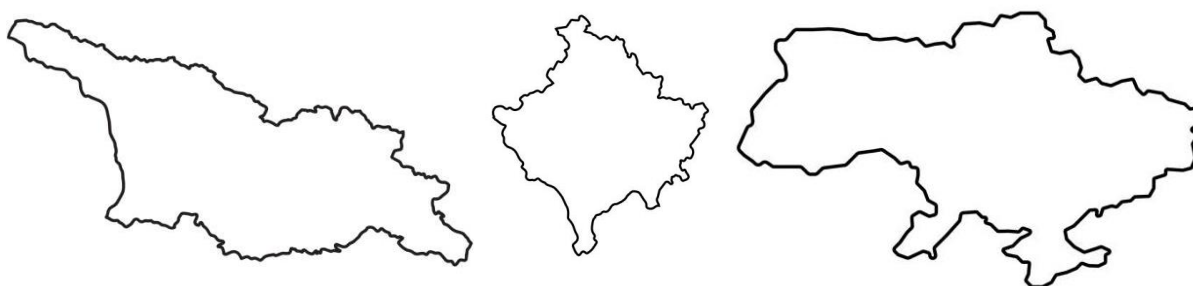


CIVIL SERVANTS MOBILITY PROGRAM 2020

GEORGIA, KOSOVO, UKRAINE



HUNGARY	2 – 9 October 2021 (Kosovo) 8 – 11 November 2021 (Georgia)
POLAND	7 – 10 December 2021 (Georgia) 13 – 18 December 2021 (Ukraine)
CZECH REPUBLIC	22 – 28 November 2021 (Georgia)
SLOVAKIA	5 – 11 September 2021 (Georgia, Kosovo) 26 September – 2 October 2021 (Ukraine)

REPORT

The aim of the Civil Servants Mobility Program (CSMP) is to share experience of the Visegrad countries on the implementation of the sectoral reforms and harmonization of the national legislations with the EU legislation with the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkan countries. The intention of the program is to raise awareness of civil servants from both regions through organizing a week-long study visits in the V4 countries.

The Civil Servants Mobility Program 2020 was significantly affected by the pandemics and measures countries around the world took. The travelling was complicated if possible at all, the gatherings and meetings were limited in terms of number of people and difficult to carry out. Although we assumed that the implementation of the events would be possible in the second half of 2020, the reality proved otherwise. One wave followed another, and it was not easy to coordinate the stricter rules in each country even in the first half of 2021. In the summer of 2021, the situation began to improve temporarily, so we started to organize individual visits.

We intended to divide the organization of individual editions into 3 parts, hosting altogether 60 experts from Ukraine, Georgia and Kosovo. Unfortunately, despite the immense effort and will, we were not able to complete all the editions but Georgian, hosting **9 experts from Ukraine, 10 from Kosovo** and **16 from Georgia**. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions we have postponed the visits of 2 Kosovo delegation to Poland and the Czech Republic and 2 Ukrainian delegation to Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Notwithstanding the fact, that corona pandemics significantly influenced the 2020 edition, **CSMP proved to be an important instrument of the V4 experience and know-how sharing** from integration and reform processes. It was once again shown that the Think Visegrad platform is able to provide a wide range of expertise since nearly all of the participating groups had different thematic focus.

Regarding the **Georgian civil servants**, the first group focused on the topic of energy efficiency. The second group concentrated on the internationalization of higher education, as well as Erasmus partnership opportunities to Georgian officials. Third group discussed in detail Local development through attracting foreign investment, development of tourism and regional products and the fourth carried out the meetings in the field of the social services.

The **civil servants from Kosovo** focused on two different topics. The first group dealt with the energy efficiency and the main topic of the program of the second group revolved around the Euro-Atlantic integration of the region with a special focus on economic diplomacy and agriculture

Ukrainian civil servants used the study trip to discuss integrated border management. i.e. safe and inclusive border and the second group discussed with experts creation and management of industrial and technological parks at local government level.

PART 1 – SLOVAKIA

BRATISLAVA_05–11 September 2021 (Georgia & Kosovo)

Participants **Georgia**

Nikoloz Kholodov	Senior Specialist of Division of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Policy Promotion, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development
Tamar Sabelashvili	Senior Specialist of Division of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Policy Promotion, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development
Mamuka Shalikhshvili	Deputy Head, Infrastructure Policy and Dev. Partners Relation Department, Ministry of Regional Development & Infrastructure
George Shengelia	Executive Director, Municipal Development Fund
Lia Glonti	Deputy-Head of Department for relations with the Self-Governing bodies at the Administration of the State Representative in Guria Region

Kosovo

Luan Morina	Director of the Department of Energy, Ministry of Economy, Kosovo
Blin Berdoniqi	Senior Officer for Energy Efficiency and Co-generation, Ministry of Economy, Kosovo
Lorik Haxhiu	Institute for Sustainable Development of Natural Resources, Kosovo
Afrim Berisha	Director of the Directorate for the Condition of the Environment, Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency
Srdjan Sentić	Economic Diplomat of Kosovo in Vienna

The main focus of the study trip of five civil servants in Slovakia was the Energy efficiency and use of renewables. During the meetings organized by the **Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association**, they gained knowledge about the institutional and legislative framework as well as governance in the field, reform experience and the current measures of the respective institutions, including their competencies and interaction.

The official working program for the expert group was organized into five working days and combined various meetings in order for the delegations from Georgia and Kosovo to share not only governmental experience, i.e. state organizations, ministries and their agencies, but also the experience of companies that work in the field and have the first-hand experience with reality of legislative and institutional framework in practice as well as independent experts. The program of the study trip thus consisted of a series of meetings with leading representatives and experts of the official Slovak institutions, governmental agencies, companies (focused on using innovative solutions) and independent experts.

The team of Georgian and Kosovar experts was officially briefed and received by the RC SFPA's analyst of economic and development policy program **Peter Brezáni** and head of the energy policy research program **Veronika Oravcová** upon arrival during the orientation meeting.

