



Enhancing Cooperation - Newsletter

of the IPA CBC Programmes Montenegro-Albania and Montenegro-Kosovo 2014-2020 and 2021-2027

April 2026

INAUGURATION EVENT IN TROPOJA

CONTENT

The twenty-fifth issue of the newsletter brings you information on activities and events implemented within both IPA Cross-border Cooperation (CBC) Programmes Montenegro - Albania and Montenegro - Kosovo* 2014-2020 and 2021-2027. Programmes and project activities are funded by the European Union.

Please find below more information on the programmes.

IPA III CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania 2021- 2027

The global objective of the programme is to promote good neighbourly relations, foster Union integration and contribute to social, economic and territorial development by improving the quality of life of the population in the programme cross-border area by tourism development based on cultural/natural heritage and by protecting the environment.

Click [here](#) for more information.

IPA III CBC Programme Montenegro - Kosovo 2021-2027

The global objective of the programme is to promote good neighbourly relations, foster Union integration and contribute to social, economic and territorial development of the programme cross-border area by improving employment, labour mobility and social and cultural inclusion across borders; and developing sustainable tourism.

Click [here](#) for more information.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

- A new chapter for cultural heritage in Tropoja...2
- News on projects financed under the 3rd and 4th CfPs IPA CBC Programme Montenegro – Albania.....3
- News on projects financed under the 3rd CfP IPA CBC Programme Montenegro – Kosovo6
- CBC-House opened in Prishtina7
- Joint Monitoring Committee meetings held.....8

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CBC ZOOM

A new chapter for cultural heritage in Tropoja

The Municipality of Tropoja successfully inaugurated the revitalized Historical Museum of Bajram Curri on 26 March 2026, marking a major milestone in the implementation of the project *New Reality of the Heritage Sites*, funded by the European Union under the 3rd CfP of IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania 2014-2020. The event gathered representatives from local and national institutions, the European Union and cross-border partners, highlighting the strong cooperation between Albania and Montenegro in promoting cultural heritage and sustainable tourism.

In his opening remarks, Mayor Mr. **Rexhë Byberi** emphasized the importance of the investment for the local community and visitors, stating that the project represents a significant asset for cultural tourism in Tropoja and reflects successful cooperation with the Municipality of Bar.



Speakers underlined the innovative approach of the project, combining heritage preservation with modern technology. Mr. **Rando Kote**, Head of Unit for Territorial Cooperation, State agency for Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination (SASPAC), noted that integrating history with digital tools such as augmented reality creates more attractive, competitive and sustainable tourism products.



He also highlighted the strengthened institutional capacities of the Municipality of Tropoja in project management, tourism development and heritage interpretation.

Mrs. **Nada Pejović**, Head of Department for Bilateral Cross-border Programmes, Ministry of European Affairs of Montenegro, stressed that the project is a strong example of partnership between Montenegro and Albania, contributing not only to the preservation of shared cultural heritage but also to creating new opportunities for future generations.



Mrs. **Carla Folgôa**, representative of the Delegation of the European Union to Albania, emphasized the broader importance of culture, noting its role in fostering dialogue, inclusion and mutual understanding as core values of the European Union and essential elements in the EU integration path of both countries.



Through this project, the Bajram Curri Museum has opened the path toward the transformation into a modern cultural attraction, featuring improved infrastructure and innovative interpretation tools. In addition, a wide range of activities were implemented in both countries, including the revitalization of heritage sites, development of cultural routes, creation of tourism products and introduction of digital and augmented reality experiences.



The project *New Reality of the Heritage Sites* has contributed to enhancing the visibility and accessibility of cultural heritage in the cross-border area, while strengthening cooperation between institutions and supporting sustainable tourism development in Montenegro and Albania.

and the largest lake in the Balkans, recognized for its ecological importance and biodiversity. Through EU funding, the team has been equipped with modern monitoring tools that are now integrated into daily operational activities. These resources enhance the capacity of institutions to collect data, track environmental changes and respond more effectively to emerging challenges in the protected area.



The initiative contributes to establishing a coordinated, transboundary approach to ecosystem management, supporting joint monitoring systems and strengthening institutional cooperation between the two countries. It aligns with broader efforts to ensure sustainable use of natural resources, improve environmental protection and promote nature-based tourism in the region.

