



# Enhancing Cooperation - Newsletter

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

## December 2024

KICK OFF EVENT IN TUZI – LAUNCH OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> CFP UNDER IPA III MNE – KOS

CONTENT

The twenty-first 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.

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**This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Joint Technical Secretariat of the CBCP MNE-ALB and MNE-KOS and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.**

\* 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.

## CBC ZOOM

### Kick-off conference and Informative sessions organised for the 1<sup>st</sup> Call for Proposals

After launching of the 1<sup>st</sup> CfP within IPA III CBC Programme Montenegro – Kosovo 2021-2027, a Kick-off conference was organized in Municipality of Tuzi on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024. At the opening, the Head of the Directorate for Bilateral Cross-Border Programs in the Ministry of European Affairs, **Nada Pejovic**, welcomed the attendees and expressed her satisfaction that the 1<sup>st</sup> CfP within IPA III has been launched. She pointed out that this Program, with allocated funds of 9.7 million euros, is a continuation of the successful cooperation that started 12 years ago, and its ultimate goal is the promotion of good neighbourly relations and contribution to the social, economic and territorial development of the cross-border area. She invited institutions and organizations to improve employment, workforce mobility, social inclusion and sustainable tourism through projects, which will improve the living conditions of citizens. She added that this cooperation would not be possible without the support of the relevant ministries and the European Union, and expressed her belief that the cooperation will be even stronger in the coming period.



**Fatmire Berisha**, acting Head of the Department for Cross-Border Cooperation in the Ministry of Local Self-Government Administration of the Republic of Kosovo, thanked the partners from the Ministry of European Affairs and the Ministry of Finance of Montenegro for their excellent cooperation, as well as the Delegation of the European Union for their continued support. She pointed to the fact that through IPA II, 24 projects with a total value of over 9 million euros were implemented, and that 5.4 million euros will be available for the 1<sup>st</sup> CfP within IPA III. She added that info sessions in Montenegro and Kosovo aim to inform interested institutions and emphasised that the Joint Technical Secretariat of the program remains available for all necessary support.

**Melanie Bride**, Programme Manager for Cross-Border Cooperation at the EU Delegation in Montenegro, stated that cross-border cooperation is the fundamental idea of a united Europe, and that it would not be what it is today without people from different sides of the border who have realized that working together benefits both them and their countries. She expressed strong belief that EU cross-border programs in the Western Balkans are the best support schemes because they bring



tangible results in the social, economic, and territorial development of the region. For this call for proposals, she urged potential applicants to focus on EU priorities and those of the countries involved, particularly employment, social inclusion, tourism development, and cultural heritage.

**Jelena Vujadinovic** from the Ministry of Finance (CFCU), thanked her colleagues from the Ministry of European Affairs and the Ministry for Local Self-Government Administration for their quality cooperation, as well as potential beneficiaries who continuously show interest in the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Montenegro-Kosovo. She highlighted that the main goal of the programme is to promote good neighbourly relations, encourage EU integration, and contribute to the social, economic, and territorial development of the cross-border area. She informed the attendees that the 1<sup>st</sup> CfP within IPA III Montenegro-Kosovo has been launched on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024 with a deadline for submission of Concept notes by 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024.



In regard to 1<sup>st</sup> CfP within IPA III CBCP Montenegro-Kosovo, four informative sessions were organised during which the rules for applying and submission of applications within the 1<sup>st</sup> CfP were presented by the representatives of the Directorate for Finance, Contracting and Implementation of EU Assistance Funds (CFCU). The Informative sessions were organized in Tuzi on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, in Berane on 1<sup>st</sup>

October, in Peja on 2<sup>nd</sup> October and in Gjakova on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024. The informative sessions were attended by over 140 participants.

### **Contracted projects of the 4<sup>th</sup> Call for Proposals Montenegro - Albania!**

The implementation of approved projects under the Fourth Call of the IPA II Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Montenegro - Albania 2014-2020 began in December. Namely, four joint projects of institutions and organizations from Montenegro and Albania are approved for funding. One project started with the implementation in December 2024 and while the others will start in January 2025.