The meeting with Mr **Radoslav Kňazúr** of company **DATATHERM** focused on use of biomass for district central heating system in municipalities. The meeting outside Bratislava (Nová Dubnica, Nemšová and Dubnica nad Váhom) focused on visits of 3 facilities of company Datatherm: DT Termonova, a.s. in town of Nová Dubnica as a Central District Heating supply and Heating Plant – combined production of electricity and heat from wood chips, then Biomass boiler room in town of Nemšová, producing the heat and hot water from wooden pellets for school in Nemšová and DT Forest, a.s. in town of Dubnica nad Váhom; company producing wood chips from wood waste and its distribution. The meeting was especially important, as both countries would like to officially reduce the use of gas/coal for heating and see biomass as one of the crucial source (especially in Georgia). The presentation of the application of modern western technologies to rather similar infrastructure was perceived as very useful.

The second day was opened with the meeting at the **Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency**. The goal of over 3 hour-long meeting was to give an official perspective on innovations and energy efficiency environment (raising awareness, legislation, regulation and financial support for various projects) in Slovakia, as well as to share problems and issues stemming from introduction of the changes. The delegation was received by Mr **Artur Bobovnický**, Director, Innovation and the International Cooperation Directorate and Mr **Ján Magyar**, Department of International Cooperation.

The second part of the day was dedicated to the meeting with the representatives of the **Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic**, DG for Energy Policy. During the meeting with Ms **Alena Žáková**, Director, Dpt. of International Relations in Energy and her colleagues **Peter Drotár**, Department of International Relations in Energy, Mr **Miroslav Mariaš**, Counselor, Dpt. of International Relations in Energy and Mr **Juraj Rokfalusy**, Counselor, Dpt. of International Relations in Energy (National Climate-Energy Plan), the participants discussed various aspects of Slovakia's energy policy. During the meetings they discussed policies, program and targets with special focus on National integrated energy and climate plan (energy part).

The last meeting of the day took part at the **Building Testing and Research Institute** with professor **Zuzana Sternová**, Director of the Institute. The meeting solely focused on energy performance of buildings, renewal of existing buildings, materials and presentation of the concrete project of complex and deep renewal of the existing apartment panel building in Devínska Nová Ves (on the spot).

Meeting on September 8 at **Regulatory Office for Network Industries** the chairman of the Regulatory Office for Network Industries Mr **Andrej Juris** together with directors of the Office's units presented development of current regulation in Slovakia and also the regulatory perspective in the context of new developments: deregulation, decarbonisation and digitalisation. Mr **Richard Ružička**, Director for Gas regulation and Electricity and gas market presented regulation and market evolution in Slovakia, priorities of the regulation, current regulation and future perspective in the country. Mr **Martin Liepeš**, Director for electricity regulation presented electricity regulation paying attention to composition of energy prices in the country. Mr **Oliver Púček**, Director for renewable energy sources and

combine production of heat and electricity presented the regulatory perspective of renewables with the role of regulator in the context of new developments and challenges, such as decarbonisation.

The visit to **Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic**, Climate Change and Air Protection Directorate with Mr **Milan Zvara**, Head of Climate Change Mitigation Department within the Ministry of Environment of the SR who presented the Slovak climate change framework and its interaction with energy framework. He focused on development of Slovak policies within the context of the EU policies, such as EU ETS (emission trading system) and Effort Sharing Regulation, CO₂ standards (emission standards) for vehicles and sustainability criteria for biofuels and greenhouse gases reduction targets for fuels. He explained in detail Low-Carbon Development Strategy of the Slovak Republic until 2030 with a view to 2050 aiming to identify measures, including additional measures, to achieve climate neutrality in Slovakia by 2050. The Strategy contains scenario with existing WEM measures and scenario with additional WAM measure and was adopted by the government in March 2020. He explained also the way of calculation cost of decarbonisation and available sources of financing. Participants were interested especially in data gathering and modelling of the Strategy.

The Ukrainian delegation continued the fourth day with meeting with **Slovak Association of Photovoltaic Industry and Renewables (SAPI)** and met SAPI director, Mr **Ján Karaba**. He described the use of renewables in Slovakia and the tools required for their further development. He stressed that the alternatives to fossil fuels are becoming more and more attractive, and government co-financing is increasingly available. However, he was critical of the past and also present developments of renewables in the country and explained the legislative obstacles, such as stop status that was introduced by distribution companies or failure to start the green auctions by the government. He also emphasized the importance of cross-border projects in electricity, that are beneficial, since they will encourage the integration of transmission networks and help connect RES through smart grids, which will ensure security of electricity supply while maintaining affordable prices. He explained the role of the Association in education activities, renewables promotion, but also active engaging into legislation process

The next meeting was focused on energy security framework in Slovakia and institutional architecture related to energy policy in the country within the context of the EU policies. Experts from **Slovak Foreign Policy Association Alexander Duleba**, Energy Research Program and **Veronika Oravcová**, Head of the Energy Research Program and Director of the **Central European Energy Conference** explained the role and the competences of the ministries and institutions, such as Regulatory Office for Network Industries, Emergency Oil Stocks Agency, Administration of State Material Reserves of the SR or Committee for Energy Security or Supreme Audit Office. The experts explained the role of 2009 gas crisis in understanding energy security and described the crisis management and its role during the crisis - created and conveyed by the Ministry of Economy, consisting of ministry representatives, operators of gas infrastructure (TSO, DSO, storage), representatives of the Regulatory Office and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. They also focused on policies that were introduced after the crisis, such as developing storage capacities, new

interconnectors both in gas and electricity sector with the role of Projects of Common Interest and the importance of regional cooperation.

The meeting was followed by discussion with practitioners. Mr **Peter Robl**, Chairman of the Board of **Slovak Green Building Council** who discussed the practical side of institutional and legislative framework in green building sector, use of the EU funds for its deep and complex renewal, government and public support and presentations of the best projects.

The day ended with representatives of **Slovak Gas and Oil Association** Mr **Richard Kvasňovský** Executive Director. The debate focused on energy mix and challenges to address energy security of supplies, gas sector development, role of TSO and/or DSO, market structure.

