



## Civil servants mobility program – Ukraine 2016

Slovakia	18 – 24 September 2016 and 23 – 27 January 2017
Czech Republic	23 – 29 October 2016 and 12 – 18 February 2017
Hungary	07 – 11 November 2016
Poland	20 – 26 November 2016

### Report

The Civil servants mobility program 2016 was originally divided in two parts hosting 6 participants from Ukraine and 3 participants from other country. Taking into consideration the preferences of the V4 Countries, the decision to implement the second part of the project again with Ukraine was made. First two groups of 6 Ukrainian civil servants arrived to Slovakia and the Czech Republic in September/October 2016. After the decision of the V4 coordinators to merge both parts of the project two groups consisted of 9 participants arrived to Poland and Hungary in November 2016. Remaining two groups of 3 participants visited Bratislava and Prague in January/February 2017. The ability to respond adequately to the needs of different groups of Ukrainian civil servants proves the flexibility of the Think Visegrad platform, which was also demonstrated on a different thematic focus of each group of civil servants.

The both groups in Bratislava focused on security sector reform and fighting corruption, the groups in Prague on educational management, another one in Budapest on environmental issues and water management and finally the one in Warsaw on the role of cross-border cooperation in European integration. The division of the topics corresponded with the agreement of the ministers of foreign affairs of the V4 countries to divide responsibilities in terms of assisting Ukraine in the implementation of important reforms.

### **Bratislava, 18 – 24 September, 2016**

**Participants:** **Ruslan Fufalko**, Ministry of Interior of Ukraine, **Olexiy Melnyk**, General Prosecution of Ukraine, **Roman Osypchuk**, National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, **Igor Prymich**, General Prosecution of Ukraine, **Ruslan Safronyak**, National Anticorruption Bureau of Ukraine, **Serhiy Zhytnyak**, Ministry of Interior of Ukraine

The main focus of the study trip of six civil servants in Slovakia was the security sector reform with special focus on fighting corruption, which was the topic selected by Ukrainian partners in cooperation with the Embassy of Slovak Republic in Ukraine.

The official working program for the expert group was organized into five days and combined various meetings in order for the Ukrainian delegation to make acquaintance of the institutional framework and the governance in the field, reform experiences and the current activities of the respective institutions, including their competencies and interaction. The program of the study trip consisted of a series of meetings with leading representatives and experts of the Slovak institutions that are part of the security sector of the Slovak Republic in the area of justice and fight against the corruption.

The first day of the program was opened by meeting at the **Office of the Government of SR** where delegation met with Mr. Milan Ježo, Head of the Control and Corruption Prevention Section. The main focus of the meeting was to introduce Governments perspective on the corruption in Slovakia and explain its role in fighting corruption. During afternoon meetings at **Financial Administration of SR** with Mr. Peter Macák, Inspection and Internal Control Section and Mr. Ľubomír Provazník, Criminal Office, participants were informed about tools to prevent, reveal and fight corruption among tax and customs officers. Both lecturers presented many practical experiences which helped to foster active discussion.

The second day of the program started at **RC SFPA** where the group was officially received by Mr. Alexander Duleba, director of RC SFPA. The program continued with specific focus on meetings with representatives of the **Police Corps of SR** and the delegation met with Mr. Ľubomír Ábel, Vice President of PC SR, Mr. Peter Hraško, Director of the National Crime Agency and Mr. Róbert Krajmer, Director of the National Anticorruption Unit, National Crime Agency. Very active discussion included sharing of practical experiences from both sides and by participants was rated as one of the most interesting meetings.

On the third day of the official program the delegation visited **General Prosecutor's Office of SR**, Office of the **Special Prosecutor of SR** and **Specialized Criminal Court of SR**. These meetings were especially valued by the representatives of the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine. The delegation was received by Mr. Peter Šufliarsky, Deputy to the General Prosecutor of SR, Karol Pánik, Prosecuting Attorney of the Criminal Matters Department and Eva Halásová, Prosecuting Attorney of the Civic Matters Department. Ukrainian experts were especially interested in the reform experience of the Office, its competencies, division and information about particular offices including the one of the Special Prosecutor, which they visited in the afternoon. During this meeting the delegation met Mr. Dušan Kováčik, Special Prosecutor accompanied by his colleagues from the Office. Meeting was followed by meeting with Mr. Michal Truban, Chairman of the Specialized Criminal Court of SR. Long working day was conclude by informal meeting and reception at **Ukrainian Embassy in Bratislava** held on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Independence of Ukraine.

