



# EASTWEST INSTITUTE

*Centre for Border Co-operation*

**In cooperation with:**



**Regional Development  
Agency, Korca**



**Center for Inter-Balkan  
Cooperation, Kozani**



**Regional Enterprise  
Support Agency, Bitola**



**Cultural Triangle of  
Prespes, Agios Germanos**

**Present the:  
CBC Prespa/Ohrid Newsletter, Summer 2005**

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**PRESPA/OHRID  
CBC NEWSLETTER**



### Dear Reader

The cross-border dimension of political, economic and social affairs in the Prespa/Ohrid region is becoming a more and more apparent and accepted facet of everyday life in the region. Local and regional authorities, private entrepreneurs, universities and non-governmental organizations are increasingly looking for partners from across the borders to exploit common opportunities and tackle common problems. Like this, cross-border links are becoming closer and stronger.

It has become commonly accepted that the Prespa/Ohrid region should work towards a joint development strategy that coordinates the individual efforts presently undertaken on each side of the borders. Roads, business zones, medical facilities, business networks and science networks need to be planned together in order to make sense and have an impact. In this respect the mayors and prefects of the Prespa/Ohrid region met two times in June 2005 to discuss common development goals. These were the first ever meetings of their kind.

Equally students, professors, tourism experts, NGO leaders, pupils, teachers and parents from each side of the borders came together on several occasions to meet their counterparts from the neighboring countries and elaborate joint initiatives for regional development in their area of concern. These meetings are very encouraging signs of the region slowly and steadily overcoming old prejudices and embracing a common future.

### Euroregion Background

Since the latter half of 2001, the EastWest Institute has supported the border communities of Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Greece in their endeavour to build trust and co-operation among themselves in order to bridge the long-standing rifts that destabilize the region. To institutionalize cross-border cooperation, EWI, its local partners the Regional Development Agency (RDA) of Korca, the Regional Enterprise Support Centre (RESC) of Bitola and the Centre for Inter Balkan Co-operation (CIBC) of Kozani, as well as the local and regional authorities, are working towards the formal establishment of a Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion. At the same time a number of concrete Pilot initiatives for co-operation in fields ranging from NGO co-operation to education and economic development have been led: these intend to demonstrate the direct benefits of practical co-operation to the communities of the region.

The "Trans-frontier Institution Building Project for the Prespa/Ohrid Region 2003-2005 - Towards the Establishment of the Euroregion" is financed by the Swedish Agency for International Development (SIDA), which has a long-standing commitment to the region and is present with offices (among others) in Ohrid and Korca. For more detailed information about the geographic and thematic scope of the Euroregional activities please refer to Newsletter No.1 or contact the EWI local project office in Ohrid, or any of the local partners.

### Euroregion Establishment

The signing of the trilateral protocol formally establishing the Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion has been postponed until the primary logjams to positive bilateral relations between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have been resolved. Until then the Greek government has withdrawn its support of an official inauguration of the Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion. It is hoped, though, that a solution to the bilateral problem will be found before the end of the year.

### Prespa/Ohrid Integrated Development Initiative

The local and regional authorities in the Prespa/Ohrid region have decided to establish the Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion in order to coordinate and systematize cross-border co-operation in the region. ▶

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► Of special concern to them is, naturally, the overall development of the region. To this end, EWI facilitated several meetings in June 2005 to discuss development priorities for the Prespa/Ohrid region.

The first meeting took place on 01 June 2005 in Florina, where broad development goals were discussed among participants from the three countries. One week later administrative experts from the participating municipalities and prefectures came together under the guidance of an EWI-appointed trainer from the University of Nis to translate the development goals into specific needs and possibilities.

The mayors and prefects, their administrative experts and representatives from several Prespa/Ohrid working groups (Education, Tourism, NGOs) met again from 15 – 16 June 2005 in Bitola to discuss final suggestions for a regional development plan. Among the priorities discussed and elaborated were:



- **Improvement** of the Road Infrastructure connecting the main towns in the region
- **Analysis** of the economic potential of and the growth sectors in the region
- **Common** Business Fairs and the Establishment of a Free Economic Zone
- **Marketing** of the Region on a common website
- **Closer** co-operation between universities in the region



- **A strong** network between non governmental organizations

The participants agreed to discuss these suggestions with other stakeholders in the region and meet again in September 2005 for a final Euroregion development plan.