The last day of the trip focused on presentation of public projects related to climate change and environment protection. During the meeting at **Metropolitan Institute of Bratislava**, the delegations met with architects Ms **Veronika Vojteková** and Ms **Linda Duchovná** who presented the scope of the conceptual institute dedicated to architecture, land-use planning, participation and strategic planning. They emphasized that the role of the Institute is to create assignments and announce architecture competitions putting an emphasis on the quality and functionality of the solution, develop manuals and principles to ensure the interventions in the urban space are inclusive and accessible, set up a transparent and sustainable urban and land-use planning and develop strategic documents by putting the public interest first. Then they discussed specific projects of the city of Bratislava focused on sustainability and green solutions, and also explained the tendering processes. According to the Institute large scale projects require an open architectural competition. The best proposal is then selected by a jury, followed by a contract with the authors. Smaller scale project face problems with the capacity to organize equal amount of open competitions and that is why framework contract with long-term partners who gradually work on coming projects has been tendered.

An expert from the **Institute for Circular Economy** Ms **Hana Palušková** presented the activities of the organization focused on waste minimization, educational activities and projects of circular economy in Slovakia. The role of the Institute is to help companies, municipalities and people create less waste and to design and implement changes that can be done at daily basis. The aim of the Institute is also to help to change the economy so that it no longer works at the expense of the environment and the climate. It does so with numerous educational activities and publications, but also developing of so-called Circular maps that promote circular economy and zero waste lifestyle, such as free-package stores, community composting sites, rental shops or repair shops. The Institute also helps companies and institutions to set measures leading to waste minimization.

In overall, delegations from Georgia and Kosovo positively assess the structure of the program, the meetings and their information value as well as quality of experts. Participants were active, asked a lot of practical questions and expressed their will to continue in the cooperation in future. After the meeting with **International Visegrad Fund** Director, Mr **Petr Mareš**, Strategic Relations Coordinator Mr **Jiří Sýkora** and Project

Manager Ms **Orsolya Rigó** they stressed the necessity of the Civil Servants Mobility Programme (and other similar activities) for both of their countries as they see the exchange of experience as one of the crucial part of their reform effort. They suggested to organize program and concrete projects more specifically – only for specific institutions and/or departments, i.e. not mixing the institutions but rather just departments of one institution.

BRATISLAVA_26 September – 2 October 2021 (Ukraine)

Participants

Oleksii Solomin	senior officer of the border control organization department, State Border Guard Service of Ukraine
Anton Lysak	officer of the international border cooperation and border representative work section, State Border Guard Service of Ukraine
Hanna Taburianska	Chief Specialist of the Department of Prevention of Illegal Migration, Readmission and Expulsion Department for Foreigners and Stateless Person, State Migration Service Ukraine
Serhii Moskalenko	Border management specialist, Embassy of Ukraine in Slovakia

The main focus of the study trip of civil servants in Slovakia organized by the **Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association** that took place under the title Safe and inclusive border between Ukraine and Slovakia was integrated border management between Slovakia and Ukraine. During the meetings, participants gained knowledge about the institutional and legislative framework as well as governance in the field, reform experience and the current measures of the respective institutions, including their competencies, interactions and opportunities for international and mutual cooperation in the field.

The official working program for the expert group from Ukraine was organized into the five working days and combined various meetings in order for the experts to discuss and share governmental experience, i.e. state organizations, ministries and their agencies and the first-hand knowledge of legislative and institutional framework in practice. The program of the study trip thus consisted of a series of meetings with leading representatives and experts of the official Slovak institutions, governmental agencies, companies (focused on using innovative solutions) and independent experts.

Considering the situation with pandemics and measures taken by the Slovak government, 2 Ukrainian participants from Custom Service of Ukraine did not join the study group on account of not being vaccinated. As hosting institution was informed only 2 days before their supposed arrival, we asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine to nominate representative being responsible for border management and is currently serving at the Embassy of Ukraine in Slovakia.

The team of Ukrainian experts (1 from Migration Office, 2 from Border Office of Ukraine and 1 that join the group on behalf of Custom Office of Ukraine) was officially briefed and received by the RC SFPAs' analyst of economic and development policy program **Peter Brezáni** and financial manager **Jitka Ivančíková** upon arrival during the orientation meeting. The program, agenda and changes to agenda were discussed. Participants also suggested 1 extra topic regarding the border control to be added to their program. (after the consultation with Border Police in Slovakia, the topic was included)

Given the structure of the study group and competencies that Migration, Border and Custom Offices in Ukraine have, we started the program at the **Migration Office of the Slovak Republic**. Ukrainian delegation was received by the team of experts headed by Ms **Petra Achbergerová**, head of Migration and Integration Dpt. who officially welcomed all experts and shortly presented the activities of Migration Office. The discussion with Ms **Iveta Zraková**, procedural Dpt., Ms **Blanka Timurhan**, head of Documentation and Foreign Cooperation Dpt., Ms **Frederika Holleinová**, Organization and Legal Dpt., Ms **Veronika Mikušiaková**, Mr **Pavol Plzák**, Mr **Drahomír Marko** of Dublin Center Dpt., Ms **Janka Janovičová**, Head of Unit of Asylum Facilities and Ms **Amra Sarajlić** from Migration and Integration Dpt. then focused on detailed competencies of the Office, migration policies and strategies of the Slovak Republic, asylum procedures, integration projects and Dublin Center.

In the afternoon, the group paid visit to **asylum camp in Rohovce** that is run by the Migration Office, where they were received by the Director of the camp Mr **Peter Privitzer**, who presented the work and operation of the center and gave participants a detailed tour through the camp facilities. The delegation has also opportunity to discuss the situation and procedure with asylum seekers, that were present in camp.

The second day started with series of presentations and expert debates at the **Bureau of Border and Foreign Police of the Slovak Republic**. Due to the fact, that many topics and activities that are in Border and Foreign Police portfolio in Slovakia are also in portfolio of Migration Service of Ukraine, the meetings (and perhaps coordination) with the Slovak counterparts were even more important.

The goal of first day's over 7 hour-long series of meetings were to give an overview and discuss wide range of topics of interests. The first one was the application of the IT technologies at the border control. Discussion with Mr **Roman Pochylý**, Director of Risk Analyses Dpt. concentrated on control mechanisms, monitoring, risk assessment and also on the plans of Border Policy towards the future. During the next meeting, the group discussed the issue of human trafficking and trade of humans with Mr **Marek Bango**, Coordination Unit of the National Unit for Combating Illegal Migration. Eventhough, there is no issue between Ukraine and Slovakia in this topic, the overall problems and situations were similar for both countries and that is why Ukrainian colleagues shared also their experience and discussed the solutions. The last meeting of the day was dedicated to technologies applied at the border surveillance. The Chief Technical Officer from Sobrance

Border Police detachment Mr **Ján Kostičák**, presented the very practical information from Slovak – Ukrainian border, although within the limits that such a delicate topic provides.