Meetings of the fourth day started at **Judicial Council of SR** where delegation met Ms. Jana Bajánková, Chairwomen of the Judicial Council of SR. Both sides discussed the role of judiciary in fight against corruption and compared institutional framework in Slovakia and Ukraine. The following meeting was with Ms. Zuzana Brejlová, Director of Justice Supervision Department, **Ministry of Justice** who explained competences of the Ministry and procedures to ensure independence and neutrality of judges. In order to ensure plurality of views the delegation held also several meetings with the representatives of Slovak NGOs dedicated to fight the corruption. In the afternoon the delegation met Mr. Peter Kunder, **Fair Play Alliance**, and Mr. Ctibor Košťál, Director of the **Slovak Governance Institute**.

The final day of the programme continued by meeting representatives of the NGOs. The delegation met Mr. Pavol Sibyla, Executive Director of the **Let Us Stop Corruption Foundation** who informed them about legislation in the field of protection of whistle-blowers. The last meeting of the programme took then place at the **International Visegrad Fund** where the group was welcomed by Mrs. Beata Jaczewska, Director of the IVF and Jíří Sýkora, public relations coordinator. The meeting served not only as a debriefing one and used as an opportunity to receive feedback from the Ukrainian delegation, but the Ukrainian experts were also informed about possibilities to apply for grants and projects at the IVF.

In overall, the program and the meetings received very positive **feedback** from all six Ukrainian experts. The group actively engaged in debates, posed very concrete and practical questions and expressed their will to continue in the cooperation in future. Due to the positive experience from the past, one of participants already participated for the second time and after the end of the program he stressed the importance and great added value of the Civil Servants Mobility Program for Ukraine.

#### **Bratislava, 23 – 27 January, 2017**

**Participants:** Valeriya Zhukova, National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, Yurii Lipin, National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, **Andrii Petrikov**, National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine

The GLOBSEC Policy Institute had the pleasure of hosting the representatives of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine within the framework of the study trip which took place from 23 until 27 January, 2017 in Bratislava. The study was organized through “**Civil Servants Mobility Programme**” (hereinafter referred to as CSMP) which is a part of “Think Visegrad” programme supported by the International Visegrad Fund.

The visit focused on the sharing of Slovak experience with harmonization of national legislation with the EU acquis and on the potential transfer of know-how and best practices that V4 countries (most directly: Slovakia) have obtained during the course of their own integration processes to the EU and NATO. The topic of the visit was devoted to the issues of **corruption prevention in the public sector** – paying special emphasis on the security and defense sector.

The Ukrainian participants met with the Head of the Section of Supervision at the **Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic**, Mr. *Miloš Mojto*. The representatives of the Slovak MoD have presented the participant the internal structure of the Ministry's supervision bureaucracy and described the anti-corruption mechanism that have been put in place. The participants had an extensive discussion about the ways how civil servant can report suspicious activities and discussed the best practices in investigating and prosecuting potential wrong-doers. The employees of the Ministry presented past cases of corruption activities in the armed forces and provided the publicly accessible statistics to the Ukrainian participants. Mr. Mojto also presented the way how to Ministry observes two special parts of the Slovak anti-corruption legislative system – the “*whistle-blower*” protection law and Law on the central register of contracts.

The Ukrainian participants continued with a meeting with the **Alliance Fair-Play** – a leading anti corruption NGO – investigative fellow: *Peter Kunder*. Mr Kunder presented the participants the history of fight against corruption and lack of transparency in the public domain from a perspective of a journalist and activist. The discussion touch upon the notion of the significant time-demand that is related to the fight against corruption in Central Europe (most particularly in Slovakia). Mr Kunder payed special attention to describing his personal contribution to the introduction of the Law on the financing of the political parties. Along with the “*whistle-blower*” protection law and Law on the central register of contracts, Mr. Kunder list the aforementioned Law as the three key pillars of corruption prevention legislative initiatives that Slovakia has experienced over the course of previous two decades.