News on projects financed under the 3rd and 4th CfPs IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania

Strengthening monitoring capacities in Skadar/Shkodër Lake area

During a visit to the offices of Public Enterprise for National Parks of Montenegro in Vranjina organised on 7 April 2026, project partners highlighted the tangible results achieved through the EU-funded initiative *Skadar/Shkodër Lake Watershed – a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve*.



The project supports the sustainable management of the Lake Skadar/Shkodër basin, a shared natural asset between Montenegro and Albania



By combining technical investment with cross-border collaboration, the project represents a concrete step toward the long-term vision of a transboundary biosphere reserve, enhancing both environmental resilience and regional cooperation in the Lake Skadar/Shkodër area.

Strengthening cooperation for tourism development

A partnership agreement has been signed between the Union of Employers of Montenegro and the Tourist Organization Zeta, marking

an important step toward strengthening cooperation in the field of tourism and economic development. The agreement aims to enhance collaboration between the private sector and local tourism stakeholders, with a particular focus on improving the promotion and development of Zeta as an emerging tourism destination.



Through this partnership, both institutions will work jointly to support local businesses, encourage entrepreneurship and contribute to a more competitive tourism offer in the region. The initiative reflects a shared commitment to creating new opportunities for economic growth, while also reinforcing the role of tourism as a driver of local development. By aligning efforts and expertise, the partnership is expected to contribute to better visibility of Zeta’s cultural and natural assets and to foster a more coordinated approach to tourism promotion. This agreement represents a concrete example of how institutional cooperation can support sustainable tourism development, strengthen the local economy and create added value for both residents and visitors. The initiative is implemented within the project *Accessible Boat Tourism*, in cooperation with the Albanian Chamber of Crafts.

Moreover, as part of the same project, a three-day training for craftsmen and artisans was organised in Vau i Dejës from 29 to 31 January 2026. The training focused on improving local capacities for the construction and modification of accessible boats, contributing to the development of inclusive tourism around Lake Shkodër. Participants explored modern accessibility standards in boat design, including safer boarding solutions, adapted seating, improved mobility spaces and user-oriented design approaches. The activity also highlighted the importance of combining traditional craftsmanship with innovative and inclusive tourism solutions.



The training represents an important step toward creating more accessible tourism services in the region while supporting local artisans, promoting social inclusion and strengthening the long-term sustainability of tourism development in the Skadar/Shkodër area.

New opportunities for youth and women through cross-border cooperation

In Lezhë, a Career Guidance and Counselling Centre has been established, creating a dedicated space where young people, women and unemployed persons receive not only information, but also guidance, motivation and confidence to take more secure steps towards employment.



Through professional counselling and personalised career guidance, beneficiaries are discovering new development opportunities tailored to the real needs of the labour market. Thanks to the partnership with the National Agency for Employment and Skills and the support of the Regional Employment Directorate Lezhë, the project interventions in Lezhë have already delivered tangible results.



20 të rinj të certifikuar në kursin "Digital Skills" dhe "Soft Skills". 15 të rinj kanë ndjekur praktika profesionale



Namely, a total of 20 young people have been certified in *Digital Skills* and *Soft Skills* training programmes, equipping them with competencies that are increasingly demanded in the labour market.

Moreover, 15 young people completed one-month internships in *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* companies in Tirana, gaining first-hand professional experience and exposure to workplace realities.



Women, 15 of them, participated in employability training focused on communication, teamwork and hospitality services, including kitchen operations, service, reception and maintenance, while 9 women are already in the process of being employed by local businesses in Lezhë, taking important first steps towards economic independence.

At the same time, the same model is being implemented in Montenegro, where the Employment Agency of Montenegro is supporting young people and women through skills development for employment and entrepreneurship.

This cross-border cooperation demonstrates that investing in people remains one of the most effective pathways towards sustainable development and social inclusion, ensuring that no one is left behind.



The project *Boosting decent employment for youth and unemployed people in the cross-border area of Montenegro and Albania* is implemented by World Vision Albania, the Employment Agency of Montenegro and the Albanian National Employment and Skills Agency, and aims to empower young people and unemployed individuals through soft skills and digital training, professional internships, and entrepreneurial support.