The total value of the supported projects amounts **1.5 million euros**, ensuring the maximum utilization of available funds under the 2020 allocation. The implementation of these projects will contribute to further strengthening the relations between Montenegro and Albania, improving the quality of life in the cross-border area, and creating sustainable models of cooperation for the future.

### **News on projects financed under the 3<sup>rd</sup> CfP IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania**

#### **Activities in the No Borders for Work project**

On 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024, the Municipality of Fushe-Arrez successfully held an informative session with representatives from various interest groups in Fushe-Arrez and Malesi e Madhe. This session aimed at boosting employment opportunities for youth, women, people with disabilities, and long-term unemployed individuals through training designed to enhance essential job skills. The session covered key aspects of the project, including Phase 1, which focuses on soft incubation and the provision of financial support through sub-grants for new entrepreneurs, followed by more in-depth incubation in Phase 2. Attendees were informed about the candidate selection process, which involves the pre-selection of 20 candidates (10 from Albania and 10 from Montenegro), and the final selection of 10 candidates (5 from each country) who will receive sub-grants to launch their businesses.

Moreover, during November 2024 a five-day training program was successfully held in Cetinje as part of the *No Borders for Work* project activities. Participants were educated on green economy, sustainable agriculture and social entrepreneurship, gaining valuable insights into career development opportunities in these fields. The training was led by Andrea Novakovic, a local development expert from Croatia, who introduced participants to circular economy practices and self-employment examples. The project is being implemented by the Municipality of Cetinje in collaboration with NGO ProAct Hub from

Podgorica, the Municipality of Fushe-Arrez, and Institute for Sustainable Policies from Albania, with the aim of promoting employment and socially inclusive economic development.



#### **Business Forum held in Budva**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> October, a Business Forum was held at the Splendid Hotel in Budva, bringing together companies from Albania and Montenegro for networking and business collaboration.



The forum gathered businesses from both countries, where they showcased their products and services to the local and cross-border markets. It served as a unique opportunity for networking, experience exchange, and potential collaborations with partners from various economic sectors, such as tourism, hospitality, IT, agriculture, and crafts.

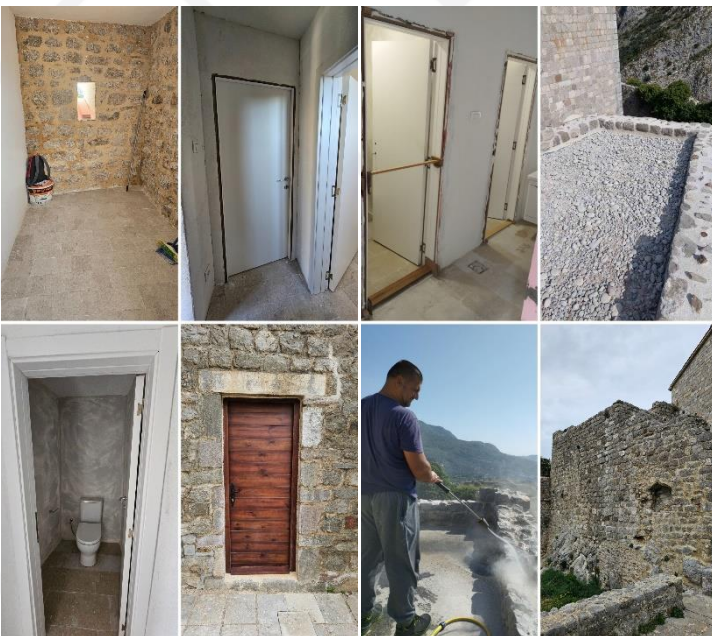


The Business Forum was organized by the Chamber of Commerce of Montenegro in collaboration with partners, including the Business Start Center Bar Foundation and the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA), as part of the project *Skills for Jobs Albania – Montenegro*. The event highlighted the importance of building business ties and fostering regional economic cooperation between these neighbouring countries.



### Works on adaptation of cultural heritage sites in Tropoja and Bar continued

As part of the project *New Reality of the Heritage Sites*, the first phase of the adaptation of the Bajram Curri Museum has been successfully completed, addressing key structural and functional aspects of the building. Improvements included the waterproofing of the roof to prevent leaks, plastering of interior and exterior walls to enhance durability and repairing the facade with decorative stone for a revitalized appearance.