The Ukrainian participants continued in their program with meeting the **APUEN Academy** – a unique public procurement oriented watchdog – director: Mr. *Jaroslav Lexa*, who have presented his personal experience with building up the Slovak public procurement system – both from a perspective of a governmental official and a non-governmental expert. Mr. Lexa emphasized the importance of digitalization of the entire procurement process – which he identified as a big leap in building ever greater transparency in managing public finances. Mr. Lexa stipulated that efficient public procurement must be specific enough to avoid the participation of entities lacking serious credentials but on the other side, it must be open enough to avoid restricting the competition to most established private entities – which would otherwise be a specific form of *clientelism*.

During the meeting with the **Slovak Security Policy Institute (SSPI)** – a leading defence policy think-tank – director: *Jaroslav Nad'*, the participants learned about fight against corruption in Slovak Arms Forces from a perspective which is both professional and political. Mr. Nad' stipulated that fight against corruption cannot be absolutely efficient, but on the other side it could be well managed and productive. Mr Nad', judging from his past professional experience, emphasized to role of transparency enhancement measures (“*making every non-classified*” public) as the ultimate precursor for the protection of public finances from misuse or direct theft.

During the meeting with *Lubomír Gal'ko*, former Minister of Defence, Deputy of the **National Council of the SR**, the participants were given a presentation on Minister Gal'ko's experience with internal challenges in fighting corruption practices in the Slovak military and the Ministry of Defence.

As Mr. Galko noted, the nature of corruption does not recognize national borders and Slovakia was an object of misuse of power aimed to increase the private profitability of both Slovak and international private entities. Minister Galko, encouraged the Ukrainian participants to enhance transparency building measures as the public pressure on public authorities has been historically proven to minimize the willingness to avoid accountability to national legal standards. Similarly, to his fellow program speakers, Mr. Galko encouraged the participants to look for already present best practices around the region as an inspiration for enhancing Ukrainian national measures for preventing corruption.

The Ukrainian participants were also hosted by the Head of Section of Supervision and Fight against Corruption at the **Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic**, Mr. *Milan Ježo*. Mr. Ježo presented the participants his offices added value to the fight against corruption with is largely based on the establishment of national anti-corruption hotline, where each citizen is granted access to specialized legal counsel and provided a roadmap for processing the eventual criminal complaint (in the matters of corruption). Unfortunately, Mr. Ježo also reported to the participants that the public practise with apprehending and formally processing the suspicious acts of corruption has proved to be rather poor and called for more precise public edification in these matters.

The Ukrainian participants concluded their series of meetings with *Martin Fedor*, former Minister of Defence, Deputy of the **National Council of the Slovak Republic**, who was willing to share his views on the best practices in addressing the symptoms of corruption during a private meeting – outside the official premises of the Parliament. Mr. Fedor placed special emphasis on the necessity of endurance and constant reconsideration of the appropriateness of measures – as corruption is not static in time, but evolves further as the society (and the system evolves) as well.

Within the framework of the project’s agenda, the Ukrainian participants meet with the representatives of the **International Visegrad Fund** and discussed their impressions on the efficiency of the project, its adequacy and overall quality. Moreover, the participant has an opportunity to sit in one of the internal meetings of the **GLOBSEC Policy Institute** and discuss the general policy (and geo-political) direction the country is heading towards. As the last element in the agenda, the participants were hosted by the *First Secretary of the Ukrainian Embassy in the Slovak Republic*, who thanked them for their continuous service and enquired about the general impressions of the participants regarding the content of the project.