On Wednesday, September 29, the group continued with meetings at the Border Police. The two meetings were chaired by Ms **Milada Bucseková** and Mr **Martin Oravec** of Department of Border Policy. Topics such System of Border Surveillance EUROSUR, Application of the EU procedures and standards in the field of the border control and readmission policy were discussed very vividly and participants agreed to remain in contact and discuss it further with more participants online and more opportunities for mutual cooperation when dealing with the aforementioned issues.

In the afternoon, the Ukrainian experts moved to the premises of **Financial Administration (Custom Administration)** where they participated at presentation of Mr **Miloš Kozák** and Ms **Silvia Vašková** both representing Financial Administration's Criminal Office on Combating the Drug and Arms Smuggling. Due to very high relevance for Ukrainian colleagues and due to high relevance for Slovak – Ukrainian border, 13 other representatives of Custom Office of Ukraine took part in the meeting online and actively participated in discussion thereafter. Both speakers presented very concrete cases, approaches of Slovak custom administration and results.

The second meeting at the Custom Administration also focused on very practical aspect of custom officials' performance, i.e. technologies applied at the customs controls at the external border of the European Union. Mr **Michal Duška**, from Custom Administration of the Financial Administration of the Slovak Republic not only presented concrete technologies, but also showed examples of the cases that were solved thanks to the use of the mentioned technologies. Colleagues from Ukrainian side also shared their experience and both sides agreed to cooperate even further in this field.

During Thursday, the group participated on the field trip to village of Gajary, to the Canine Training and Management Center of the Financial Administration. The head of the Department of Cynology, Mr **Milan Dibaba** presented the cynology program of the Financial Administration, its history, reasons and advantages of using dogs for customs and border controls, international cooperation and methodology of training and provided colleagues from Ukraine with concrete statistical data. The field trip ended with practical demonstration of obedience, drug as well as cigarettes sniffing dogs and attack dog training.

In the afternoon, the group returned to Bratislava (Financial Administration) and continued with their program with Ms **Janka Nemčovská**, Head of the Department of Risk Management and Analysis at the Financial Administration of the Slovak Republic on the topic of Risk management system during customs control. The presentation combined concrete information on risk management agenda in Slovakia, tools used for risk assessment, systems (ERP2), databases, creating the risk profile with open debate not only with participants present on the spot, but also with the group of 15 Ukrainian participants that took part at meeting online.

The last day commenced with visit to **Bratislava airport** and presentation of border and custom procedures in practice. Mr **Pavol Buza**, director of Department of Border Control presented the airport department of the Border Police, legislation, roles and responsibilities as well as procedures, technologies used, communication, risk analysis. Then, Mr **Jozef Bernát**, Department of Border Control discussed the new trends and new ways as well as specific of detecting illegal migration (forging passports). The meeting with representatives of Custom Administration with same structure ended official expert part of the program of Ukrainian experts in Slovakia. The visit to Bratislava airport ended with the airport tour and demonstration of both, border and custom control on flight that landed during the visit.

In overall, delegation from Ukraine positively assess the structure of the program, the meetings and their information value as well as quality of experts. Participants were active, asked a lot of practical questions and expressed their will to continue in the cooperation in future. Representatives of Border and Custom Services of Ukraine remained in contact with their Slovak counterparts.

After the meeting with **International Visegrad Fund** Director, Mr **Petr Mareš**, Strategic Relations Coordinator Mr **Jiří Sýkora** they also stressed the necessity of the Civil Servants Mobility Programme (and other similar activities) for their country as they see the exchange of experience as one of the crucial part of their reform effort. Especially when something such as border between the two countries is involved. They suggested to organize program and concrete projects more specifically – only for specific institutions and/or departments, i.e. not mixing the Border, Migration and/or Custom Services but rather just departments of one institution.

PART 2 – HUNGARY

BUDAPEST_03–09 October 2021 (Kosovo)

Participants

Delvina Hana Bakija	Director of Department for Economic Analysis and Agriculture Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
Doruntina Shala Hoxha	Senior Officer for Quality Infrastructure and Notifications, Ministry of Industry Entrepreneurship and Trade
Agnesa Jashari	Adviser to the First Deputy Prime Minister, Government of the Republic of Kosovo, Office of the Prime Minister
Adelina Maksuti	Head of Division for Economic Analysis in Department for Economic Analyses and Agriculture Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
Saranda Stublla	Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Local Government Administration

The participants' fields of work varied from diplomatic/political issues to the appointed sectorial policies of EU integration. The study trip reflected on this diversity: the meetings gave an insight into the Hungarian coordination mechanisms from legal, financial, and technical perspectives as well as opened the floor for discussions on current challenges of the EU–Western Balkans relations.

The week-long program offered the opportunity for the participants to share their experience on the political and technical sides of the EU integration process as well as introducing good practices in the fields of economic diplomacy and agriculture. The meetings with representatives of Hungarian institutional units/departments gave them the chance to get to know Hungary's experience in the EU integration and its stances on the future of enlargement.

October 4th began with a visit to the **Western Balkans Green Center (WBGC)**, where colleagues from the **Ministry for Innovation and Technology** (Dr. **Péter Holicza**, Climate Policy Advisor and **Barbara Kovács**, Head of Unit, Climate Policy Department) were also present. On behalf of the WBGC, Mr **László Örlös**, PhD, Managing Director, presented the objectives and activities of the Center, and explained its operation. The participants were also able to get acquainted with the current projects running in Kosovo, among other things the initiatives aiming at local water management and air pollution were introduced. The delegation was particularly interested in the tender system and the possibilities for cooperation between Hungarian and Kosovar companies. Both sides agreed that the most important goal during the green transition is to make it as painless as possible for the people, and this can only be achieved by sending a message that green transition would create jobs.