Additionally, the damaged electrical and hydraulic systems were repaired, ensuring the infrastructure operates safely and efficiently. These efforts have significantly improved the building's overall condition and functionality.



Damaged doors and windows were replaced to improve security and insulation, while the museum's cladding was updated with new boards for added protection and aesthetic appeal.



In addition, in Bar, the adaptation of the public toilet was done, while works on the ticket office and path are ongoing. As part of project activities the digital map of old town of Bar was produced.



## New equipment for monitoring of forests in Bar and Shkodra

As part of activities of the project Building Smart Forests, second workshop at the Primary School "Kekec" in Sutomore, Municipality of Bar was held during December. The event was led by M.Sc. Pera Pavlica-Dragisic and focused on educating students about fire protection and wildfire prevention.



Pupils engaged in interactive demonstrations of firefighting equipment, learning about the tools and techniques used to combat different types of fires. The hands-on experience included insights into modern firefighting technology and safety measures.

The workshop concluded with a creative session, where participants reflected on their learning and contributed to the development of promotional materials, culminating in group presentations of their visual designs.

## Inspiring event advances Skadar Lake Watershed Transboundary Biosphere Reserve initiative

During September, a three-day event in Podgorica has brought together experts, stakeholders and officials to advanced sustainable business practices and innovative governance models for biosphere reserves (BRs). The gathering highlighted the Skadar/Shkoder Lake Watershed's potential as a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (TBR), fostering collaboration between Montenegro and Albania.



The event emphasized the role of biosphere reserves in supporting sustainable development without imposing additional restrictions, enabling green economies, sustainable tourism and local community participation. Discussions also highlighted the global network for knowledge sharing, research, education, and training. Participants drew inspiration from the experiences of established BRs in Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic and Italy, while exploring lessons from the Julian Alps nomination process and the pioneering five-country TBR Mura-Drava-Danube.



In a pivotal announcement, Montenegro's State Secretary for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Northern Region Development confirmed that the nomination dossier for Skadar Lake Watershed TBR will be submitted for designation in September next year. The event coincided with Montenegro's State Ecological Day, adding significance to the discussions on sustainable resource management and transboundary cooperation. Key partners, including UNDP, the European Union Delegation to Montenegro and UNESCO's Venice Office, underscored the critical importance of stakeholder involvement and collaborative development. EnvPro's Director emphasized the project's ultimate goal: transforming resource use toward fairness, inclusivity and effectiveness. With over 150 participants, including esteemed speakers and online attendees, the event fostered meaningful dialogue on the potential of the Skadar Lake Watershed TBR. The community-focused approach emerged as a particularly positive aspect, reinforcing the reserve's value as a platform for cooperation and sustainable progress.

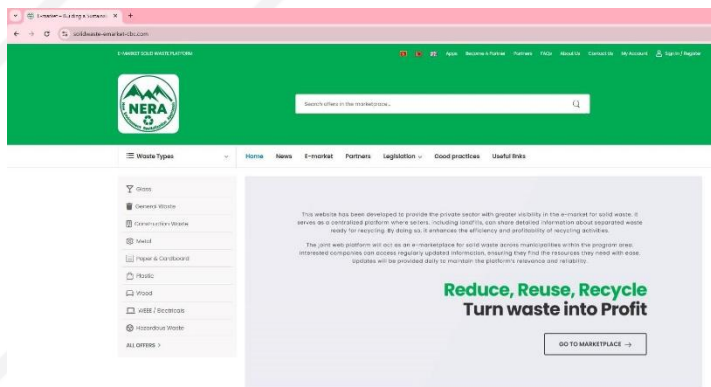
## News on projects financed under the 3rd Cfp IPA CBC Programme Montenegro - Kosovo

### Tuzi and Peja together for cleaner and greener cities

Within the project NERA 27 educational sessions were held with over 800 pupils in primary and secondary schools. Last workshops were held in period September – November 2024 in schools in Tuzi. During the workshops, pupils had the opportunity to learn more about current environmental challenges, such as air pollution, waste in nature and climate change, as well as practical examples of how negative impacts on the environment can be reduced through recycling, energy saving and responsible use of resources. Moreover, on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024, educational visit of 20 pupils of Elementary School "Mahmut Lekic" was conducted to the recycling centre Deponije d.o.o., in cooperation with the Municipality of Tuzi, the school's Eco Committee and "Komunalno-Komunale" d.o.o.