**Prague, 23 – 29 October 2016**

**Participants:** *Oleh Fasolia*, Chief of regional education department, Khmelnytskyi region, *Iryna Hrekova*, Chief of local education unit, Dnipropetrovsk region, *Gennadii Ionitsoi*, School principal of Mamalyha secondary school, Chernivtsi region, *Svitlana Petrenko*, School principal of Biloziria secondary school, Cherkasy region, *Nataliia Samochko*, School principal of Bilshivtsi secondary school, Ivano-Frankivsk region, *Oleksandr Voitiuk*, School principal of Romaniv Gymnasium, Zhytomyr region

EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy organized another Civil Servant Mobility Program study trip from October 23 to 29, 2016. The project, realized within the Think Visegrad platform, was focused on sharing experience in the field of educational management in the Czech Republic with a selected civil servants from Ukraine. The group consisted of four directors of schools in various Ukrainian regions and two local officials who deal with the topic of education.

The program consisted of many meetings and on-site visits. The program started by a welcome dinner on Sunday evening, where Jana Straková, researcher at the Centre of research and development of education of Charles University in Prague, introduced the program and gave a brief overview of the topic. More in-depth discussion about the Czech educational system continued on Monday morning, when the group met with Jindřich Kitzberger, director of private Montessori school and former assistant director of the Minister of education. In the afternoon, Václav Trojan of the Centre of Educational Management at Charles University presented the Czech system of education for school directors and shared his comparison with the Ukrainian one. The day was concluded by a visit to the Academy of Crafts, technical high school, where the guests were greeted by director Drahoslav Matonoha.

On Tuesday, the group visited elementary school in Karlovy Vary region, unique for its status of community school co-founded by three municipalities that are sharing the costs. Director Jitka Topičová was joined by the head of the local government for the afternoon discussion session. In the end of the day the group had an opportunity for sightseeing in Karlovy Vary.

Wednesday's program started at the Central Bohemian Region Government office, where the representatives of the Education department introduced the role of founder of secondary schools in the region. In the afternoon, Ondřej Andrys of Czech School Inspection introduced the role of his institution in ensuring the quality of education in the Czech Republic.

Zdeněk Pracný from Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports talked more generally about setting the Framework of educational plans in the national context in the first session on Thursday morning. Later on, Marcela Štiková introduced the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic and the role of municipalities in the establishing elementary schools. The study program was concluded by a meeting with Michaela Vencová of Prague 1 and Eva Houdová from the Prague city hall who talked about the financial management of the schools established by their respective offices.

Friday was devoted to the evaluation of the program and after a farewell lunch, the group was taken on a guided tour through the historical center of Prague.

According to the **evaluations**, all guests were highly satisfied with both the relevance and content of the meetings – on the scale from 1 to 5 (1- excellent, 5-unsatisfactory) all meetings ranked between 1 and 1.5 on average in both categories. Our guests also appreciated the accompanying program, such as the welcome dinner and guided tour and were very satisfied with the choice of hotel and restaurants. Organizers and translator also received excellent feedback.

## Prague, 12 – 18 February 2017

**Participants:** **Nataliia Kolousova**, principal of Nedryhailiv Specialized Secondary School of Nedryhailiv Regional Council of Sumy region, **Hanna Sotsenko**, principal of hub School – Skadovsk Educational Complex "Academic Gymnasium" of Skadovsk City Council of Kherson region, **Lyudmyla Lishchyshyn**, principal of Kozova Secondary School №1 of Ternopil region.

EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy organized another Civil Servant Mobility Program study trip from February 13 to February 18, 2017. The project, realized within the Think Visegrad platform, was focused on sharing experience in the field of educational management in the Czech Republic with a selected civil servants from Ukraine. The group consisted of three directors of schools from three Ukrainian regions. The program was planned on the basis on a successful program on a same topic, realized in October 2016, and was adjusted to the guests' profiles.

The program consisted of many meetings and on-site visits. The program started by a welcome dinner on Sunday evening. On Monday Jana Straková, researcher at the Centre of research and development of education of Charles University in Prague, introduced the Czech system of education and briefed the guests on the recent developments. In the afternoon, the group visited the Academy of Crafts, technical high school, where the guests were greeted by director Drahoslav Matonoha. Mr. Matonoha showed the group various workplaces designed also for elementary school pupils, which inspired the directors to start similar projects in their schools.

