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***Press release*** *(www.biuroprasowe.pl)*

**Good practices of the Lodzkie Region (Poland) published in the Interreg Europe Good Practices Database under the project "Financing impact on regional development of cultural heritage valorisation - FINCH"**

Two good practices of the Lodzkie Region under the project "Regional development through financing valorisation of cultural heritage - FINCH" have been published in the Interreg Europe Good Practices Database. This project involves partners from 6 European countries who are looking together for the best ways to finance cultural resources. The implementation of these activities is to restore, protect and improve the management of cultural heritage in partner regions.

The first good practice concerns the cultural park "Town of weavers" located in the city of Zgierz. This practice is related to the cooperation of the public sector and NGOs in the field of revitalization of the historic district of the city. The "Town of weavers" is the first cultural park in Poland. It was founded in 2003 by the city authorities to protect the unique urban layout of the city from the 1820s. At the beginning of the 19th century the textile industry developed in Zgierz. When the city lost its industrial significance, the part of the city that was most closely related to the textile industry, declined and has been inhabited by the poorest social groups since that time. To preserve the cultural heritage, based mainly on wooden architecture, the authorities of the city raised funds from the EOG financial mechanism and began the project "Revitalization and development of the historical wooden architecture complex of the city of Zgierz". This process took place through the revitalization of 4 buildings. After this stage, NGOs selected through a public tender, introduced various services in renovated buildings (i.e. a hostel with a conference room, a small arts and culture center, a wood conservation center, gastronomic services and cafe). Cooperation with non-governmental organizations had a positive impact on the maintenance of buildings, made this place more attractive for visitors and gave jobs to people with disabilities. Thanks to the actions taken, a number of historic wooden buildings, which lost their original purpose, were transformed into a space with new functions. This contributed to the revival of the district and cultural life in the previously neglected area. The "Town of weavers" is a good example of reusing historic buildings and redefining them in the context of the urban environment. In addition, these activities contributed to the strengthening of historical identity and integration of the local community. Currently, this cultural park is visited by 10,000 people annually. More information on this practice can be found on the Interreg Europe website:

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3361/public-sector-and-ngo-s-cooperating-for-valorisation-of-the-cultural-park-town-of-weavers/>

The second good practice is related to the European Institute located in the city of Lodz which is an example of the cultural heritage preserved thanks to EU funds and currently being valorized through commercial activities. The European Institute was established in 1993 as a public foundation. Originally, it specialized in issues of European integration and was the first institution dealing with EU affairs in Eastern Europe. The Institute was the scene of numerous international events with the participation of key representatives of public administration and scientists. In 2010 the Institute hosted José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission. The Institute is currently part of the Natolin Foundation and may undertake some commercial activities. The facility itself consists of two historic buildings from the beginning of the 20th century. The main building is a villa built in 1910 for Robert Schweikert, the local factory owner. Currently there are conference rooms and offices. The initial modernization of the facility was financed from EU funds. However, these funds were insufficient to maintain the facility in the future. To find additional financing, the Institute decided to rent space for offices and filmmakers as well as organize trainings and conferences. Every year, the building is used by students of the Lodz Film School for film etudes. Thanks to the actions taken, the collected funds allow for the maintenance of buildings and employees and surpluses are invested in development and renovation. Staff costs have been optimized by incorporating the Institute into the Natolin Foundation. The European Institute, thanks to cooperation with the Lodz Film School, supports the cultural heritage and artistic creation of the oldest film school in Poland. This practice is a positive example of valorisation of cultural heritage and obtaining funds for its protection through commercial activities. It should be noted that the successful implementation of such activities depends largely on efficient management as well as employees who are able to use the potential of the facility. More information on this practice can be found on the Interreg Europe website:

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/good-practices/item/3501/european-institute-in-lodz-cultural-heritage-valorization-european-values-promotion-fostering-art/>