Solid Waste E-Market, a platform connecting the private and public sectors within the program territory has been officially launched. This innovative website allows solid waste sellers to showcase their offerings as part of an integrated supply chain for the solid waste market. Buyers can register and browse listings, conveniently online. Explore the platform now: [www.solidwaste-emarket-cbc.com](http://www.solidwaste-emarket-cbc.com).



A brand-new small waste collection truck was handed over to Eco Sig by Peja Municipality in order to improve their services by ensuring they have the necessary equipment to keep the city cleaner and greener. Additionally, in Peja, 40 color-coded trash bins for plastic, metallic, organic, and paper waste across 6 schools and 4 public institutions in Peja were distributed.



Additionally, within the project the apps [Nera - T](#) and [Nera - P](#) have been designed and launched to enhance the efficiency of municipal services in waste management and foster better communication with citizens to improve the environment.

Follow the project [page](#) for more information.

### Capacity building workshop for professionals organised in UNEETED project

The Institute for Development Policy (INDEP), as part of the project UNEETED, organised the capacity building workshop for professionals

that brought together experts, policy makers, municipal officials and other actors from the municipalities of Peja, Decan and Junik.



Challenges, problems, solutions and recommendations were discussed in three days, among lecturers and participants. The recommendations derived from this activity will be provided to the competent bodies, in order to serve for the improvement of the social and economic position of the NEET group in Kosovo.



In addition, as part of project activities, a joint seminar in Peja for young NEETs from Kosovo and Montenegro was organised. Over three days, participants were engaged in lectures covering employment opportunities, circular economy, essential skills and current industry trends. This workshop provided a valuable platform for these young individuals to increase their employability, get to know the issues better, socialize and prepare for future career opportunities.

The project *Young NEETs: new opportunities for work and increased employability – "UNEETED"* is implemented by the Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses (ISSP), Institute for Development Policy (INDEP), Chamber of Economy of Montenegro and Municipality of Mojkovac.

### No Borders project boosts regional cooperation and skills development

As part of the *No borders* project, on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024, 10 businesses from Kosovo participated in a business fair in Berane aimed at fostering regional collaboration and promoting economic growth. The Chamber of Economy of Montenegro, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Kosovo, the Regional Business Centre Berane, and the Education, Training and Research Institute (ETRI), successfully organized this event.



Moreover, on 1 October 2024, a licensed training programme for Tourist Guides commenced under the *No borders* project. Six young participants underwent a comprehensive training programme that lasted until December 2024, which combined classroom sessions with practical outdoor experiences in the stunning mountains of Rugova. This initiative aimed to equip young individuals with skills for sustainable employment in the cross-border region.



The *Skills for Sustainable Employment in the Cross-Border Region of Montenegro and the Republic of Kosovo – No Borders!* project continues to support capacity building and economic collaboration across the region.

### Smart board donation enhances cross-border tourism and cultural promotion in Klina

As part of the activities of the project *Cultural Renaissance from Lake Skadar to Kosovo - TIME TRAVEL*, the Community Development Fund (CDF) has delivered a smart board, a multi-user interactive touch screen, to the Directorate of Culture, Youth and Sports in Klina.



This equipment aims to promote cross-border tourism and support the development of thematic trails and innovative touristic products within the framework of the project. The installation of the smart board reflects a strong commitment to leveraging modern technology for enhancing tourism and cultural promotion in the project target areas.

### New vehicle for the municipality of Mojkovac to enhance environmental protection

The Municipality of Mojkovac has received a new off-road vehicle procured as part of the *Cross-Border Green Deal* project. The vehicle, intended for the Secretariat for Urbanism, Housing-Communal Affairs and Transport, will contribute to improving waste disposal monitoring and environmental protection in the municipality.