On Tuesday, group visited Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, where Zdeněk Pracný talked more generally about setting the Framework of educational plans in the national context and our guests introduced Ukrainian reforms to the Czech representatives. In the afternoon, Vladislava Coufalová of Czech School Inspection introduced the role of her institution in ensuring the quality of education in the Czech Republic.

More in-depth discussion about the Czech educational system continued on Wednesday morning, when the group met with Jindřich Kitzberger, director of private Montessori school Duhovka and former assistant director of the Minister of education. This different approach to elementary-level education was appreciated by the guests. The study program of the day was concluded by a meeting with Michaela Vencová of Prague 1 who talked about the financial management of the schools established by their respective offices.

Marcela Štiková took the floor on Thursday morning and introduced the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic and the role of municipalities in the establishing elementary schools. The follow-up discussion was focused on the differences between the Czech and Ukrainian approach. In the afternoon the group met with Renata Schejbalová, director of the Nad Štolou grammar school and continued

On Friday morning, group visited elementary school Curieových, where they admired the setting of an inclusive elementary school that focuses on working with talented children and

foreigners. Follow-up session was devoted to the evaluation of the program and a closing session with Jana Straková. After a farewell lunch, the group was taken on a guided tour through the historical centre of Prague.

According to the **evaluations**, all guests were highly satisfied with both the relevance and content of the meetings – on the scale from 5 to 1 (5- excellent, 1-unsatisfactory) all meetings were evaluated as excellent (5) in both categories. Our guests also appreciated the accommodation (5) accompanying program, such as the welcome dinner and guided tour and were very satisfied with the choice of hotel and restaurants. Organizers and translator also received excellent feedback (5+).

### **Budapest, 07 – 11 November 2016**

**Participants:** **Kristina Mirzoieva**, Leading Specialist State Agency of Water Resources of Ukraine, **Stanislav Volodimirovics Kulykivskiy**, State Emergency Service of Ukraine, **Petro Petrovics Kropotov**, State Emergency Service of Ukraine, **Iaroslavna Ievdokimova**, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, **Victor Petrovych Mikulin**, Regional State Administration of Transcarpathia, **Andriy Oleksandrovich Timchuk**, Kharkiv Regional State Administration, **Mikola Anatolijovics Moroz**, Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, **Olga Kolodii**, Lviv Regional State Administration

The program was organized by the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT) in cooperation with the Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy (CEID). The main aim of the program was to share the Hungarian experience regarding environmental issues and water management. The professional program covered a wide range of topics, including EU environmental legislation, development of water resources management, flood control, the management of transboundary water resources with the neighboring countries, as well as organic farming, disaster management and reduction of industrial emission.

The program started in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade with the opening remarks of Tibor Fehér, Head of Unit of the Eastern-European and Central-Asian Department of the Ministry and András Máté Lázár, National Visegrad Coordinator of Hungary. As a start of the project, the main fields of Ukraine-Hungary relations, Ukraine-EU relations and the actual issues of V4 Cooperation were mentioned. The welcoming session was followed by the presentations of the experts of Danube Region Strategy (DRS), who introduced the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the main objectives of the Hungarian presidency of the DRS; as well as the Hungarian activities regarding the implementation of Water Quality Priority Area (PA4) and the Environmental Risks Priority Area (PA5) of the DRS. The lectures focused on the transnational programs and the possibilities for future cross-border cooperation among the nations within the region. At the end of the day, the Ukrainian delegation and the representatives of the MFA were hosted for a Welcome Dinner to facilitate the connection building between the experts.

The participants visited the General Directorate of Water Management where experiences of flood management, the operation of the Hungarian emergency early warning system and flood

monitoring system and the DRS mission of Solotvyno were introduced and discussed. In the afternoon, the delegation paid a visit in the Parliament, at the Environmental Sustainability Committee of the National Assembly.