The afternoon continued with a visit to the **Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry**. On behalf of the Chamber, Ms **Mária Tényiné Stark**, International Director, and Mr **Attila Galambos**, Chairman of the Western Balkans Committee, were present. After a short introduction about the activities of the Chamber, the participants had a long discussion with Mr Galambos about the possibilities of developing the Kosovar-Hungarian trade relations. Mr Galambos highlighted that the personal connections are the most important ones—and not the common language—regarding trade relations in the Western Balkans, and with its geographical and cultural proximity Hungary has this advantage. The main issue from the delegation was the prospects of exporting from Kosovo.

The delegation spent Tuesday morning at the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade**. First, Mr **Dávid Hegyesi**, Deputy Head of the **Department for Export Development**, received the civil servants and gave a short presentation on the organizational structure of the MFA. In doing so, he covered how the foreign economic departments have been integrated into the Ministry, how these changes work and what results they have been bringing since 2014. Seeing the increase in export indicators, the delegation showed a strong interest in the export structure, but questions were received regarding experiences with Kosovo companies as well.

The visit to the **MFA** continued with a meeting with the Head of the Western Balkans Department, Mr **András Klein**. In his introduction, Mr. Klein focused on the current state of the European Union accession process of the Western Balkans and how Hungary evaluates the situation. In his view, enlargement is stalled, and no political move is expected to promote it. Going through the problems country by country, he concluded that the biggest challenge is that states are linked in the minds of the decision-makers, meaning that one problem in one state appears like a problem in every country. At the same time, he stated that Hungary continues to support the accession of the Western Balkans to the EU, which is in the national security and economic interest of Hungary.

The next day began with a visit to the **Ministry of Justice**, where Mr **Oszkár Ökrös**, State Secretary for European Union Affairs, received the delegation. Mr Ökrös began his speech with in-depth information about the Ministry and its organizational structure, and then elaborated on Hungary's experience in implementing the EU law during the accession process that might be beneficial for the Western Balkan countries alike. On Wednesday, the EU–Western Balkans Summit took place in Slovenia; in this regard, Mr Ökrös stressed that Hungary also supported the position that the final declaration must include enlargement and not only an EU perspective for the Western Balkans. As in Hungary the Ministry of Justice oversees the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFuE), Mr Ökrös pointed out that the Western Balkans must be the part of the CoFuE: instead of deepening, the EU should be widened with the integration of the Balkans.

The delegation further met with Ms **Krisztina Varju**, Ministerial Commissioner for the Hungarian V4 Presidency. Ms Varju began her speech with a review of the Hungarian V4 Presidency, during which she laid down that Hungary is committed to regional integration and its aim is a strong Central Eastern Europe as well as maintaining pragmatic relations with the East and the West. Ms Varju then turned to how the V4, as a form of cooperation, helped Hungary's EU integration: in addition to serving as a coordination mechanism for the participating countries, it also encouraged information sharing, so V4 can also set a good example for the countries of the Western Balkans.

(The V4 Presidency posted on their Twitter account about the meeting: https://twitter.com/V4_PRES/status/1446045562026004485).

On October 7th, the group visited the **Hungarian Export Promotion Agency (HEPA)**. Head of Institutional Relations **Levenete Kardos**, Director of the Directorate of Subsidy Programs **Anett Lehóczki** dr., and **Máté Kurin** from the International Business Development Support Department (Balkan countries) highlighted the National Export Strategy (2019). They also talked about the work of the Agency in relations to Kosovo: about the regional office in Belgrade (HEPA Balkan), the Enterprise Europe Network and the Western Balkans Investment Scheme. Participants showed great interests in how the Agency could be at service of small-and medium-sized enterprises planning to conduct export activities—something that Kosovo is currently lags. They agreed that Kosovo has a lot to offer to foreign companies and country also has potentials in the fields of tourism and ICT too. According to the participants, Kosovo needs expertise and investment in the agricultural sector (i.e. cultivation), water management, sustainable transportation and digitalization.

The last day started with a visit to the **Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture** where Head of Foreign Affairs Unit Ms **Andrea Györffy** dr., Knowledge-transfer Expert Ms **Ágnes Jakab Gáborné** and CAP Expert Ms **Dóra Horváth** welcomed the delegation. They briefed the civil servants about the structure and the diverse portfolio of the Chamber with a particular focus on the Hungarian land use and the work of the so-called rural economists (rural consultants). As for the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the emphasis was placed on strategic planning: how and through which EU mechanisms (Copa-Cogeca) can the Chamber represent the interests of Hungarian farmers on a national and EU level(s). Participants were also interested in the Farm Advisory System (FAS) and on the work of the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS).

On Friday afternoon participants visited the **“One with Nature” World of Hunting and Nature Exhibition** at HUNGEXPO. They showed particular interest in the newest technologies applied in Hungarian agriculture as well as the variety of interactive programs and installations at the exhibition. After a week of professional meetings, the group further exchanged thoughts during a farewell dinner.

Participants expressed their special gratitude towards EU Integration Expert Ms **László Domján**, the Hungarian Embassy in Pristina and the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade for organizing the study visit. They left Budapest with the strong belief that they will be able to incorporate their newly acquired experience to their work as well as they could serve as bridges between Hungary and Kosovo in the fields of economic diplomacy and agriculture.

BUDAPEST_03–09 October 2021 (Kosovo)

Participants

Nunu Mitskevichi	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia
Giorgi Amilakhvari	Deputy Chairman, Education and Science Committee, Parliament of Georgia
Revaz Javelidze	Deputy Head, Administration of the Government of Georgia
Nino Chelidze	Executive Director, LEPL – International Education Center)

The **Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy** hosted a four-member delegation from Georgia. The delegation was welcomed on Monday (8th November), by the Executive Director of CEID, **Dániel Bartha** and project assistant **Zsófia Bíró**. In 2021, following consultations between the Georgian and Hungarian sides, the program was aimed to present the internationalization of Hungarian higher education, as well as Erasmus partnership opportunities to Georgian officials, in line with Georgia's goal of becoming an Erasmus partner country.

The program was established to serve as a guideline for the Georgian partners and to help them gain a deeper insight into Hungarian public administration institutions, universities and other institutions related to the internationalization process of Hungarian higher

education. All of the meetings included a presentation or a general discussion, answering questions from participants, reviewing best practices, and providing particular instances. The goal was to meet the requirements and aspirations of the Georgian participants.