Besides procuring the vehicle, the main project activities include training for employees in environmental protection institutions, seminars and presentations on EU best practices in solid waste management, research on waste composition, surveys on environmental awareness and habits of the population, a cross-border conference on improving solid waste management, environmental awareness campaigns, publications on ecological topics, ECO caravans, and promoting the reduction of plastic bag usage.

Through the project *Cross-border Green Deal*, project partners FORS Montenegro, ECMI Kosovo and the Municipality of Berane continue with activities aiming at improving environmental protection in the cross-border region between Montenegro and Kosovo.

### Ongoing activities in the project Evocation and Attraction of Cultural Heritage

During December, the conservation works at the historic Haxhi Bey's Hammam have been completed. These efforts ensure the preservation of this valuable cultural heritage for future generations. Moreover, on 23-24 September 2024, a youth camp on cultural heritage and a media conference took place in Peja, Kosovo, as part of the project *Evocation and Attraction of Cultural Heritage – Christian Antiquity and Turkish Bath for Cultural Tourism*.

The camp, hosted at Haxhi Bey's Hammam, brought together architecture and polytechnic students from Podgorica and high school art students from Peja. Participants engaged in discussions on cultural and tourism collaboration, sparking positive reactions and potential partnerships.



Experts from the public sector, private tourism operators, architects and civil society shared insights at the camp and during the conference, emphasizing regional collaboration through joint archaeological excavations, educational activities, and cultural promotion.



Key initiatives include preserving Christian antiquities in Tumbarice (Berane) and restoring Haxhi Bey's Hammam in Peja, with advanced technologies like 3D modelling to document and promote these sites. The project also integrates physical and virtual exploration tools to make the heritage more accessible.

Check out the video from the youth event [here](#).

### ***Strengthening cross-border tourism: Kosovar delegation explores Montenegro's rural gems***

On 27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> October 2024, RDA-West organized a Familiarisation Trip in Montenegro as part of the EU-funded project *Turning our villages into tourism destinations* project.



The trip aimed to introduce participants from Kosovo — including tourism organizations, recreational and sports associations, hospitality operators, journalists, and bloggers — to Montenegro's rural tourism offers. It also sought to foster collaboration between similar organizations on both sides of the border.



Participants visited rural and agro-tourism service providers across villages in the municipalities of Berane, Andrijevica and Plav. They also took part in activities at the rural tourism fair in Plav, which showcased operators within Montenegro's rural tourism network. The exchange of experiences and insights during the two-day trip enhanced cooperation among stakeholders, promoted joint tourism and hospitality products, and will drive visitor growth in this cross-border region. As part of efforts to enhance rural tourism, five manuals were developed for Kosovo beneficiaries. Tourism infrastructure was initiated in 15 rural locations (8 in Montenegro and 7 in Kosovo) along thematic trails, including seating areas, floral fixtures, bike parking, playgrounds and 150 informational signs.

Support was provided to 20 families (10 in each country) for yard arrangements and setting up gastronomy service areas, with some work completed and others pending due to property upgrades. Four promotional events were organized—two in Montenegro and two in Kosovo—highlighting rural tourism. Major events in Plav and Peja (October–November 2024) and thematic activities in rural locations showcased the region's tourism potential.



## Three-day training held for social protection and employment institutions

From 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> October, representatives from social protection and employment institutions in Montenegro and Kosovo participated in a three-day training focused on supporting vulnerable groups in social inclusion and employment.



The training aimed to enhance the skills and knowledge of professionals through the exchange of best practices and practical solutions. This activity was part of the "In Employment, Education, Training – InEET" project, implemented by NGO Juventas from Montenegro and NGO Labyrinth from Kosovo.