For more details on the suggested development goals please visit:

<http://cbc.ewi.info>

## University Co-operation

The Prespa/Ohrid region has the great advantage of boasting several universities within its territory, which offer a unique development potential for the area. The Technical University TEI Kozani with campuses in Kozani and Florina, the University of Western Macedonia with a campus in Florina, the University 'St. Kliment Ohridski' of Bitola with campuses in Bitola, Prilep and Ohrid and the University 'Fan S. Noli' of Korca with a campus in Korca are all within a distance of less than three hours from each other. Their proximity has led to fruitful co-operation initiatives and projects for several years as universities have discovered the advantages of exchanging expertise and ideas and implementing common projects. Within the framework of Euroregional co-operation, this becomes even easier and more frequent.

The Technical Faculties of the TEI Kozani, the University of Bitola and the University of Korca were the first in the region to exchange professors and work on common curriculum design. The three partner universities have since realized a joint student and professors meeting with EWI support in March 2005 in Korca. During this two-day working meeting, students and professors discussed university teaching in the region and planned next steps, including a student study visit to the Faculty of Agriculture of the Technical University TEI Kozani in Florina and the joint elaboration of a text book on technical science education by professors.



Another strong partnership has been formed between Social Science Faculties in the region, with EWI's facilitation, namely the Department of Balkan Studies in Florina, the Department of Public Administration in Bitola and the Economics Faculty in Korca. They have organized a student and professor meeting in Korca, where participants presented the different universities and worked on common teaching modules. The Social Science Faculties have furthermore participated in a meeting of students with NGO leaders and have organized a seminar on cross-border university programmes and the European Credit Transfer System. The next step is the exchange of lecturers amongst universities to benefit from the diverse fields of expertise of the participating professors.

The third partnership has been formed between the Faculties of Pedagogy of Korca, Florina and Bitola. These faculties are in a unique position to transmit the advantages of cross-border co-operation to the future teachers of the region. EWI will facilitate the first student exchange in early autumn 2005 between the Faculties of Pedagogy.



## European Integration for Students

The EastWest Institute in co-operation with the universities of the region has started a seminar series on the European Integration Process for students from the co-operating universities. They offer students the chance to engage in interactive working session led by distinguished experts on European Union Studies teaching in and outside the region as well as experts from the field as the seminars become more advanced and focused on specific topics.

The introductory seminar took place from 25 – 26 May 2005 in Bitola. Around thirty students from all three countries and Bulgaria attended and passed the final test with great success.

The more comprehensive advanced workshop on the European Integration process took place from 25 – 28 July in Ohrid and gathered 35 students from the three neighbouring countries. Finally, the Social Science Faculties have jointly applied for funding for a ten-day winter school on the European Integration Process to the Balkan Trust for Democracy, which, as most advanced workshop, will complete the seminar series.

## NGOs link up in the Region

The third event in the series of capacity building workshops for NGOs in the Prespa/Ohrid region again attracted great attention by regional NGO leaders. From 20 - 21 June 2005 they came together for practical training and applied exercises on Media Relations in Bitola. The participants held press conferences that they evaluated themselves afterwards. They elaborated press releases and learned about how to approach media in the most professional and pragmatic way. The two days proved to be far too short to answer all questions and tackle all issues surrounding the relations of NGOs with the Media. The experienced Media specialists and practicing journalists, Ms. Biljana Bejkova and Mr. Roberto Belicanec, from the NVO Infocentar Skopje, who led the training, therefore promised to assist NGOs in their media relations on an ongoing basis.

At the end of the two-day training (21 June 2005) the participants seized the opportunity to discuss the establishment of a Prespa/Ohrid NGO Council. The successful launch of the NGO Database ([www.ewi.info/programs/subprogram/NGODB](http://www.ewi.info/programs/subprogram/NGODB)) and the subsequent possibility to communicate more easily and organize cross-border networking and training workshops has encouraged the NGOs in the region to institutionalize their co-operation. The NGO representatives endorsed a memorandum of understanding that will establish a loose association among NGOs that is coordinated by an elected president. The



idea is to meet regularly in order to exchange ideas, form partnerships and work on common projects. The Memorandum was signed by all interested organizations in the region in July 2005. If your organization would like to join the NGO Council please contact the EastWest Institute local project office in Ohrid ([prespa-ohrid@ewi.info](mailto:prespa-ohrid@ewi.info)), the Cultural Triangle of Prespes in Agios Germanos ([ctprespa@acn.gr](mailto:ctprespa@acn.gr)) or the local partner organizations.

