

## EPICAH Extended Period

04 April 2022 / 11.00 – 13.15 CET

Virtual Seminar with the participation of Managing Authorities

Scope: To promote the exchange of experiences between Managing Authorities

# Virtual Seminar Minutes & Report

## April 2022

### 1. Introduction



The main aim of the EPICAH additional activities is to identify the challenges faced by the PIs in reviving the development of border territories, of the relations & exchanges between CB territories & communities & contributing to their

recovery & resilience in the specific field of CB heritage and tourism.

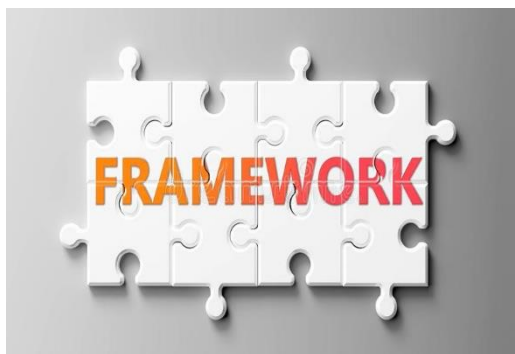
According to the project extension Application Form a Virtual Seminar took place on the **4th of April 2022**, with the participation of EPICAH project partners and their stakeholders and **invited speakers from the Managing Authorities of the policy instruments of the program.**

The preparation, organisation, implementation via ZOOM platform and reporting of the Seminar results were on the responsibility of the Greek partner, the Regional Development Fund of Western Macedonia. An external expert and the partner project team prepared the Seminar, following specific steps from February 2022 on already:

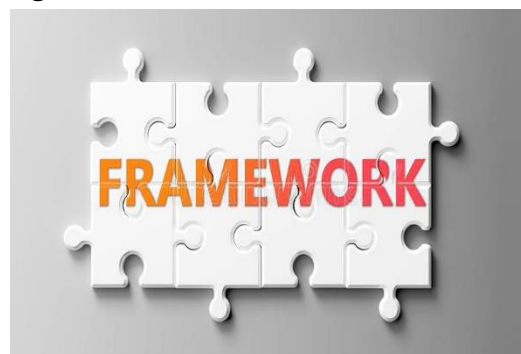
- Description of the events' framework
- Communication with all partners to invite and inform the Managing Authorities representatives on the events' framework
- Elaboration of the events' agenda
- Organisation of the Seminar
- Preparation of the Virtual Seminar Minutes & Report

## 2. The Virtual Seminar Framework

All Managing Authorities representatives were informed in advance the meeting that they should present answers to questions and address challenges in their slides from the following topics of interest:



- Updates on the policy instruments implementation by the end of 2021
- How strongly did the pandemic crisis affected their Policy Instrument (PI)?
- What were the correction activities - measures to adopt their IP on the pandemic situation?
- Were there any successful experiences on Cross order heritage and tourism management held during pandemic times?
- How can the PIs support (through what type of actions & projects & methodologies) cultural & natural heritage to become resilient and drivers for the recovery of CB territories?
- How to take advantage of Cross Border heritage as valuable asset in a post-COVID scenario (ensuring its sustainable use & balancing preservation & economic activity).



- How to re-establish Cross Border relationships and trust on neighbouring countries.

The MA representatives were provided with an optional to use template prepared by the RDF of WM team.

All speakers were invited by each responsible project partner.

Confirmation of all speakers made by 12 of March 2022.



### 3. The Virtual Seminar Agenda

## **VIRTUAL SEMINAR COVID19 – CHALLENGES FACED AND EMMERGING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BORDER TERRITORIES**

