism). The Administrative Experts and Working Group Representatives had met for the elaboration of the development priorities in between the two council meetings from 08 - 09 June 2005 in Ohrid.

II. General Conclusions

The Council meeting started with welcoming words from Ms. Sasha Havlicek, the Senior Director of the Centre for Border Co-operation of the EastWest Institute; the Mayor of Bitola, Mr. Vladimir Taleski; the Prefect of Florina, Mr. Ioannis Stratakis and the Mayor of Korca, Mr. Robert Damo who stressed the importance of consensus building on a Euroregion level and embedding local development goals in the broader framework of regional development. Subsequently the Council Members used the platform for an extensive and open discussion on those development priorities of the Prespa/Ohrid region suggested two weeks earlier and elaborated by the council members' administrative experts in the meanwhile. The Council Members endorsed the development priorities but pointed out that the council members needed to consult all members of the three national associations before they would be able to draw up a final list of development priorities. At the same time the participants engaged on an intensive discussion on institutionalising and streamlining deliberation and decision-making procedures in the Euroregion. It was suggested that next to council meetings the presidents of the three national associations (making up the Euroregion) should meet to reach agreement on the broad framework for the Euroregion goals and activities.

In the afternoon, Mr. Pavel Branda from the Nisa/Neisse Euroregion comprising border regions of the Czech Republic, Poland and Germany gave a inspiring presentation of the structure and achievements of his 'home' Euroregion and, upon demand, shared practical details about the steps necessary to make cross border co-



operation work in praxis. His presentation was followed by accounts of the activities undertaken and the results achieved by the Prespa/Ohrid working groups on Higher Education, NGO and Tourism co-operation to date.

Later on the participants in the Council Meeting were joined by the Mr. Risvan Sulejmani, the Minister of Local Self Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and his chief of cabinet, Ms. Flora Kastrati, who emphasized their full support for cross border co-operation between local and regional self governments as well as other stakeholders.

On the second day of the meeting the council members had to opportunity to work with the distinguished expert on association building, Dr. Zydia Teqja from the Agricultural Association of Albania, on building successful associations in the region. Dr. Teqja stressed the need to keep associations open and base them on sound common interest as well as support structures.

In parallel representatives of the Prespa/Ohrid working groups as well as administrative experts of the local and regional authorities continued with their work on identifying detailed needs and possibilities of the region based on the recommendations given by the council members that they had begun one week earlier in Ohrid. Mr. Cveticanin from the University of Nis, who had provided training already in Ohrid, guided the workshop. The result of the problem analysis and solution finding, that started in Ohrid and continued in Bitola, can be found in Annex B of this document.





III. Agenda

Venue: Hotel Molika, Bitola (Pelister Mountain)

10:00 Welcoming Addresses:

Ms. Sasha Havlicek, Senior Director, Centre for Border Co-operation, EastWest Institute

Mr. Vladimir Taleski, Mayor of Bitola

Mr. Ioannis Stratakis, Prefect of Florina

Mr. Robert Damo, Mayor of Korca

11:00 Presentation of Achievements in the Nisa Euroregion

Mr. Pavel Branda, Nisa Euroregion

11:30 Work Plan Elaboration/ Activities in the Nisa Euroregion

- Focus of Activities
- Funding
- Implementation
- Guidelines for Participants

Mr. Pavel Branda, Nisa Euroregion

12:30 Discussion on Transferability of Euroregion Best Practice to Prespa/Ohrid region

Moderator: Ms. Sasha Havlicek, EastWest Institute

13:30 Lunch

14:30 Presentation of Working Group Activities (Education, Tourism and NGO Network) to Council Members

Moderator: Mr. Johannes Busse, EastWest Institute

16:00 Coffee Break

16:30 Discussion on the Development of the Prespa/Ohrid Region (Council Members and Working Group representatives)

18:00 Dinner

DAY 2, 16 June 2005

10:00 Development Goals within the Prespa/Ohrid Region (Council administrative experts and Working Group representatives)

Trainer: Mr. Predrag Cveticanin, University of Nis



10:30 Break up into Task forces on different areas of activity

Trainer: Mr. Predrag Coeticanin, University of Nis

10:30 Break Out Session: Training on Association Building for Council Members & Board of Directors

- The concept of an association and why an association is needed
- Principles of Associations and the By-Laws

Trainer: Mr. Zydi Teqja, KASH

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Report of Task forces, Conclusions and Outlook

