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Press release

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TOURISM, HERITAGE AND CREATIVITY

The project “Tourism, Heritage and Creativity” (THC) is a joint endeavor of Georgian Arts and Culture Center (GACC; LPP1), European Institute for Cultural Tourism EUREKA NPO (PP2), and Foundation for the Development of the City of Mykolaiv (FDN; PP3), National Agency for Cultural Preservation of Georgia (PP4). It aims to bind the sectors of tourism and heritage for their mutual advantage. Overall, the objective is to advance businesses within these sectors by developing creative tourism and cultural products on the basis of local heritage assets. The project implementation period is between 26.09.2020 and 26.12.2022. THC is carried out with the support of the ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme 2014-2020 and funded by the European Union.

The ongoing global shift of tourist’s interests toward participatory practices and closer interaction with local culture, is coupled with the undeniable need of applying principles of sustainability to all touristic practices. In addition, the tourism industry is becoming increasingly saturated and competitive. That is why, despite diverse touristic assets, the Black Sea countries need to seek out innovative ways of developing tourism products and reaching a wider audience. The emerging field of Creative Tourism perfectly responds to these challenges by focusing on intangible heritage and offering tourists a more varied and deeper array of activities and products. Creative Tourism enables travelers to exercise creativity and move beyond passively experiencing tangible cultural assets. Due to the field’s focus on intangible heritage, Creative Tourism activities and products tend to be more sustainable by not putting additional pressure on the environment. Closer interactions with local culture instill a deeper sense of respect for socio-cultural authenticity of host communities and ensure long-term economic benefits for them.

[More follows.]

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Project activities will cover three different regions: Severoiztochen in Bulgaria, Mykolaiv in Ukraine, and Eastern Georgia. Despite having unique culture, a variety of historical monuments, vibrant traditions and rich natural assets, all three regions lack proper utilization of these resources. Heritage-based creative tourism offers and cultural products will unlock the cultural diversity of pilot destinations and bring them economic benefits. Combining the creative tourism destinations in thematic routes will strengthen their marketing opportunities and develop sustainable cross-border business links.

The following activities will be implemented during the project:

- Studies;
- Capacity building activities;
- Creation of new tourism and cultural products and cross-border routes;
- Joint marketing and awareness activities.

Additionally, a small scale investment for the development of an ethnographic corner at the Niko Piroshmanashvili State Museum in Mirzaani as a creative tourism destination, will establish a replicable example of a good practice, which combines heritage and tourism services. The project will be done in partnership with National Agency for Cultural Preservation of Georgia.

Through building capacity of local tourism and cultural actors in entrepreneurial skills, creative tourism, and development of cultural products for tourism, the project contributes to the strengthening of SMEs, stimulation of new startups and introduction of new approaches. As a result of the project, capacities of local tourism and cultural actors will be developed in a way that enables their participation in successful cross-border business cooperation; innovative cross-border creative tourism offers and cultural products will be developed on local heritage assets; and platforms for joint promotion of creative tourism will be created to ensure the longevity of the project's outputs.

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