4 of April 2022

<https://zoom.us/j/97665570672?pwd=bTB6UmpuSGpwUjcoNFIGVjRkUjFzZz09>

Meeting ID: 976 6557 0672

Passcode: 906456AGENDA

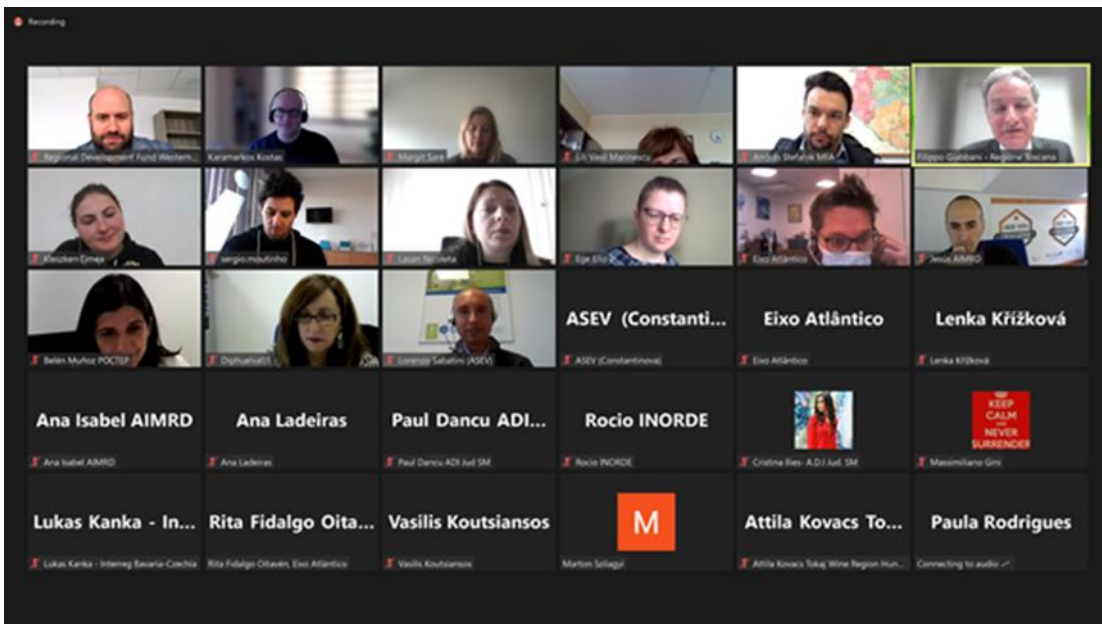
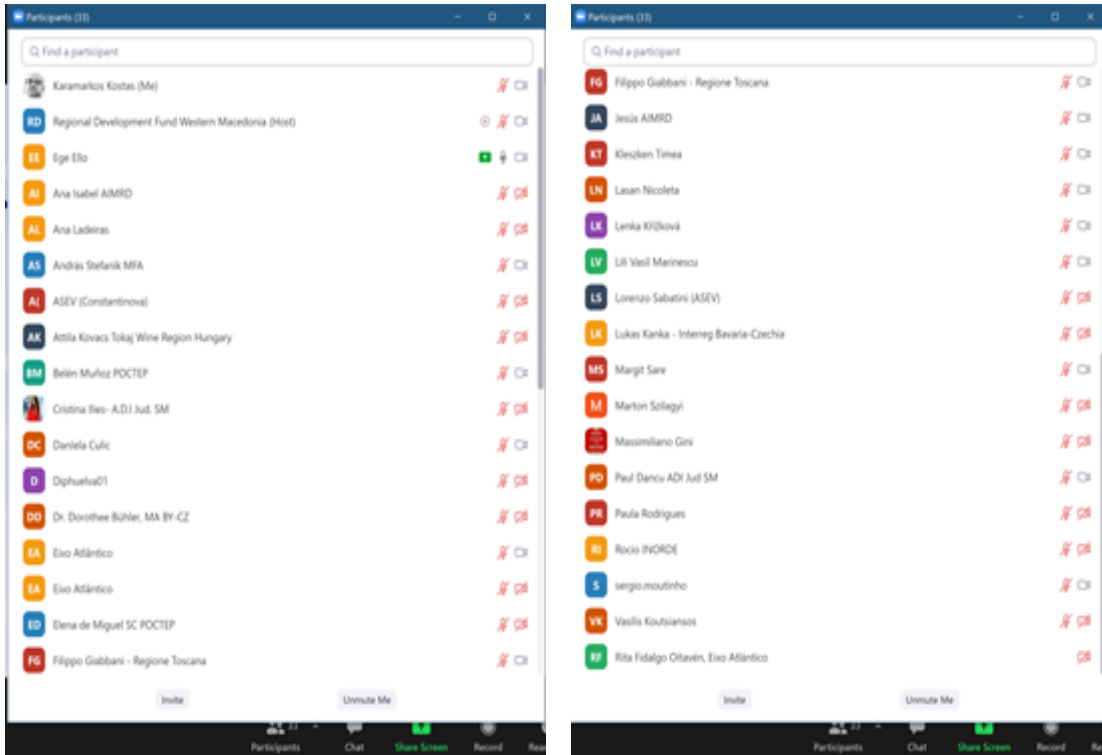
**(Central Europe Time)**