Ms. Sasha Havlicek, EastWest Institute

Mr. Vladimir Taleski, Mayor of Bitola

Mr. Johannes Busse, EastWest Institute

Mr. Aurel Grabocka, Regional Development Agency of Korca

Prof. Dragan Damjanovski, Regional Enterprise Support Center of Bitola

Ms. Gabriela Scheiner, Cultural Triangle of Prespes

14:00 Departure of Participants



IV. List of Participants

Prefecture of Florina

Mr. Ioannis Stratakis, Prefect

Prefecture of Kastoria

Mr. Pashalis Oikonomidis, Director of the Development Office

Mr. Spyros Koremtzidis, Advisor



Municipality of Florina
Petros Giannatsis, Vice Mayor

Municipality of Prespes
Mr. Lazaros Nalpantidis, Mayor

Municipality of Korca
Mr. Robert Damo - Mayor
Ms. Erjola Stermolli - Administrative staff
Mr. Mikel Dishnica - Administrative staff

Municipality of Erseka
Mr. Adriatik Braçe - Mayor
Ms. Anna Gutierrez - Peace Corps Volunteer

Municipality of Bilisht
Mr. Valter Miza - Mayor
Ms. Alketa Xhafi - Administrative staff

Municipality of Pogradec
Mr. Thoma Tasellari - Administrative staff
Ms. Teri MacBride - Peace Corps Volunteer

Municipality of Ohrid
Mr. Goce Simonoski - Advisor, International Relations

Municipality of Prilep
Mr. Marijan Risteski - Mayor
Mr. Dimitar Stevanandzija - Councilor

Municipality of Bitola
Mr. Vladimir Taleski - Mayor

Municipality of Resen
Mr. Dimitar Buzlevski - Mayor
Ms. Daniela Apostolovska - Advisor, International Relations

Ministry of Local Self-government of the fYR of Macedonia
Mr. Rizvan Sulejmani, Minister
Ms. Flora Kastrati, Chief of Cabinet

Mr. Ioannis Pediotis, Greek Consul



External Experts

Mr. Pavel Branda, Nisa Euroregion

Mr. Predrag Coeticanin, University of Nis; OGI

Dr. Zydi Tegja, KASH

Working Group Representatives

Dr. Georgios Christides, University of West Macedonia in Florina

Dr. Ioannis Manos, University of West Macedonia in Florina

Prof. Zlatko Zoglev, University of Bitola

Ms. Snezana Mojsavska – Salamovska, University of Bitola

Ms. Anica Palazzo – GTZ Ohrid

Ms. Tanja Hafner, MCMS Skopje

Mr. Nikola Kiselinov, Tourist Association "Biljana" Ohrid

Mr. Naum Gegprifti, Association "Tourism and Environment" Pogradec

RDA Korca

Mr. Aurel Grabocka, Director

Mr. Gjergji Naçi, Project Coordinator

Ms. Mariela Trako, Administrative staff

Mr. Iroin Cepa, Administrative staff

RESC

Mr. Dragan Damjanovski, Director

Mr. Goce Petrovski, Expert

Ms. Elena Damjanovska, Project Assistant

CIBC

Mr. Antonios Siampanopoulos, Member of the Board of Directors

Mr. Nikos Sketas, Finance

CTP

Ms. Gabriela Scheiner, Director

Mr. Froy Seco, Volunteer

EWI

Ms. Sasha Havlicek, Senior Director, Centre for Border Co-operation

Mr. Johannes Busse, Project Manager, Centre for Border Co-operation

Ms. Bohdana Dimitrovova, Project Manager, Centre for Border Co-operation

Ms. Marija Dojranska, Project Assistant, Centre for Border Co-operation

Interpreters

Mr. Argjir Gjata

Mr. Andreja Ralebok

Mr. Artan Coma



V. Annexes

Annex A

Development Priorities for the Prespa-Ohrid Euroregion

based on recommendations by the Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion Council and the Prespa Economic Task Force

Euroregion Sustainability

Feasibility Study on Local Co-Financing of Euroregion Structures (at local/ regional authority and business levels alongside external sources of funding) including the work of the Euroregion Council, Euroregion secretariats and the Euroregion working groups

Physical Infrastructure

Feasibility Study on Main Road Infrastructure

For example: Korca - Ohrid (ext. Struga) - Resen - Bitola (ext. Prilep) - Niki - Florina (ext. Kastoria, Grevena, Kozani)

Business

Follow up Research Study (to the ETF Report) on the Economic Base and Interconnectedness of the Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion (first, second and third sector) as basis for well targeted local economic development projects

Annual Prespa/Ohrid Business fair rotating among the main exhibition centres in the region (Kozani, Bitola and Korca) to become one of the main fairs in the Balkans

Long Term Goal: Establishment of Prespa/Ohrid Free Economic Zone

Working Groups

University Cooperation: Towards common curriculum design of the Universities in Florina/Kozani, Kastoria, Bitola and Korca