*The NGO networking activities have so far included:*

- **The elaboration** of a web based searchable database containing all active NGOs in the region as well as NGO support structures, potential donors and other relevant information. ([www.ewi.info/programs/subprogram/NGODB](http://www.ewi.info/programs/subprogram/NGODB))
- **A training** workshop on project proposal development using the logical framework approach held in October 2004 in Korca
- **A training** workshop on strategic and operational planning as well as funding

opportunities held in November 2004 in Resen

- **Small** Cross Border Cooperation Projects on NGO Media Relations, Rural Tourism, NGO Networks and Women Businesses
- **A training** workshop on NGO Media Relations held in May 2005 in Bitola
- **The establishment** of a Prespa/Ohrid NGO Council in July 2005 in Ohrid

*Future activities include the:*

- **Elaboration** of an NGO Website displaying all NGO activities in the region and featuring an NGO online helpdesk
- **A series** of training workshops on NGO Management and Networking. The first workshop on NGO networking will take place in September 2005
- **Regular** Prespa/Ohrid NGO council meetings, at least every two months

## Cross-Border Ecocamp

The beaches around the lake Ohrid are in some places quite littered with garbage, not a pleasant sight for residents, as well as local and foreign tourists. The municipalities of Ohrid and Pogradec together with local schools, the Tourist Association Biljana and in co-operation with the East-West Institute and local partners decided that something needed to be done before the start of the summer season and agreed to organize an Ecocamp for schoolchildren including the cleaning of beaches.

The camp brought together 25 schoolchildren from Ohrid municipality schools and 25 schoolchildren from Pogradec municipality schools for three days (03 - 05 June 2005) in Pogradec and Ljubanishte. The children were accompanied by teachers, parents and young educators from the Youth Center Babylon in Ohrid who did a fantastic job of breaking the ice, helping the children to get to know each other and en-



gaging them in creative activities related to the protection of our living environment.

The children started off with cleaning a stretch of beach in Pogradec collecting five big bags of garbage; with some of the garbage they found they made objects and displayed them in a garbage museum. On the second day the children went to the Ljubanishte Camp and together with local citizens and the Ohrid Communal Service Enterprise cleaned the camp beach and the adjacent area from garbage. Altogether more than a small truck of garbage was

collected on that day.

The children also explored the natural surroundings of Ljubanishte on a nature trail orientation walk and later, back in the camp base in Pogradec, painted T-Shirts and sea objects and made jewelry. At night the children, tirelessly, prepared a talent show that saw remarkable recitations of traditional poems, life song and dancing performances as well as small role-plays. The mingling became even more cheerful during the subsequent disco party. When, the next day, it was time to depart there were many good-bye tears and promises to keep in contact.



## Day of Lake Ohrid

On the occasion of the Day of Lake Ohrid, annually celebrated jointly by the Municipalities of Pogradec, Ohrid and Struga on 21 June, the EastWest Institute together with the Cultural Triangle of Prespes, the Youth Center Babylon Ohrid, the Tourist Association Biljana Ohrid and local schools brought together children from the three neighbouring countries, namely from Ohrid, Pogradec and Agios Germanos for a day of activities on the Pogradec Lakefront. The children, who had in part met already during the Ecocamp, painted T Shirts and displayed the jewelry and painted clay figures that they had created two weeks earlier during the Pogradec - Ljubanishte Ecocamp. A highlight for the children was the visit of their stand by the three mayors of Pogradec, Ohrid and Struga as well as the media.



## Tourism Development

The natural beauty and the cultural richness of the Prespa/Ohrid region, make it a popular destination for tourists from the region and abroad. Tourism has thus become a major source of income for people in the region. This is likely to increase further as the tourism potential of the region is better used. In February 2005 the participants at the first Prespa/Ohrid Tourism Development meeting agreed to work towards developing the region as one tourist destination and to focus on tourism development in the fields of marketing (website), training and products (tours).

At the follow - on meeting in Pogradec in April 2005 participants approved that the working groups should meet regularly in small focus groups. Since then the 'product' focus group, that includes tour operators from the three neighboring countries, has met twice to develop encompassing ten-day tours covering the main attractions in the Prespa/Ohrid area. The tours are planned to revolve around cultural/religious tourism, village tourism and recreational/nature tourism and are going to be marketed mainly to foreign tourists coming to the region.

The focus groups on training (involving among others the Tourism Faculty in Ohrid, the tourism branch of the Technical University TEI Thessaloniki and the Economics & Tourism Faculty of Korca University) and marketing (website) will meet in September 2005.