09.00 – 09.05	<p><b>Official welcome</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Xoan Vázquez Mao</b>, Secretary General, Eixo Atlantico (Portugal and Spain)</p>
09.05 – 09.10	<p><b>Presentation of the virtual seminar (agenda, objectives and relevance for EPICAH project).</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Kostas Karamarkos</b>, External Expert on behalf of the Regional Development Fund of Western Macedonia (Greece)</p>
09.10 – 11.05	<p><b>EPICAH Policy Instruments Round Table: Challenges faced and emerging opportunities for the border territories</b></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> <b>Mr. Kostas Karamarkos</b>, External Expert on behalf of the Regional Development Fund of Western Macedonia (Greece)</p> <p><u>Speakers:</u></p> <p><b>Mrs. Belen Muñoz</b>, Interreg VI A Spain-Portugal Managing Authority</p> <p><b>Mr. Filippo Giabbani</b>, Interreg VI A Italy-France “Maritime” Managing Authority</p> <p><b>Mrs. Vaia Agnantou</b>, ROP 2014-2020 of Region of Western Macedonia, Unit B/Monitoring and Management of Acts, Managing Authority</p> <p><b>Mrs. Ege Ello</b>, Interreg V A Estonia-Latvia. Managing Authority</p> <p><b>Dr. Dorothee Bühler</b>, Regional Economic Development, European Territorial Cooperation INTERREG A</p>

	<p><b>Mrs. Brigitta Nagy &amp; Mrs Liliana Vasil Marinescu</b>, Annual Programme for granting non-reimbursable financing from the local budget of Satu Mare County. Managing Authority</p> <p><b>Mr. Andras Stefanik</b>, Interreg VI A Slovakia- Hungary Cooperation Programme 2013-2020. Managing Authority</p>
11.05 – 11.20	<b>Questions and answers</b>
11.20 – 11.30	<p><b>Discussion and main results</b></p> <p><b>Mr. Kostas Karamarkos</b>, External Expert on behalf of. Regional development Fund of Western Macedonia. Moderator. (Greece)</p>

#### 4. The Virtual Seminar Agenda participants

During the seminar the participants numbered up to 36 people.



## 5. The Virtual Seminar Presentations

Mrs. Belen Muñoz, Interreg VI A Spain-Portugal Managing Authority was the 1<sup>st</sup> speaker.



Mr. Filippo Giabbani, Interreg VI A Italy-France “Maritime” Managing Authority, was the 2<sup>nd</sup> speaker.





Mrs. **Vaia Agnantou**, ROP 2014-2020 of Region of Western Macedonia, Unit B/Monitoring and Management of Acts, Managing Authority, was the 3<sup>rd</sup> speaker.



The slide features a white background with a large green arrow pointing downwards. In the top left corner, there is a logo for the Managing Authority of the Operational Program Dytiki Macedonia 2014-2020. In the top right corner, the EPICAH Interreg Europe logo is displayed. Below this, the European Union flag and the text 'European Union European Regional Development Fund' are shown. The main title of the seminar is centered in bold blue text. At the bottom, the speaker's name and the date are listed.

**MANAGING AUTHORITY**  
OPERATIONAL PROGRAM  
DYTIKI MAKEDONIA  
2014-2020

**EPICAH**  
Interreg Europe

European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

**VIRTUAL SEMINAR:  
COVID<sub>19</sub> – CHALLENGES FACED AND  
EMMERGING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE  
BORDER TERRITORIES**

**Vaia Agnantou, Managing Authority of Region of Western Macedonia**  
04 April 2022

Mrs. **Ege Ello**, Interreg V A Estonia-Latvia, Managing Authority, was the 4<sup>th</sup> speaker.



The slide has a light blue background with a pattern of white, overlapping circular lines. The title is in large, bold, dark blue font. Below the title, the speaker's name and title are listed. At the bottom, there are logos for Interreg Estonia-Latvia and the European Union.

**Estonia - Latvia Programme  
overview**

**Ege Ello**  
Head of Managing Authority  
4 April 2022, EPICAH

**Interreg**  
Estonia-Latvia  
European Regional Development Fund

**EUROPEAN UNION**



**Dr. Dorothee Bühler**, Regional Economic Development, European Territorial Cooperation INTERREG, was the 5<sup>th</sup> speaker.