Tourism Cooperation: Develop the Prespa/Ohrid Region as one destination for local and foreign tourists

Civil Society: Strengthening of the NGO Network



Outreach/Marketing

Elaboration of the Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion Website

Advocacy

Improvement of Border regime and management (especially Visa)

Opening of Border Point at Agios Germanos/Markova Noga

**Annex B:
Development Priorities for the Prespa/Ohrid Region
Problems & Solutions**

*Elaborated by Local Authority Administrative Experts and Working Group Members
16 June 2005 in Bitola*

Tourism

Problems

Lack of information connected with cultural and natural attractions that could be presented

Lack of access to the countries (border crossings are time consuming)

Lack of inexpensive accommodation

Lack of entertainment and cultural activities

Lack of transport (lake bus, lake boat)

Lack of joint projects in tourism

Lack of standardization of tourism facilities

Lack of international promotion of the region

No web site with booking possibilities

Lack of promotional materials (maps, guides...)

Lack of trained human resources (tour guides, rescue teams, tourist staff...)

Lack of joint ventures of tourist agencies

No signage

Tourism Projects and possible solutions

I Research

- a) Market research, feasibility study (tourism facilities, environmental and cultural resources, defining host families)



- II *Promotion of the tourism sector of the Euroregion*
 - a) Web-site (information on tourism facilities, booking possibilities, links, information on cultural and natural resources)
 - b) Brochures, DVD, promotional material (maps, guides, etc)
 - c) Participation in international fairs
 - d) Familiarization visits (tourist operators, media, travel guides)
 - e) Facilitate collaboration of tourist agencies on the three sides of the border
 - f) Campaign for Signage

- III *Training*
 - a) Human Resources (rescue teams, hotels/restaurants on customer service, hosting families, tourist guides, staff of tourist agencies)

- IV *Advocacy for Visas (tourists, businessmen)*

Business

Problems

Lack of information on cooperative legislation and trafficking of goods
Lack of information on the available funding, donors and credit lines
Lack of info on what companies are active (their industrial capacities, and other characteristics - no directory)
Lack of common fairs
Problems of communication (language)
No smart visas and special cross border passes for business people
No standardization
Lack of appropriate translations of labels
No information on available season jobs

Business Projects and possible solutions

- I **Expansion of activities of the 3 centers (CIBC, RDA, RESC)**
 - Providing information on cooperative legislation, trafficking of goods, on available funding and credit lines and active companies (website, print material and providing information on request-on-line helpdesk)
 - Training Seminars for business people (include standardization)
 - Research study

- II **Promotion of the business sector**
 - a) across the borders and internationally (website, print material, etc)



b) rotating common fair

NGOs

Problems

Overlapping of projects
No joint activities among NGOs
NGOs not working together on specific issues
Don't have efficient equipment
No support centers in Albanian and Greece
No sufficient funding
Little communication
No collaboration of development institutions
No NGO Council
Problems with visas
Little transparency of NGO activities
No certification programs
Lack of cooperation with local and governmental authorities
Not enough media coverage of NGO
No study of institutional capacities

NGO Projects and possible solutions

- I Establishment of an NGO council/forum of the Euroregion** (cooperation with local self government, dissemination of existing information on NGOs, trust-building, NGO certification, media coverage, collaboration with development institutions and donors, coordination of NGO activities in the region)
- II Study on Institutional capacities of NGOs**

Culture

Problems

No database on cultural monuments
No database of cultural events, festivals,
No database on spoken traditions
Declining of the use of traditional handicrafts
Lack to visits to cultural monuments
No or few cultural joint ventures and research



No regional conference on cultural heritage and its use for development (culture-tourism)

Lack of professionalism and clarity of presentations

Lack of exchange and collaboration of cultural institutions from three countries

Lack of international promotion of the culture of the region

Underdeveloped commercial potential of cultural heritage (branding, marketing, shop for handicrafts)

Lack of information on the available funding

Culture Projects and possible solutions

- I Promotion and Packaging of cultural resources** (website, brochures, clarity of presentation, branding, training, shops for handicrafts, fairs)
- II Exchange between cultural institutions**
- III Research study (cultural monuments, cultural events, spoken tradition, etc)**

University collaboration

Problems

No cooperation between the universities

No info on curriculum

No staff exchanges

No student exchanges

No joint research work

No common meetings, workshops and summer schools

No joint projects for Eu funding

No easier procedures for academics

University Projects and possible solutions

- I Joint EU funded projects (Tempus)**
- II Summer school, workshops, common meetings (Ohrid, Prespa)**
- III Continuation of academic exchanges (staff, students, curriculum)**
- IV International Student ID cards**
- V Advocacy for visa for academics**