The program continued with a field trip to Szentendre, where in the morning the delegation visited the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, an international organization with its head office located in Szentendre, with a mission to assist in addressing environmental issues. Executive Director Márta Szigeti Bonifert introduced REC's mission and operation and her colleagues hold several presentations concerning the largest ongoing and recently finished projects (Cressida and the Carpath CC projects) of the REC with a special emphasis to those that might be interesting for Ukraine. Following the REC, the delegation had the chance to visit the mobile dam at Szentendre, as the guest of Balázs Török, Deputy Mayor of the town. A short demonstration was also provided with the help of the Szentendre City Services on the setting up and taking apart of the mobile flood wall. Wednesday's program was finished at the Wastewater Treatment Plant of Budapest Waterworks where following a short presentation on the operation of water treatment system of Budapest, the participants visited the site as well.

The lectures of the day were hosted in the offices of the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade. In the morning, the representatives of the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture and Biokontroll Hungária Kft. hold their presentation on Organic Farming. The afternoon lectures of the Ministry of Agriculture covered the adaptation of the Industrial Emissions Directive – IED and the application of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in Hungary. The last professional part of the program were the lectures of the representatives of the Directorate of the Central Danube Basin Water Management regarding flood protection and water quality management.

The program was closed by the remarks of Dr. László Vasa, Deputy Director General, Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade

Based on the **feedbacks** from the participants, the Civil Servant Mobility Program was a great opportunity for networking, meeting potential partners and generating future cross-border projects, they considered the lectures as relevant and useful. The representatives from the participating Hungarian public institutions found the program a unique opportunity.

Feedbacks received from the delegates showed that the program also provided a unique opportunity for the delegates to get to know and build partnerships with their Ukrainian colleagues.

### **Warsaw & Lublin, 20 – 26 November 2016**

**Participants:** **Vasyl Luhvishchyk**, Volyn Regional Administration, Lutsk, **Bohdan Samoylenko**, Association of Ukrainian Cities, Lutsk, **Jaroslav Matviychuk**, the first deputy mayor, Volodymyr-Volynskyi, **Vitaly Kimak**, Association of Local Self-Government Bodies „Council of Lviv Region”, **Natalia Bandura**, The Association of Ukrainian self-governments bodies of the Euroregion Carpathians, **Natalia Savka**, Association of Local Self-Government Bodies „Council of Lviv

Region", **Olexandra Lenycka**, Trostanec Self-Government Community, **Vasyl Chudynec**, Deputy Chairman of the Regional Council of Zakarpattia Oblast, **Yurii Klyvec**, Chairman of the Municipal Council, Kolochava

A study visit was organized by the Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) in Warsaw in cooperation with the Society of the Institute of East-Central Europe in Lublin. The project was implemented from 20-26 November 2016 in Warsaw, Wroclaw, Wojnowice, Jelenia Gora and Liberec (agenda – appendix no. 1). Nine local government representatives took part in the visit, from the local, district and regional levels, and also from the Carpathian Euroregion from the Volyn, Lviv and Zakarpattia oblasts. In line with the rules of the CSMP program, the participants were selected by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Kiev in cooperation with the Polish consulates.

The goal of the project was to pass on the experience of Polish-Czech-German cross-border cooperation to the Ukrainian civil servants. The Lower Silesian Voivodeship was chosen as an example since it is actively implementing various cross-border cooperation instruments offered by the European Union and bilateral cooperation instruments on Poland's western and southern borders. The meetings for the Ukrainian delegation were planned to spotlight cross-border cooperation from the nationwide, regional and local perspectives. In order to do this it was important to organise meetings with people directly involved in cross-border cooperation at all levels.

The Polish-Ukrainian borderland issue is an important one. It most frequently arises in debates on the problems involved with crossing the border, of queues for border checks or regarding cases of smuggling and other illegal activity. It is important that the cross-border topic function also in other, positive contexts.

All the meetings were in a workshop format, consisting of discussions, answers to participants' questions, the discussion of specific problems and the presentation of completed cross-border projects. The greatest effort possible was made to respond to the expectations and requirements of the participants from Ukraine. During every meeting the representatives of the delegation asked many questions, frequently going into detail. Examples of completed cross-border projects were interesting for them as they could serve as the inspiration for projects in the Ukrainian border region. There were also questions on the procedures of how projects are applied for, implemented, financed and settled. Ukrainian local governments are intensively searching for external sources of finance. According to information provided by the participants, for every programme accepted in Polish-Ukrainian-Belarusian cross-border cooperation, around 50 applications are submitted. This level of cooperation is not seen in any other programme of cross-border cooperation along Poland's border. This shows the level of interest which Ukrainian organisations have in cross-border cooperation and its potential.