## Cross-border eco-trail adventure from Peja to Kolasin

Within the project *Tourism for the Future*, partners NGO REA Prishtina, Mountaineering Association "Gjeravica", Municipality of Kolasin and Institute for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development in period 1-2 October 2024 organised the Cross-Border Eco-Trail adventure from Peja (Kosovo) to Kolasin (Montenegro). Participants embarked on a journey to explore the natural beauty, local traditions and delicious culinary offers of both regions. The trail aimed to promote eco-tourism and strengthen cross-border cooperation between Kosovo and Montenegro through sustainable tourism activities. Highlights included hiking, food tasting at local guesthouses such as Ariu and Kulla e Rugovasin in Kosovo and Household Jokic and Household Kljajic in Montenegro. Participants also enjoyed beekeeping lessons and traditional activities, immersing themselves in the region's culture.



Accommodation was provided at Eko Katun Martinovic in Kolasin, Montenegro, where participants had the opportunity to experience rural hospitality and enjoy local delicacies.

Check out the video from the event [here](#).

## First Joint Monitoring Committee held in Tirana

On 16<sup>th</sup> September the 1<sup>st</sup> Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) of the IPA III IPA CBC Programme Montenegro – Albania was organised in Tirana.



During the meeting the JMC Rules of Procedure (RoP) were approved, outlining the new JMC composition's responsibilities under the IPA III Programme and taking over tasks from IPA II. Additionally, the IPA III Programme for Montenegro-Albania 2021-2027 was presented and the proposal for financial allocation, thematic priorities, specific objectives, activities and target beneficiaries for the 1<sup>st</sup> Call for Proposals (CFP) under IPA III was approved.



## Capacity building activities for potential applicants within IPA III Montenegro - Albania

The Joint Technical Secretariat, in cooperation with the Ministry of European Affairs of Montenegro, Ministry of Finance of Montenegro - Directorate for Finance, Contracting and Implementation of EU Assistance Funds (CFCU) and State Agency of Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination of the Republic of Albania (SASPAC), organised three-day trainings on Project cycle management for the potential applicants from the eligible Programme area of Montenegro and Albania. During the period November - December 2024, as part of the preparatory activities before the publication of the 1<sup>st</sup> CFP within IPA III CBC Programme Montenegro - Albania, three trainings on drafting of project proposals in line with the EU rules were organized. Namely, two Project Cycle Management trainings were dedicated only for local authorities, i.e. one was held in Kolasin in period 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024 for Montenegrin authorities, while for local and regional authorities from Albania was held in Shkodra in period 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024.



Also, one training was dedicated to other potential applicants from Montenegro and was held in period 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024 in Ulcinj, while the training for other potential applicants from Albania is expected to be held during February 2025.



The capacity building activities were specifically designed to prepare the potential applicants for the upcoming CFP within the IPA III CBC Programme Montenegro – Albania 2021-2027 and were attended by 61 participants. The aim of these trainings was to develop and increase the capacities of the local authorities and other potential applicants from the eligible Programme area of Montenegro and Albania for preparation of the project proposals.

### ***Bilateral meeting between Montenegro and Kosovo held in Podgorica***

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024, in Podgorica, a bilateral meeting was held between Management structures of Montenegro and Kosovo. The meeting was organised to discuss the IPA III CBC Programme Montenegro-Kosovo 2021-2027, as well as important updates on the partnership agreement and the ongoing First call for proposals.



### ***10<sup>th</sup> Regional Cross-Border Cooperation Forum held in Budva***

The 10<sup>th</sup> Regional Cross-Border Cooperation Forum took place in Becici, Budva from 25–27 September 2024 and was organized by the Cross-Border Institution Building CBIB+3 project.



This significant event brought together participants from the region and the European Union, including representatives from ministries responsible for coordinating cross-border cooperation programs in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, as well as representatives from the European Commission.



The forum was opened by Miloš Marković, the Director General of the Directorate for European Territorial Cooperation in the Ministry of European Affairs, who expressed his pleasure that Montenegro was hosting such an important regional event.

During the event, the achievements and status of both the IPA II and IPA III CBC programmes Montenegro – Albania and Montenegro – Kosovo were presented.

Moreover, a session was dedicated for the visibility and communication of CBC programmes and the presentation of the best practices used by IPA-IPA CBC programmes. During this session, the results, lessons learnt and best practices in both programmes Montenegro – Albania and Montenegro – Kosovo were presented.

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



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