Trainings on business plan development successfully completed

The second phase of business plan development for women entrepreneurs participating in the project *Women microenterprise development in the cross-border area* has been successfully completed. The activity brought together participants from the cross-border area of Montenegro and Albania, providing them with an opportunity to further develop their business ideas and transform them into structured and sustainable business plans.



Under the mentorship of experts, the participants worked intensively on refining their business concepts through practical guidance and individual mentoring sessions. Each participant had the opportunity to present her entrepreneurial idea and develop it into a comprehensive business plan, which will serve as the basis for applying to the Municipality of Ulcinj's open call for support. The mentoring process focused on strengthening participants' capacities in business planning, financial sustainability and market positioning. Through constructive feedback and practical advice, the experts supported the women entrepreneurs in improving and strengthening their business concepts, preparing them for the next stages of business development.



The workshops were characterized by a highly positive and collaborative atmosphere, with participants expressing strong enthusiasm, increased motivation and commitment toward advancing their entrepreneurial journeys. In addition to enhancing their business skills, the activity

contributed to networking and mutual support among women entrepreneurs from the cross-border region.

Check out the video from one of the sessions [here](#).

This project *Women microenterprise development in the cross-border area* is implemented by the Municipality of Ulcinj, Monitoring Group Ulcinj – MogUL and Code Partners from Shkodra.

Strengthening communication and teamwork skills

As part of the implementation of the P.O.W.E.R. project, Caritas Albania, in partnership with Down Syndrome Albania, organized the third training session for persons with disabilities from 23 to 26 February, focusing on *Communication and Teamwork*. The training aimed to strengthen interpersonal skills, improve collaboration and build mutual trust among participants. Through practical exercises, group activities and interactive sessions, participants explored effective communication techniques and gained a deeper understanding of the importance of teamwork and the role each individual plays within a group dynamic.



The sessions were led by Ms. **Enkeleida Mataj**, who facilitated the training in an inclusive and motivating environment that encouraged open discussion, active participation and personal reflection. Throughout the four-day activity, participants demonstrated a high level of engagement, cooperation and motivation to strengthen their capacities and improve their communication abilities. The positive and supportive atmosphere contributed to greater interaction among participants and reinforced the value of teamwork in both personal and professional contexts.



The project *People with disabilities: new Opportunities for Work, Employability, professional Rehabilitation - P.O.W.E.R.* continues to support the development of competencies that contribute to increased

independence, social inclusion and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

News on projects financed under the 3rd CFP IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Kosovo

New interpretive signs

In April, representatives of the CFCU, Ministry of European Affairs and JTS had the opportunity to visit activities implemented under the *Cultural Revival from Lake Skadar to Kosovo (Time Travel)* project, a cross-border initiative promoting shared cultural heritage and sustainable tourism experiences between Montenegro and Kosovo.



New interpretive signs were installed near Skadar/Shkodër Lake, helping visitors better understand the cultural and natural significance of the area. The signage contributes to creating a more accessible and engaging tourism experience, while encouraging visitors to explore the region responsibly and appreciate its rich historical connections.



The project, implemented by Community Development Fund (CDF), Centre for Sustainable Tourism Initiatives (CSTI) Montenegro, National Tourism Organization (NTO) Montenegro and Klina Municipality, continues to strengthen cooperation across the border by linking cultural landmarks, local traditions and sustainable tourism practices into a shared regional story.



3rd Edition of the Peja Outdoor Festival

The third edition of the *Peja Outdoor Festival* will be organised from 11 to 14 June 2026, confirming the long-term impact and sustainability of the results achieved through the *Tourism for the Future* project. The festival continues to grow as a platform promoting sustainable tourism, outdoor recreation and regional cooperation between Montenegro and Kosovo.