The study group was able to have conversations with both politicians and civil servants directly involved in cross-border cooperation issues. In Warsaw there were meetings in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including with the management of the Eastern Department) and in the Ministry of Development. Before it departed for Lower Silesia the Ukrainian delegation had a meeting in OSW

with the participation of representatives of: the foreign affairs department of the Ministry of the Interior; the department of European policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ukrainian Embassy; the German Embassy; and OSW experts.

During the visit to Lower Silesia there was a meeting with the voivode of Lower Silesia, the mayor of Jelenia Gora and with the directors of the department of infrastructure and the foreign cooperation division of the Marshal's Office. While in Jelenia Gora, the group also visited the headquarters of the Neisse-Nisa-Nysa Euroregion and of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) Novum. In Liberec there was a meeting with the hetman of the Liberec Region, Martin Puta and a visit in the Czech part of the Neisse-Nisa-Nysa Euroregion.

The Lower Silesian Voivodeship and neighbouring Czech regions participated in a presentation of the activity of the innovative cooperation instrument, EGTC Novum, which was received with interest. There is no legal impediment to the creation of an EGTC with a partner from outside the EU and so this instrument could be used in the Polish-Ukrainian border region. However, it appears that it would happen in the more distant future.

During the meetings the Ukrainian participants in general had a positive opinion about the local government reforms introduced in Ukraine so far. According to information provided by the local government officials, the creation of the mechanism enabling the participation of local government in the taxes paid by economic entities on their territory led to **resources for investments over the course of one year equal to what they had received over the past seven years combined**. However, local government has begun to be burdened with additional responsibilities without proper funding. This concerns above all competences in the fields of health care and the maintenance of schools. The participants of the study group were united in their opinion that the local government reform is being applied too slowly. Regulations enabling the planning of multi-year infrastructure investments are required.

According to the participants of the visit, the main obstacle in the application of joint ventures on the Polish-Ukrainian border remains **the difficulties involved with crossing the border**. The representative of the district government from Sambir cited an example of when a fire brigade from a partner district on the Polish side donated fire engines to the Ukrainian side. It appeared that due to formal customs reasons, it is not possible to transport fire engines across the border without paying import tariffs and providing proof of purchase.

The participants pointed to the following **topics in which they would expect support from their Polish partners by way of experience sharing**. These topics could provide the subject matter for subsequent study visits and the exchange of Poland and the Visegrad countries' experiences with Ukraine:

- how to practically attract foreign investment, an institutional system for investor service, how cities and regions can prepare the conditions for investors;
- the management, organisation and financing of education, in particular vocational training;

- waste management;
- Energy efficiency, experience sharing at a high level of expertise involving the exploitation of specific practical solutions already in place;
- the transformation of state organisations in charge of: public transport, the water supply and sewage disposal, the administration of council property, heating etc.;
- solving ecological problems, including with dumps (this is a serious problem for Lviv) and creating modern mechanisms for waste collection and management;
- the administration of roads, the organisation of tenders for the construction, repairs and maintenance of roads;
- The creation of strategies for the development of municipalities, districts and regions, along with sectoral plans.

**Experience sharing in cross-border cooperation and the use of integration instruments in the border area helps to promote local governance in Poland and good neighbourly cooperation in Central Europe.** The formula implemented during the V4 CSMP edition discussed here may be used during the visits of local government officials from other Eastern Partnership states. It is also worth considering applying a similar formula for the application of a CSMP program for **representatives of local governments from the countries of the Western Balkans.** The example provided by the Polish-German and Polish-Czech border regions is not merely a source of practical experiences concerning the development of cross-border cooperation—it may also serve as an inspiration when applying the idea of unity and mutual understanding at the local and local-government levels.