On November 8th, the participants were hosted by the representatives of the **V4 presidency** in Budapest, Ms **Krisztina Dóra Varju** Ministerial Commissioner for the Presidency of the Visegrad Cooperation and Mr **András Lázár**, V4 Coordinator of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, where the basic principles and goals of Hungary's 2021/2022 V4 Presidency were laid out.

The next meeting was held at the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade**, where Dr. **Orsolya Pacsay-Tomassich**, State Secretary for the Hungarian Diplomatic Academy and the Stipendium Hungaricum Program welcomed the delegation. The meeting successfully identified possible points for cooperation between Georgia and Hungary, regarding the Stipendium Hungaricum Program.

On November 9th, Ms **Judit Lannert**, educational researcher and Senior Fellow at **Equilibrium Institute of Budapest** gave a presentation on Hungarian higher education in international comparison.

The delegation later visited the **Budapest Business School – University of Applied Sciences**, hosted by Dr. **Gábor Réthi** Faculty Head of International Affairs, and Ms **Denissza Blanár** Head of the Office of International Relations and Mobility.

The next day, as a focal point for the internationalization process in education, the Georgian representatives visited the **Tempus Public Foundation**, where they were presented with four different topics, relating to higher education, internationalization and Erasmus +. Mr **Szabolcs Bokodi**, Director of Higher Education in the foundation, gave an overview of the current state of higher education, specifically mentioning the high level of political and policy consensus around the importance of the internationalization of higher education and Hungary's alignment to the joint European policy goals. Tempus Public foundation works to achieve the European Leuven objectives, which aims to provide 20 % of the graduates in Hungary with international experience. The presentation also raised awareness of the challenges, especially brought by the COVID-19 pandemic as the international crises naturally resulted in a decrease in the number of applicants. Ms **Orsolya Jánosik**, representing the Study in Hungary Directorate gave a presentation on the internationalization of higher education and experiences about the Stipendium Hungaricum Program. As explained, one of the biggest challenges internationalization has to tackle is the diversification of study destinations, as most students apply to Western countries, while regional and neighbouring countries lack applications. Moreover, studying abroad with Erasmus especially in recent years has become financially challenging for most applicants. Ms **Zsuzsa Rozgonyi**, Director of Erasmus +, talked about the public education system and vocational training.

On the same day, Mr **Balázs Hankó**, Deputy State Secretary for Higher Education welcomed the Georgian delegation at the **Ministry of Innovation and Technology** and presented to

the Georgian delegation the current state of Hungarian higher education and the ongoing restructuring process. Mr Hankó outlined the key roles the government plays in higher education and explained the newly implemented hybrid model, which means a new foundation-based system for higher education.

On the last day, the 12th of November, the delegation visited the **University of Public Service** where Ms **Boglárka Koller** International Deputy Rector of the University and Ms **Klára Breuer**, director of international directors welcomed the delegation and held a general discussion about the university, which is the most important institution in the education of public officials and civil servants. The deans of the four departments held presentations to introduce their departments to the delegation.

As the last program, a visit to **Eötvös Loránd University** was implemented, where Mr **László Borhy**, Rector of the University welcomed the delegation. Cooperation between ELTE and Tbilisi State University already exists. Mr **Imre Hamar**, Deputy Rector of International Relations, gave an overview of the current state of internationalization of the university and answered all the questions posed by the participants.

During the four-day program the Georgian delegation met several government representatives and officials responsible for higher education and the internationalization of Hungarian higher education in key ministries; the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry of Innovation and Technology**. The delegation also visited three Hungarian Universities, where the internationalization process is successfully ongoing; **Budapest Business School- University of Applied Sciences, Eötvös Loránd University and the University of Public Service**. Moreover, **Tempus Public Foundation** has been visited as the key institution managing and organising the Erasmus program. The delegation also met an educational researcher to get the full view of Hungarian higher education. All of these institutions gave helpful information about the goals and institutional challenges higher education faces, and also gave detailed information on how to successfully manage the internationalization process.

PART 3 – CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague_22–28 November 2021 (Georgia)

Participants

Tamila Barkalia	Deputy Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
Tea Gvaramadze	Head of the Social Policy Department of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
Meri Maghlaperidze	Director of the Care Agency
Bela Gogua	Deputy Director of the Care Agency

The study trip for a delegation from Georgia was organized in Prague by **EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy**. The main focus of the programme was *the field of social services*. The main goal of this trip was to enable civil servants from Georgia to spend a week in the Czech Republic and to meet their counterparts or other experts in defined area. As for the social services, the organizers aimed to present through the various meetings the structure of the social system in the Czech Republic itself, the role of the social services in the legal framework, as well as in the educational process, the cooperation in the social area and the providers of the social services in the country.

Starting their study trip, the Georgian delegation met with Ms. **Zuzana Stancová**, Head of Department – Resocialization and Reintegration Programs (RRP), **Centre of Social Services in Prague**. This meeting was focused to present the participants with a general picture of their work, both current and past, who they work with and what their processes look like. Even if the group from Georgia does not currently work with former and current prisoners, they appreciated their experience from working with the family members and acknowledged the importance of work in that particular field.

The following meeting was with Mr. **Mirek Adámek** from the **Czech Senate**. After an introduction of the group, the talk shifted to the general presentation of how are the social services legally framed in the Czech Republic, as well as the recent development in this area from the Senate perspective. Mr. Adámek explained in detail his agenda and what he is working on and where the Czech Republic and Georgia could cooperate even more. The group considers the Czech social system as a good example for their future development.

The last meeting was with Ms. **Andrea Vachtlová**, the representative from Diaconia, one of the biggest provider of social services in the Czech Republic. Diaconia Prague is one of three dozen facilities run by the **Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren**, a Christian non-profit organization. They have been providing social services to children, youth and adults with disabilities, as well as support to their families since 1994. They provide the social, therapeutic, and counselling services.

The following day, we continued by a meeting with the **Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences in Prague**, namely with Ms. **Olga Angelovská** and Ms. **Mirna Jusić**. They presented the social system in Czech Republic as well as the MA Degree Programme at the Faculty – Public and Social Policy Studies (PaSP), which aims to provide students with contemporary, relevant knowledge of policy-making processes and cultivate their analytical skills.