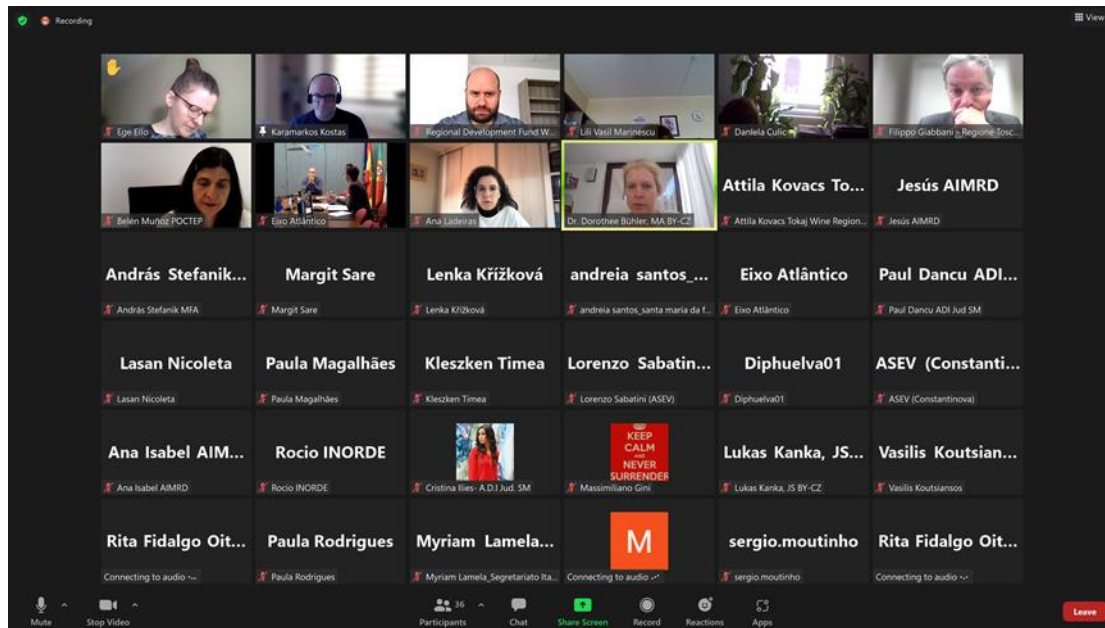
**Mrs. Brigitta Nagy**, Annual Programme for granting non-reimbursable financing from the local budget of Satu Mare County. Managing Authority, was the 6<sup>th</sup> speaker.



**Mr. Andras Stefanik**, Interreg VI A Slovakia- Hungary Cooperation Programme 2013-2020. Managing Authority, was the last speaker.

No presentation

## 6. The Virtual Seminar Minutes & Results



The Seminar is considered as successful, as through the presentations and the exchange of questions - answers were identified critical challenges faced by the Policy Instruments in reviving the development of border territories, of the relations & exchanges between Cross Border territories & communities & the contribution to their recovery & resilience in the specific field of CB heritage and tourism.

Questions and challenges that were addressed by the Managing Authorities representatives in their presentations and questions, per topic are:

### 6.1 Updates on the policy instruments implementation by the end of 2021.

#### a. Spain – Portugal

- ✓ 6 calls
- ✓ 779 submitted projects
- ✓ More 1 600 partners
- ✓ Same cooperation area for 2021-2027 , 427 M€

#### b. Italy – France

The Program aims to achieve the objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy in the central-northern Mediterranean area, promoting smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth taking into consideration the problems of marine, coastal and island areas, but also addresses inland areas, with specific risks of isolation.

The main objective is to help strengthen cross-border cooperation between the designated territories to make this area a competitive, sustainable and inclusive area in the European and Mediterranean landscape.

- ✓ 2 States (Italy and France), 5 Regions
- ✓ 6,5 million people in the cooperation area
- ✓ Almost 200 millions euros of total budget
- ✓ 122 projects financed
- ✓ 819 partner beneficiaries

#### c. Greece – Albania/North Macedonia

20 projects are co-funded by the OP of Western Macedonia 2014-2020 which contribute to the promotion of visitable monuments of special physiognomy and importance, and aim to attract visitors, not just "random", seasonal tourists, but cultural visitors (priority axis 6).

The overall budget of these project is about 21.000.000 € and most of them will be completed by the end of 2023.

The aim is the Region of Western Macedonia to be a pole of attraction throughout the year, for both local groups (e.g. students) and for (foreign) visitors who are interested in gathering new essential information and experiences, in order to satisfy their spiritual needs. An increase in the number of visitors to the monuments, as well as to the wider area, will lead to the development of (cultural) tourism and the stimulation of entrepreneurship, will contribute to the development of the region.

#### d. Estonia – Latvia

##### **Estonia - Latvia Programme 2014-2020**

- ✓ Last projects are ongoing

- ✓ Commitments 99,2%
- ✓ Payments 80,58%
- ✓ Closing event planned to September 2022

**2014+: Programme support to cultural and natural heritage**

**Tourism development - cultural and natural heritage**

- ✓ More visitors at cultural and natural heritage sites
- ✓ Improve at least 35 cultural and natural heritage sites
- ✓ ca 7 million euros for tourism development.

