

PRESS RELEASE

CARPATHIAN CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM

Creation of an inter-regional civil society hub for social inclusion in the Carpathian region

Inter-regional workshop in Kosice, 2-3 October, 2018

Fifty people from forty civil society organizations from Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine and Hungary meet in Kosice on October 2-3 to map future cooperation opportunities. The meeting is a milestone of the project Carpathian Civil Society Platform - Creation of an inter-regional civil society hub for social inclusion in the Carpathian region.

The project objective is to set up an inter-regional civil society hub of the rural organizations that work for the most marginalized communities in order to strengthen their collaboration and effectiveness. It's aimed to improve the influence and weight of civil sector by capacity development by creating a platform for networking, exchange of experience, knowledge and best practices. Our organizations, the Carpathian Foundation-Hungary, ETP Slovakia, Carpathian Foundation-Ukraine and the Gate of Carpathians Foundation from Poland are committed to develop civil society organizations working with rural communities and marginalized groups primarily on remote areas of these countries.

The most underdeveloped bordering rural areas of Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine have similar characteristics (distance from capital, poor infrastructure, diverse ethnic and cultural heritage, natural resources and similar history) and at the same time face very similar challenges, such as increasing poverty, social exclusion, marginalization and stigmatization of the poor. Civil society is still weak, and civil organizations lack numerous assets (funding, strategic thinking, information, tools, support for (self) development, local embeddedness, and cooperation within the civil sector and with other sectors) required for the effective interventions to alleviate poverty and marginalization of those who are the most in need.

During the 18-months long international cooperation, similar network building is being realized in North-East Hungary, East Slovakia, South-East Poland and West Ukraine. After having set up the local hublets during the workshops in each country, the next important step towards international cooperation is the Inter-regional meeting in Kosice on 2-3 October.

The meeting will be opened by H.E. Henk Cor van der Kwast, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Slovakia, and the keynote speech will be given by Péter Hunčík, writer and psychiatrist followed by the presentation of the project by Sándor Köles, the president of Carpathian Foundation-Hungary. The panel discussions on country-specific topics in inter-regional context will give the opportunity to participants to learn the findings of the local workshops of each country. On the second day of the meeting the participants will map opportunities for inter-regional cooperation in breakout groups, and will plan the future operation of the Civil Platform and the HUB.

The project is supported by the International Visegrad Fund (www.visegradfund.org), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (www.minbuza.nl), the Robert Bosch Stiftung, and by a grant from the Foundation Open Society Institute in cooperation with the OSIFE of the Open Society Foundations.

More information about the project: <http://www.karpatokalapitvany.hu/en/tartalom/carpathian-civil-society-platform>

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