

Common challenges – joint solutions

Cross-border projects between countries of the Eastern Partnership increase people's quality of life

The challenge: Promoting cooperation within the Eastern Partnership

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, cooperation between the former Soviet republics Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine decreased considerably. The countries have developed in very different directions, which led to problems, not only in the border regions of these countries. In May 2009, the European Union (EU) set up the Eastern Partnership. As part of this initiative, bilateral agreements were signed between the European Union and the six countries in its direct neighbourhood to promote cooperation. In order to also foster greater exchange and cooperation among the former Soviet republics, the EU launched the Eastern Partnership Territorial Cooperation Programme (EaPTC). EaPTC consists of the cross-border programmes Armenia–Georgia, Azerbaijan–Georgia, Belarus–Ukraine and Moldova–Ukraine. Governmental and non-governmental organisations in these countries can apply to the EU for funding for their project ideas. As the Managing Authority for implementation of the EaPTC, GIZ organises Info-Days prior to the EU's call for tenders, where the application requirements are presented. After the application phase, independent experts select the projects.



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| Project title: | Eastern Partnership Territorial Cooperation Programme |
| Commissioned by: | European Commission, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) |
| Implemented by: | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH |
| Lead executing agency: | UA: Ministry of Economic Development and Trade; AM: Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development; AZ: Ministry of Economy; BY: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; GE: Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure; MD: State Chancellery |
| Project area: | Ukraine (UA), Armenia (AM), Azerbaijan (AZ), Belarus (BY), Georgia (GE), Moldova (MD) |
| Overall term: | 01/2014 to 06/2019 |
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A project of the EaPTC programme presents selected results at a press conference

Our approach: Working successfully across borders

On behalf of the European Commission and the German Government, GIZ is supporting cross-border cooperation between the countries of the Eastern Partnership in order to promote sustainable economic development and to improve the population's quality of life. The partner countries sit on joint committees to decide about those areas in which governmental organisations and civil society institutions can submit projects for funding by the European Commission. In two programmes on cooperation, namely Moldova–Ukraine and Belarus–Ukraine, projects are being implemented to promote youth work, tourism, small and medium-sized enterprises and environmental protection, for example. GIZ has been tasked with steering these projects.

Tourist routes to historical and cultural heritage sites in the border regions are being planned, for instance, and solutions are being developed for regional problems such as youth unemployment and access to health services. Emergency services work across borders to fight flooding, forest fires, and air and water pollution. Cultural and sporting events are held at which people from the border regions can meet.

On behalf of the European Commission, GIZ informs potential grant recipients about the basic aspects of the programmes and checks the project reports during subsequent implementation. GIZ steers implementation of the programme from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and is responsible for ensuring that the projects are implemented in line with EU requirements. The projects themselves are implemented by a relevant national organisation in cooperation with partners in the country itself or in the partner country.



Sports activities such as rafting bring people together across borders



A project promoting people with disabilities uses chess to strengthen logical thinking and concentration



Oleksandr Lobov: **“Unforgettable moments and emotions”**

Oleksandr Lobov works as a project manager for the Zhytomyr Regional Fund of Social Protection of Disabled People, an organisation devoted to issues such as the social integration of people with disabilities through sport and tourism. In the border region between Belarus and Ukraine, Mr Lobov and non-governmental organisations from both countries organise a number of sporting activities for

people with disabilities. In addition to arm wrestling for wheelchair users, basketball and volleyball, the project partners organised 14 kayak tours on Ukraine’s river Ubort in mid-2018. In addition to finding a new hobby, the participants also made new friends. As Oleksandr Lobov remarks, *“These are not only unforgettable moments! This is an opportunity for the participants to test themselves by doing something they wouldn’t normally do, experience nature, enjoy incredible Ukrainian landscapes and learn about the history of these places – in short: to live a fuller live. The slow current of the Ubort enchants everyone.”*

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