## Prespa/Ohrid in Brief

*Red Peppers of Prespa - Traditional Red Pepper Recipes gathered by the children of Prespa*

A book of traditional Red Pepper recipes from the entire Prespa region, gathered over the course of more than a year in the framework of the Cross Border Red Pepper Project, published in the three local languages and English with pictures from Paris Petridis, is available at the Cultural Triangle of Prespes. The publication and part of the Red Pepper Project has been kindly funded by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). For more information please contact [ctprespa@acn.gr](mailto:ctprespa@acn.gr) or check <http://www.ctp.gr>

*'Imagination and Knowledge - against stereotypes'*

During a Youth Exchange Week 30 young people from five European countries (Spain, France, Poland, Latvia and Greece) gathered from 25 May until 1 June 2005 in the Greek Prespa area. The young people came together in the framework of the program 'Youth' implemented by the Greek Youth Secretariat and the European Commission. The Cultural Triangle of Prespes (CTP) organized Workshops, roundtable discussions, excursions, concerts, exhibitions, the creation of a Youth Forum at CTP's website and other activities. For next year the organizers plan to include also Greece's neighboring countries Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the youth exchange. For more information visit: <http://www.ctp.gr>

*Regional Junior Football Contest*

The local authorities from Pustec (Albania) and the Primary School of Dolna Gorica have organized a junior football contest on 28 May 2005 in Pustec/Albania. This football contest, which is organized annually in different places in the region, involved teams of players 13 - 14 years old from the three neighbouring countries and Bulgaria.

*Gert Jan van Appeldorn Award for Regional Co-operation*

The Regional Enterprise Support Center (RESC), Bitola, has won the Gert Jan van Appeldorn Award from the MCMS Skopje for outstanding contributions to the establishment of a Prespa/Ohrid Euroregion. The award was given during an official ceremony, with the participation of high ranking government officials, in Skopje in June 2005. ▶



► **Youth Working Camp Stenje – Otesevo – Sirhan 2005**

The Municipality of Resen hosted the “Youth Working Camp Stenje – Otesevo – Sirhan 2005” held from 20 June – 5 July in Otesevo on the shores of Lake Prespa. 120 young people from different ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds from the three sides of the border were cleaning the shores of Lake Prespa in a joint effort. They were supported by the communal service enterprise of Resen, which operated cleaning machinery. The camp was financially supported by the UNDP and other donors.

**Useful Links**

**European Agency for Reconstruction:** <http://www.ea.eu.int/home.htm>

The European Agency for Reconstruction’s task is to manage the European Union’s main assistance programmes in Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Apart from tenders that are directly related to projects, the Agency also publishes international and local procurement notices, calls for expression of interest and calls for proposals to complete jobs of a more administrative nature.

Some of these are open for a longer term, and companies are invited to submit their proposals at any time.

**EU Delegation in Albania:** <http://www.delalb.cec.eu.int>

The Delegation of the European Commission represents the European Commission in the framework of the implementation of the European Community’s external relations. Its main tasks are:

- Facilitation of the development of political and economic relations between the EU and Albania
- Management of EU Assistance Programs: CARDS and PHARE
- Dissemination of Information about the EU

**INTERREG Managing Authority in Greece:** <http://www.interreg.gr>

The INTERREG Managing Authority of the Ministry of the Economy of Greece manages all structural assistance programs by the European Union relating to cross border cooperation of Greece with its neighboring countries. These programs include most prominently the INTERREG cross border assistance (Strands A, B and C) in the fields of economic, cultural and political development. The website provides information on the general framework of INTERREG cooperation as well as past, present and future calls for proposals.

**Prespa/Ohrid NGO Database:** <http://www.ewi.info/programs/subprogram/NGODB>

The NGO Database contains a comprehensive list of NGOs that are active in the region. It provides a profile of each NGO plus additional information on donors, international organizations, local authorities, NGO support centres, and chambers of commerce working in the region.

**EastWest Institute’s Centre for Border Cooperation:** <http://cbc.ewi.info>

The Website of the EWI’s Centre for Border Cooperation provides an overview of all Cross Border Cooperation projects of the EastWest Institute in Eastern and South-eastern Europe. It further contains detailed reports on all the events and activities mentioned in this newsletter.



**Upcoming Events**

**10-18 SEPTEMBER 2005:**

Thessaloniki International Fair, Greece  
<http://www.helexpo.gr>

**24 – 28 SEPTEMBER 2005:**

Commercial Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition, Kozani, Greece  
[www.anko.gr](http://www.anko.gr)

**12 OCTOBER 2005:**

Seminar on Cross Border Tourism Development: The example of a Czech-German Border Region

**OCTOBER 2005:**

Prespa/Ohrid Technical Faculties Student Seminar on Applied Teaching in Florina