In the afternoon, the group visited the **Centre of Social Services in Prague 1**, which is supported by the City of Prague and provides the housing and social care for those in need. We were able to visit their facility (only the common spaces) and discuss how they work and also share the experience and “lesson learned” from both sides. Later on, the group met with the **Czech Development Agency** in Prague, where they not only discussed their ongoing cooperation but also charted some new ideas for the future.

The study trip continued by the meeting at the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic**, namely with Mr. **Pavel Janeček** and Ms. **Zuzana Zająrošová**. The meeting

took place directly at the Ministry. The main goal was to exchange the experience from both sides, discuss the possible developments and find the new ways how to cooperate in the future. The group was curious about the social system in the country and how they organize their work on the ground through the social facilities. After the meeting, the group had an informal lunch with the representatives from the Ministry.

The the delegation proceeded with a meeting with representatives from **STŘEP, Czech Centre for families**. The group visited their facility in Prague 3 and exchanged the experience and knowledge from their work in Georgia.

On the last working day, the organizers arranged two meetings – first one with the representatives from **Prague 1, Department of Social Services** and then with **Prague 10, Department of Social Services**, where they explained their social programme as well as the activities they are currently working on. Both parts of Prague are very active in terms of citizen engagement and work in the field. They also support social centres and public groups to encourage inclusion and help create a pleasant public environment.

Overall, the program of this study trip and the meetings received a very positive feedback from the Georgian delegation. Each of the visitors was satisfied for getting to know their counterparts in the Czech Republic, allowing them to build a base for a future cooperation among these countries. However, although presentations were very informative, because of the current situation with Covid-19 pandemic, they were not able to visit the providers of the social services in their facilities. All in all, each participant gave the program and its organization an excellent feedback, rating it with 5/5 points. This included the accommodation facility, as well as the accompanying free-time program.

PART 4 – POLAND

Warsaw_07–10 December 2021 (Georgia)

Participants

Nino Gvasalia	Advisor to the Mayor of Poti
Tamar Letodiani	Chief Specialist State Administration of the Kvemo Kartli Region – Capital Rustavi
Mirza Mamasakhlisi	Director of the Economic Department Kutaisi town

The study visit was organized by the **Polish Institute of International Affairs** in Warsaw. The participants of the visit were three representatives of municipal level local governments: **Kutaisi** and **Poti** and state authorities in the **Kvemo Kartli** region with the capital in Rustavi. The composition of the delegation, according to the rules of the CSMP programme, was selected by the coordinator of the visit, based on the recommendations of various institutions. Five persons were qualified to participate in the study visit,

unfortunately, just before the visit, one person resigned from participation due to personal reasons and another person could not enter Poland due to the tightening of the entry conditions caused by the coronavirus epidemics. The topic of the study visit was *Local development through attracting foreign investment, development of tourism and regional products*

All the meetings were conducted by the workshop method consisting in discussions, answers to participants' questions, discussion of good practices or presentation of specific examples. Maximum effort was made to respond to the expectations and needs of participants from Georgia. During each meeting, the delegation representatives asked many detailed questions. Particularly interesting for the participants from Georgia were the institutional solutions allowing for synergy of actors from various sectors and the instruments supporting development of enterprises in the form of tax relief, subsidies, public services for entrepreneurs, etc.

The first point was a visit to the **Targowa Creativity Centre**, which is owned by the **Municipal Office of the City of Warsaw**. It is an interesting example of a public-private partnership, as the management of the Centre has been handed over to a private entity, i.e. the National Chamber of Commerce, by way of a tender. The aim of the Centre is to support the development of start-ups, as well as to provide a range of advisory services for small and medium-sized local companies. The meeting entailed presentation of numerous instruments of support for entrepreneurs, acceleration projects for startups, networking events for business, support for the participation of companies in trade fairs abroad, etc.

The next meeting was held in the **Polish Agency for Enterprise Development** and was devoted to the *govLab project*. The project led by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development is addressed to local self-government units. Its objective is to develop, in the form of workshops with representatives of self-governments, a catalogue of services to be provided by public administration in support of local entrepreneurs from various sectors. The developed catalogue of services is then implemented in individual local governments. Local governments participating in the project are selected through an open competition.

The meeting at the **Mazovia Development Agency** with the participation of the Directors of the Agriculture and Culture Departments of the Marshal's Office of the Mazovian Voivodeship was devoted to regional and traditional products. The representatives of the Office talked in detail about the procedure of recruitment, verification and the benefits for entrepreneurs with regard to applying for registration of regional and traditional products on the list. This topic is particularly interesting for participants from Georgia, because in Georgia there is a great potential for creating regional products. However, in Georgia they do not have a system for their promotion and support for their marketing. Another topic was the so-called creative industry, which combines culture and crafts with business. The participant of the visit from the town of Poti is currently preparing a strategy of the town in the field of cooperation between culture and business and promotion of the town through culture and creative activities. Hence, the meeting was particularly interesting for her.

The presentation at the **Polish Investment and Trade Agency** concerned the standards and good practices in serving foreign and domestic investors developed in the daily practice of the Polish Investment and Trade Agency activities. The participants from Georgia were interested in how to prepare investment offers of cities and regions for potential investors. Ways of working with investors, key issues which cities/towns and regions must take into account in order to effectively attract capital from outside. The discussion covered a wide range of topics from the development of land and provision of transport infrastructure, through educational offer to image-building activities. The discussion also covered many detailed issues such as the preparation of meetings with investors, preparing answers to investors' questions, as well as a catalogue of issues in which investors' needs and expectations should be defined.

The next two meetings concerned the issues of tourism. The **Mazovian Regional Tourist Organization** was represented by Ms **Dorota Zbińkowska**, Director of the Mazovian Regional Tourist Organization office and Mr **Rafał Szlachta**, President of the Polish Tourist Organization. Both meetings concerned practical activities of the Mazovian Regional Tourist Organization and the Polish Tourist Organization for tourism promotion, organisation of dialogue between business, public authorities and civil society for the benefit of tourism support, training addressed to the industry. During the meeting at the Polish Tourist Organization, the possibility of opening a foreign office of the Polish Tourist Organization in Georgia was also discussed, as well as the Polish Tourist Organization's promotional activities on the Caucasus region market.