**7 heritage tourism projects:**

Coastal Hiking, Green Railway, Industrial Heritage, Livonian Culinary Route, UNESCO tourism, Garden Pearls, Military Heritage

**1 project** to improve sailing infrastructure and yacht harbours

**e. Bavaria – Czech Republic**

An overview of the programm is on the following table:

Priority Axis	Specific Objectives	No. Projects
1 – Research, technological development & innovation	Research & innovation	18
	Inclusion of SME	9
2 – Environmental protection & resource efficiency	Joint cultural and natural heritage	40
	Biodiversity and ecosystem services	15
3 – Competence and Education		30
4 – Sustainable networks		42

#### f. Romania – Hungary

The policy instrument is the annual Programme for granting non reimbursable financing from the local budget of Satu Mare County.

##### **Lessons learned with the pandemic included in the Programme are:**

- ✓ The importance of ensuring the openness and transparency of the funding process,
- ✓ The importance of digitizing procedures (in as many stages as possible) in the grant process,
- ✓ Finding new ways of interaction between citizens and public institutions,
- ✓ Strengthen the responsibility of public authorities in this area,
- ✓ Specialization and professionalization of public services in this field,
- ✓ Adequate and prompt information of applicants on any changes in the conduct of the funding procedure,
- ✓ The reasons for the decisions taken by the administration should be clear, evidence-based where necessary and explained in documents by reference to the particular context and circumstances of the decision.

**The representative of Slovakia – Hungary didn't give any updates on the Programme progress.**

#### 6.2 How strongly did the pandemic crisis affected their Policy Instrument (PI)?

##### a. Spain – Portugal

- ✓ After the first wave (Spring 2020) of the pandemic, border restrictions in the cross-border region have known successive stages of tightening and softening until now.
- ✓ The impact was on:
  - i. Cross-border mobility and work
  - ii. Economic activities and
  - iii. administrative procedures - Social & cultural activities

- ✓ Both countries have established restrictions based on health checks

#### **b. Italy – France**

The pandemic affected the PI, but It was MAs priority to ensure the continuation of funded projects during the Covid-19 emergency.

#### **c. Greece – Albania/North Macedonia**

The Operational Program was and is still affected by the pandemic crisis and this is reflected in the delays in the implementation and the completion of infrastructure projects and also in the increases in the prices of construction materials.

There were extensions to the project schedules, as well as extensions of the delivery time of the Public Procurement Contracts.

The OP was last updated in December 2021 (5th update) to include the necessary measures/activities due to the pandemic crisis.

1/5 of the overall budget of the OP was transferred from all priority axes to reinforce the enterprises and the Health System of the Region.

#### **d. Estonia – Latvia**

A significant decline is recorded in tourism sector in 2020 regarding:

- Domestic and foreign visitors
- Turnover and jobs in accommodation
- Catering
- Travel agencies & tour operators

#### **e. Bavaria – Czech Republic**

The pandemic affected the PI, but It was also the MAs priority to ensure the continuation of funded projects during the Covid-19 emergency.

These projects are 21 regarding cultural heritage and 11 regarding natural heritage.

#### **f. Romania – Hungary**

The consequence of the state of emergency / alert imposed in the territory, determined the abandonment of the financed projects due to the impossibility of their realization (sports competitions, cultural events that were to take place in arranged spaces and outdoors), respectively some of them could be carried out

only with compliance with the regulations providing for health protection measures established by joint order of the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Health and Sports.

From the perspective of the beneficiaries of the non-reimbursable financing, the imposed restrictions generated a series of inconveniences which are manifested by the following aspects:

- ✓ Uncertainty about the date or even the possibility of organizing the events,
- ✓ Additional costs relating to health safety procedures,
- ✓ Low number of addressability (of the public, of the participants) of the projects / actions.

The main challenges to be faced was to reorganize their activities or decrease the budget because some activities had to be limited in terms of participants or even reprogrammed or cancelled.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on society. The pandemic put the tourism ecosystem under unprecedented pressure. As a result of travel and other restrictions, tourism has gradually reduced its activity in Satu Mare, as in the EU and worldwide.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, virtually all states have implemented restrictions on non-essential travel, which are often accompanied by the obligation for cross-border travelers to remain in quarantine.

The EU's external borders have been closed to non-essential travel and many Member States have temporarily reintroduced internal border controls.

This meant that suddenly, millions of European citizens could no longer travel for business, study or leisure, many being separated from family and friends for months.