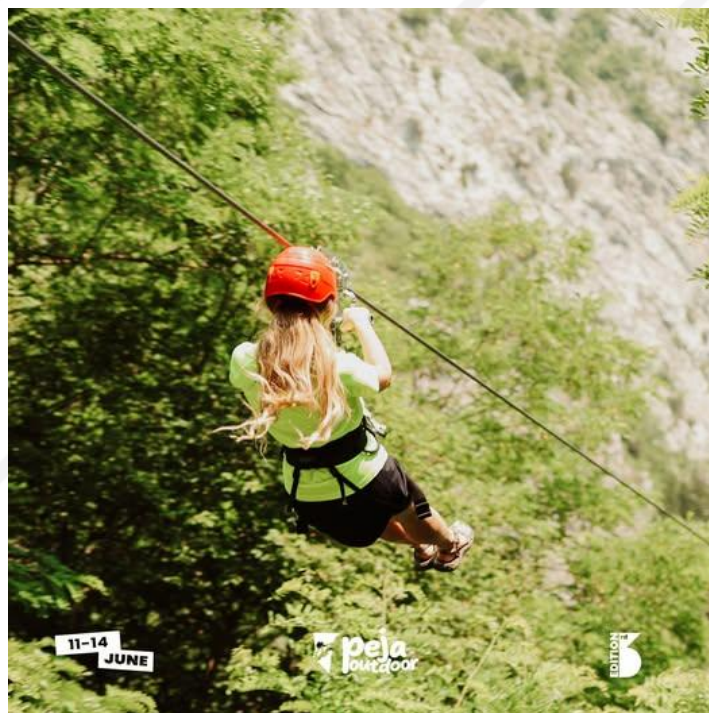


Initially launched through the cooperation of NGO REA Prishtina, Mountaineering Association "Đeravica", the Municipality of Kolašin and the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development, the initiative aimed to strengthen and brand the tourism sectors of Peja and Kolašin through innovative and sustainable tourism offers.

The successful organisation of the festival in 2024 and 2025 demonstrated the strong collaboration between public institutions, civil society organisations and local tourism stakeholders. Through activities such as hiking, cycling, rock climbing, paragliding and cultural trail tours, visitors had the opportunity to explore the region's natural and cultural heritage while promoting environmentally responsible tourism practices.

The continuation of the festival in 2026 highlights the sustainability and lasting value of the project results, particularly in terms of maintaining

eco-tourism activities, supporting local tourism operators and increasing the visibility of the cross-border region as a destination for adventure and cultural tourism. It also reflects the continued commitment of local partners to further develop tourism products that encourage responsible travel, heritage preservation and economic opportunities for local communities.



Check out the promotional video for the 3rd Edition [here](#).

CBC-House opened in Prishtina

The official opening of the CBC House in Prishtina marked an important step forward in strengthening cross-border cooperation and regional partnerships within the region.



Located at Sejdi Kryeziu Street, Entrance 54, Floor 2, the CBC House will function as a shared space dedicated to cooperation, dialogue and support for beneficiaries, institutions, civil society organisations and local stakeholders engaged in cross-border cooperation initiatives. The premises also host the IPA Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Montenegro - Kosovo, further reinforcing its role as a central point for programme coordination, communication and stakeholder engagement.



The opening of the CBC House represents an important contribution towards increasing the visibility and accessibility of cross-border cooperation programmes in the region, while encouraging greater participation from local institutions, civil society organisations and other relevant stakeholders. Partners, beneficiaries and interested stakeholders are invited to use the CBC House as a platform for networking, exchange of ideas and the development of future cooperation initiatives.



Joint Monitoring Committee meetings held

The 2nd Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) meetings within the IPA III Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes Montenegro - Kosovo and Montenegro - Albania were held during the first quarter of 2026.



During the meetings, the JMC members reviewed and discussed the respective Final Implementation Reports for the 2017 allocations under

both Programmes. Following the discussions, the JMC members unanimously adopted the respective Final Implementation Reports for the 2017 allocation.



In addition, the meetings served as an opportunity to exchange views on lessons learned and upcoming activities related to the evaluation processes of the first Calls for Proposals (CfPs) under IPA III.



The 2nd JMC meeting within the IPA III CBC Programme Montenegro - Kosovo was held in a hybrid format on 27 March 2026 in Pristina and online. The 2nd JMC meeting within the IPA III CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania was held online on 2 April 2026.



The next JMC meetings for both Programmes are planned to be held in Montenegro.

Operating structures of the programmes (click on the icon to visit the website)



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evropskih
poslova**



**Montenegro
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Directorate for Finance and Contracting
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