The meeting at the headquarters of the **Foundation for International Solidarity** concerned the possibility of cooperation between Georgian local governments and the FSM. The meeting was attended in online format by Ms **Justyna Kucuk**, Head of FSM Representation Office in Tbilisi. The discussion was devoted to the topics of projects, which are important for Georgian self-governments, such as: participatory budgeting, energy efficiency, raising qualifications of administrative staff in self-governments or the skills of obtaining external funding.

At the end of the visit, a meeting was held at the **Capital City Tourism Office**. The headquarters of the organisation are located in the Palace of Culture and Science, hence the visit was combined with a climb to the viewing platform on top of the Palace with a view of the city panorama. The conversation with representatives of the Tourism Office concerned dealing with the negative effects of tourism development in cities. Especially in the context of the development of occasional renting of flats to tourists for short periods. This phenomenon also brings undesirable consequences in the form of an increase in the price of renting flats throughout the city, as well as many tensions with the neighbours of such flats or on the line of landlords and occupiers.

WARSAW/ WROCLAW_13–18 December 2021 (Ukraine)

Participants

Olga Remeshevsk	Deputy Director of the Department of Economy and Investment, the town of Vinnytsia
Svitlana Yarova	Director of the Municipal Innovation Centre, the town of Vinnytsia
Iryna Slavova	Director of the Centre for Municipal Initiatives at the Local Development Agency of the town of Melitopol
Oleh Frolov	Deputy Director of Administration of the town of Pokrovsk, Donetsk Region
Valentyn Dunaievskiy	Director of the Regional Development Department Chernivtsi Region

The study visit was organized by the **Polish Institute of International Affairs** was carried out in in Warsaw and Wrocław on a topic: *Creation and management of industrial and technological parks at local government level*. The visit was attended by five representatives of local authorities of the municipal level: **Vinnytsia, Melitopol, Pokrovsk** and state authorities in the **Chernivtsi region**. Noteworthy is the participation of the representative of the town of Pokrovsk, which is located within the Donetsk Region, under Ukrainian control. The composition of the delegation, in accordance with the CSMP programme rules, was selected by the visit coordinator, based on recommendations from various institutions.

All meetings were conducted by the workshop method consisting in discussions, answers to questions from participants, discussion of good practices or presentation of specific examples. Maximum effort was made to respond to the expectations and needs of the participants from Ukraine. During each meeting, the delegation representatives asked many detailed questions. Particularly interesting for the participants from Ukraine were issues related to the financing of industrial parks, incubators and acceleration programmes for start-ups, support instruments and services offered by public entities to support the development of entrepreneurship and innovation.

The first point was a visit to the **Targowa Creativity Centre**, which is owned by the Municipal Office of the City of Warsaw. It is an interesting example of a public-private partnership, as the management of the Centre has been handed over to a private entity, i.e. the National Chamber of Commerce, by way of a tender. The aim of the Centre is to support the development of start-ups, as well as to provide a range of advisory services for small and medium-sized local companies. The meeting entailed presentation of numerous instruments of support for entrepreneurs, acceleration projects for start-ups, networking events for business, support for the participation of companies in trade fairs abroad, etc..

Another meeting was held at **the Foundation for Technology Entrepreneurship**. It is a private foundation, which has a license from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston) to run acceleration programmes according to MIT methodology, based on the 24 steps method. The Foundation has so far conducted 11 editions of acceleration

programmes according to this method in the region of Central and Eastern Europe and many other projects supporting development of start-ups and cooperation with corporations. Among the accelerated young technology companies were also teams from Ukraine.

During the visit to the **Polish Agency for Enterprise Development** a presentation of the *govLab project* took place. The project led by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development is addressed to local self-government units. Its objective is to develop, in the form of workshops with representatives of self-governments, a catalogue of services to be provided by public administration in support of local entrepreneurs from various sectors. The developed catalogue of services is then implemented in individual local governments. Local governments participating in the project are selected through an open competition.

After the meeting, the participants of the study visit visited the **Warsaw Rising Museum**. On that day a visit to the Płock Industrial and Technology Park was planned. However, the visit was cancelled for a short period of time due to epidemiological restrictions and the ban on admitting people from the outside of the Park.

The next two days of the visit took place in Wrocław. The most important point of the study visit was the meeting in the **Wrocław Industrial Park (WPP)**, which belongs to a group of enterprises gathered in the **Industrial Development Agency**. WPP is operated by Dozamel sp. z o. o. The visit consisted of presentation of the assumptions and practice of WPP functioning as well as answering numerous questions of the Ukrainian participants, followed by a walk around the whole Park area. This point of the program was particularly interesting for participants from Ukraine because Ukrainian local governments are planning to create industrial parks in their territory with the support of government funds and programs. Polish practical experience is helpful in creating development strategies for parks in Ukraine. Especially that Ukraine lacks know-how and experts in this field.

The next meeting was held at the **Lower Silesian Agency of Economic Cooperation**, which is a company wholly owned by the local government of the Lower Silesian Voivodship. During the meeting, the instruments of entrepreneurship support offered by the Agency were presented, such as incubators for start-ups, support in internationalization and entering other markets for Lower Silesian companies, and low-interest loans for small and medium-sized companies for various purposes, e.g. development of new innovative services, maintaining liquidity, etc.

The participants also visited **Concordia Design Wrocław**, which is a private investment in the centre of startup development and creative entrepreneurship. Concordia is a workplace for many young companies in the creative sector. In addition, Concordia is the operator of the Poland Prize accelerator programme funded by PARP. The programme aims to attract young technology companies from abroad to Poland. In the current edition of the programme, almost half of the applications from startups came from Ukraine.

The last point of the study visit was a visit to the headquarters of the **Foundation of the Jan Nowak-Jeziorański College of Eastern Europe** in Wrocław with its seat at the castle in

Wojnowice. The aim of the visit was to present the activities of the Foundation, which runs projects concerning Eastern Europe. These are conferences, trainings, debates, research programmes, study visits and publishing of books and two magazines: Nowa Europa Wschodnia and New Eastern Europe in English. One of the important achievements of the Foundation of the Jan Nowak-Jeziorański College of Eastern Europe was the construction of a monument of the Lviv professors murdered by the Germans in July 1941 on Wuleckie Hills. It was possible to build the monument owing to the partnership between the cities of Wrocław and Lviv.