For the gradual elimination of restrictions on free movement and the elimination of internal borders, proportionality and non-discrimination between citizens must be ensured



### 6.3 What were the correction activities/measures to adopt their PI on the pandemic situation?

#### a. Spain – Portugal

The pandemic posed an unprecedented adaptation challenge for both the Programme and the projects. For this reason, a series of special measures were put in place to provide an agile response to continue with a certain degree of "normality" and to promote financial execution.

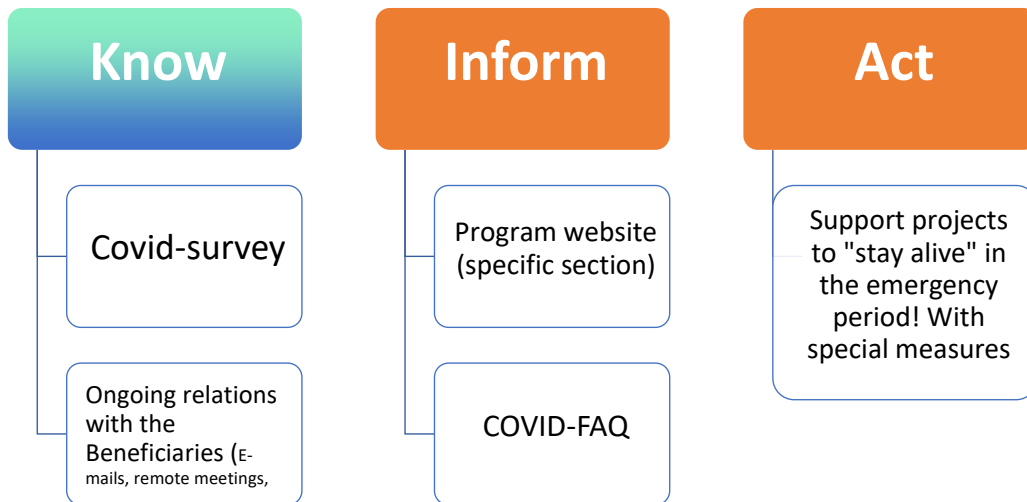
#### Automatic extensions & flexibility of actions included:

- ✓ Interruption of **deadlines** for administrative procedures during states of alarm and emergency in Spain and Portugal.
- ✓ Automatic **extensions** for project implementation.
- ✓ **Flexibility** of actions foreseen in the projects, substituting, for example, the face-to-face format for the virtual format.
- ✓ Communication activities went **online**.
- ✓ Possibility of carrying out **on-site verifications** after the project completion date.
- ✓ Exceptional **eligibility rules**: cancellation of activities and adaptation of working methods.

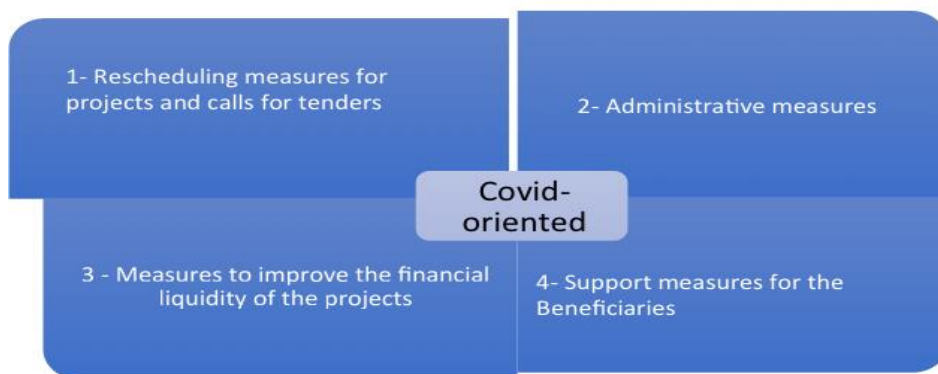
**The pandemic forced all to change plans: POCTEP projects went further, adapted, contributed and responded to urgent needs.**

#### b. Italy – France

According to the provisions of the European Commission (Regulation (EU) 2020/460) targeting investments in the health systems of the Member States and/or in other sectors of their economies in response to the COVID-19 epidemic, the Programme Managing Authority implemented specific measures addressing Beneficiaries' needs.



**The “Covid-reaction” measures by the MA at a glance:**



**The MA took over 4 different level measures in:**

- ✓ Projects (conversion plans for ongoing projects)
  - ✓ Calls (content adaptation)
  - ✓ Administrative measures (simplifications, exceptions of some obligations, etc)
  - ✓ Liquidly improvements
  - ✓ Beneficiaries support
- c. Greece – Albania/North Macedonia**
- ✓ € 40 million were transferred to support the small and medium enterprises affected by the pandemic (ERDF),

- ✓ € 11 million were transferred for the reinforcement of the equipment of the Hospitals and the Health Centers (ERDF), and
- ✓ € 6 million were transferred for the salary of the medical and nursing staff of the 5 Hospitals of our Region (ESF).

**d. Estonia – Latvia**

The MA and the beneficiaries were not able to carry out certain project activities as planned, so activities / measures to overcome this situation were:

- ✓ Guidance about eligibility of costs
- ✓ Re-design of project activities: certain activities online
- ✓ Prolongation of projects

**e. Bavaria – Czech Republic**

Since the borders were temporarily closed during Corona, joint activities could not take place (they were rescheduled ), while seminars and other events were moved online, festivals and youth exchanges were not possible.

All projects got the option to prolong their duration.

**f. Romania – Hungary**

The crisis generated by the COVID - 19 pandemic, has had and still has several significant implications regarding the situation of non-reimbursable financing under law 350/2005.

The imposed state of emergency / alert as well as the exceptional measures applied on the entire territory of the country, in some administrative-territorial units, led to the limitation of the freedom of movement, assembly, of the development of social activities in general.

In the context of the pandemic, locally, the county grant program was carried out in the same stages as in previous years regarding the preparation of specific rules for awarding grant contracts from the budget of Satu Mare county, selection of applications, verification of eligibility, evaluation of project proposals as well as the entire funding procedure.

The situations determined by the risk of infection with the SARS COV-2 virus determined the submission of a smaller number of applications for the three fields of financing: culture, sports, youth.

## 6.4 Were there any successful experiences on Cross-Border heritage and tourism management held during pandemic times?

### a. Spain – Portugal

Projects visibility is a priority and sharing experience is a necessity. POCTEP collaborated with EFE and LUSA new agencies during the pandemic.

A successful experience is **Euragora Forum' on Tourism & COVID** Feat. EU Comission, Madrid & Lisbon Majors.

Finally Gêres-Xurés Dinámico was another project, where POCTEP mentioned:

- ✓ Adaptation: support for all tourist establishments to obtain the "clean and safe" label.
- ✓ Promotion of tourism based on historical and natural heritage.
- ✓ Social dimension: tourists have to be safe, but especially local & older population

### b. Italy – France

The Programme launched the **#MarittimoChallenge (March 2020)**, a communication game-campaign with the primary objective of strengthening relationships, even informal ones, with the beneficiaries, in a period that forced everybody to remain physically further away.

### c. Greece - Albania / North Macedonia

No inputs for successful experiences.

### d. Estonia – Latvia

No inputs for successful experiences.

### e. Bavaria – Czech Republic

**New digitization opportunities and developed skills in use of new technologies** are considered as successful experiences on Cross-Border heritage and tourism management during the pandemic.

**f. Romania – Hungary**

Satu Mare County Council is a supporter of the event entitled **Street Music Festival** through co-financing.

This kind of event is unique in Romania, it takes place annually and involves the participation in the competition of musicians and street artists from all over Europe who come to our city to present their talent.

Respecting the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, the street performances could be watched by a large number of locals and tourists.

In conclusion, the main lesson learned in this pandemic is the one regarding the flexibility of the beneficiaries regarding the reprogramming and reinvention in the organization of events.

**6.5 How can the PI support (through what type of actions and projects and methodologies) cultural and natural heritage to become resilient and drivers for the recovery of Cross-Border territories?**

**a. Spain – Portugal**

COVID affected very hard the economy, especially the Cultural and Tourism sectors.

Changes needed:

- (i) To increase the attractiveness of the cross-border area:
  - ✓ Encouraging and promoting sustainable and ecological tourism, adapted to CC
  - ✓ Improving seasonality levels
  - ✓ Promoting territorial attractiveness in areas affected by the phenomenon of depopulation.

**And**

- (ii) To transform Tourism and Cultural sectors
  - ✓ Promoting the use of TICs and "data mining" allowing rapid adaptation to new requirements of the global economy, as well as remaining resilient during adverse situations

**b. Italy – France**

The PI continuously supports cultural and natural heritage aspects by funding related topics projects.

**c. Greece - Albania / North Macedonia**

The OP of Western Macedonia supports several projects that are situated and held in Florina and Kastoria, both cross-border areas, and involve the development of cultural heritage and tourism.

**d. Estonia – Latvia**

The PI support is continuously achieved by:

- ✓ Development of attractive, sustainable, visible and accessible cross-border tourism products
- ✓ New developments and improvement of the existing products with smart and targeted marketing
- ✓ Focus on Vidzeme, Kurzeme, Pierīga, West Estonia and South Estonia
- ✓ Public sector institutions and NGOs from capitals can participate to pass on their know-how and best

**e. Bavaria – Czech Republic**

Cultural and natural heritage can become resilient and drivers for the recovery of Cross-Border territories, as these topics remain very important for the programme area. Tourism is also an additional component.

The challenges to drive are the after Corona activities, the shortage of qualified personnel, the reduced number of visitors, “overtourism” cases and digitalization.

**f. Romania – Hungary**

Lessons learned with the pandemic are included in the new programmes:

The pandemic offers citizens the opportunity to enjoy the rich diversity of culture and nature in their own country and to discover new experiences throughout the year.

Many regions and cities rely heavily on cultural tourism.

Thus, technology has contributed to the reinvention of cultural tourism during this pandemic by opening up new opportunities in terms of creating innovative and local recreational and business tourism offerings.

So, there are new opportunities to discover hidden or forgotten treasures naturally and culturally, closer to home and to taste locally made products.

Tourism can benefit from the digital transition, offering new ways to manage travel and tourist flows, opportunities and more options, as well as more efficient use of limited resources.

## **6.6 How to take advantage of Cross-Border heritage as valuable asset in a post-COVID scenario (ensuring its sustainable use and balancing preservation and economic activity).**

### **a. Spain – Portugal**

No inputs.

### **b. Italy – France**

No inputs.

### **c. Greece - Albania / North Macedonia**

By the completion of the OP, the diffusion of the results will be evident both in the scientific community and in civil society, ensuring its sustainable use of the cultural heritage of the area and balancing preservation and economic activity.

### **d. Estonia – Latvia**

No inputs.

### **e. Bavaria – Czech Republic**

No inputs.

### **f. Romania – Hungary**

No inputs.



## 6.7 How to re-establish Cross Border relationships and trust on neighbouring countries.

### a. Spain – Portugal

Mostly through better cooperation governance, since:

- ✓ A stronger involvement of key territorial stakeholders will be promoted.
- ✓ A focus on solutions to border obstacles will be adopted.
- ✓ Small Project funds will be implemented in order to increase mutual trust across border

### b. Italy – France

No inputs.

### c. Greece – Albania/North Macedonia

No inputs.

### d. Estonia – Latvia

#### **Development of 2021-2027 period programme**

- ✓ Interreg: cooperation governance
- ✓ administrative + people-to-people

#### **Joint Programming Committee**

- ✓ Many representatives have experience in tourism, business

#### **Public hearings 8.11.-8.12.2021 comments and proposals:**

- ✓ Great interest of organisations in tourism development
- ✓ Municipalities: joint service development under ISO1

#### **Close cooperation during and between the calls for proposals to widen the target group and raise knowledge**

### e. Bavaria – Czech Republic

The new programmatic period is a useful multi level policy tool to partly support the re-establishment Cross Border relationships and trust on the two neighboring countries.

#### f. Romania – Hungary

It is well known that tourism is the backbone of the economy for many states.

Cross-border cultural cooperation covers all areas of cooperation and provides a strong basis for human contacts and interactions.

Now is the time to rebuild strong ties and cooperation between neighboring areas to strengthen cross-border cultural cooperation in all areas: tourism, cultural activities and cultural heritage.

The new experience and knowledge gained during this period can help to eliminate the accumulated barriers, thus creating a more competitive, credible and successful environment for neighboring countries.

It must promoted:

- ✓ new cultural activities in the cross-border area (festivals, concerts, cultural activities)
- ✓ tourist, cultural and gastronomic routes which bring out common cultural characteristics across frontier areas
- ✓ to promote and protect the cross-border architectural heritage

**Mr. Andras Stefanik**, Interreg VI A Slovakia- Hungary Cooperation Programme 2013-2020, Managing Authority representative, didn't make a presentation and didn't also give any inputs on the 7 topics addressed to all managing Authorities.



**Main common concluding results for all managing Authorities are:**

1. The borders were closed and traveling through them was a crucial problem for all cross-border activities
2. The COVID-19 impact was on:
  - i. Cross-border mobility and work
  - ii. Economic activities and
  - iii. administrative procedures - Social & cultural activities
3. There were many delays in the administrative procedures and progress of the approved - funded projects
4. There were delays in the beneficiaries response to the new calls during the pandemic
5. Some programs briefly modified their programs for the last calls of the programmatic period.
6. Culture and tourism are still valuable assets for all CB territories.
7. The specific period is a real chance to re-establish the cross border relationship and trust.
8. Common opportunities still are digitalization and ICT skills development
9. Natural – cultural heritage remains important especially when connected with tourism financial activities.

## **The Regional Development Fund of Western Macedonia Project Team**