



**BRESE**  
Interreg Europe

# **BORDER REGIONS IN EUROPE FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

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01.

# INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PROJECT.

## BRESE PROJECT INFO

**BRESE IS THE ACRONYM FOR “BORDER REGIONS IN EUROPE FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP” AND IT’S A PROJECT CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION’S REGIONAL POLICY PROGRAMME INTERREG EUROPE.**

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### **WHAT IS THE BRESE PROJECT?**

The BRESE project aims to deconstruct barriers, raise awareness and improve business support schemes for Social Enterprises. Partners in the consortium of the project, in which the Euregio Rhine-Waal (Germany) has taken over the role of the lead partner, are HAMAG-BICRO (Croatia), the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia (Latvia), the Slovak Business Agency (Slovakia), the Regional Development Agency Rzeszow (Poland) and the University of Latvia as associated partner.

### **WHAT IS A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?**

Social enterprises combine entrepreneurial activities with achieving wider social, environmental or community objectives. They provide goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative way and use their profits primarily to achieve societal goals. Social enterprises represent a new type of business and are managed in an open, responsible and democratic manner. They have proven their ability to contribute to inclusive growth and provide sustainable solutions to nowadays’ social and environmental challenges. Already today, social enterprises account for 10% of the European economy and one in four newly created enterprises in the European Union is a social enterprise.

### **WHY ARE SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IMPORTANT?**

Currently, we are facing a number of societal challenges, such as climate change, the

pollution of our oceans, demographic change and, very acutely, the COVID-pandemic. However, instead of tackling these challenges sustainably at their core cause, we often only tackle their symptoms. Facing these challenges, we need to rethink our approaches in order to bring about long-term change and make a sustainable positive impact.

Social Entrepreneurs facilitate exactly this sustainable change and tackle nowadays` challenges with innovative and future-oriented solutions to provide sustainable, long-term solutions for a better world. Especially for European (border) regions, social enterprises bear an enormous potential.

### **WHY DO WE NEED TO SUPPORT THEM?**

Despite this great potential of social enterprises, it is still difficult for them to find suitable funding, support and investments schemes, especially in their early phases of business. Since they measure their profits not only by a financial aspect but also by an impact aspect, it is often difficult for them to compete with “traditional” enterprises when it comes to investments and loans. Moreover, the landscape of available business support facilities, tailored legal forms for social enterprises and their political recognition is very fragmented among European countries.

### **HOW CAN THE BRESE PROJECT HELP?**

Making use of existing differences in the regions, the project partners will engage in an interregional learning process, in which they compare existing framework conditions for social enterprises and exchange good practices. To do so, every semester the project partners organise interregional meetings in each partner region – or, due to the current situation in which physical meetings are not possible, online - and also invite local stakeholders from their home region. During these visits, the partners and stakeholders get first-hand insights into good practices on site and get to exchange experience with peers from other European regions. Based on the good practices and findings of the project, an action plan will be drawn up for each region, containing concrete recommendations for regional policy makers on how regional funding and support instruments can be made more effective to support social enterprises more adequately and sustainably. ■



02.

# OUR PROUD PARTNERS.

## EUREGIO RHINE-WAAL

**THE EUREGIO RHINE-WAAL IS A DUTCH-GERMAN PUBLIC BODY WITH AROUND 55 MEMBER ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING MUNICIPALITIES, REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS, AND CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER.**

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Its most important objective is to improve and intensify cross-border collaboration, both economically and socially. Aiming to exploit the strong potential for economic and social development in the region, the Euregio Rhine-Waal brings partners together from both sides of the border to launch joint initiatives and benefit from synergies. Being convinced that Dutch and German citizens can achieve more if they work together, the Euregio Rhine-Waal represents the interests of its members and the citizens of the Dutch-German border region with Dutch, German and EU institutions in all areas relevant to society, reaching from economy and industry, to infrastructure, education and culture. It also functions as a platform for various target groups within the region, supporting initiatives such as the Euregional Forum for cross-border health or the round table initiative for public order and security. The Euregio Rhine-Waal also hosts a Border Info Point (Grenzinfopunkt), an info center in which citizens who regularly cross the border for living, studying or working can receive free advice in the areas of taxation, social security and labour law.

Many cross-border initiatives are co-funded by the EU's regional policy programme "INTERREG Germany-Netherlands". Within this programme, numerous regional projects are implemented by the Euregio Rhine-Waal, which also hosts the Joint Secretariat of the INTERREG A Germany-Netherlands programme. Additionally, the Euregio Rhein-Waal has participated in a number of Interreg Europe projects, both as lead partner and project partner.

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**Euregio Rhine-Waal**  
INTERREG A Germany-Netherlands Programme  
[www.euregio.org](http://www.euregio.org)



# HAMAG-BICRO

HAMAG-BICRO IS THE CROATIAN AGENCY FOR SMES, INNOVATIONS AND INVESTMENTS. IT WAS FOUNDED AROUND 25 YEARS AGO TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMES), IMPROVE INNOVATION PROCESSES AND ENCOURAGE INVESTMENTS.

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It operates as an independent institution within the competence of the Croatian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. Since its establishment, HAMAG-BICRO has been consistently committed to growth and the development of SMEs and crafts in the Republic of Croatia by facilitating their access to finance and consultancy. The Agency's main objective is reflected in the strategic creation of a unique system providing support to entrepreneurs through all development stages of their business operation, starting from the development of an idea to its commercialization and placement on the market. HAMAG-BICRO also promotes the establishment and development of SMEs by providing financing by loans and guarantees, and facilitating investments. It also provides financial support to innovative and technology-oriented enterprises in Croatia by increasing the commercialization of knowledge, raising awareness of the value of innovations, supporting the transfer from the academic sector to the economy, promoting the establishment and development of technology infrastructure and fostering the development of the venture capital industry. In doing so, HAMAG-BICRO aims to stimulate Croatia's economic growth and strengthen competitiveness.

Supporting research and innovation activities, HAMAG-BICRO is also involved in number of cooperation projects on the European and international level.

HAMAG-BICRO  
Interreg IPA HR-BiH-ME Programme  
[www.hamagbicro.hr](http://www.hamagbicro.hr)



# MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF LATVIA

THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA, LOCATED IN RIGA, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING POLICY IN THREE AREAS – ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) IN LATVIA.

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In the area of environmental protection the Ministry aims to establish prerequisites and conditions for nature conservation and a clean environment, and to ensure the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources. In the area of regional development, the Ministry implements and evaluates regional policy at state level, provides methodological guidelines and supervision for territorial development planning processes, and ensures the development and supervision of local governments with the overall goal to achieve a well-balanced and sustainable development of the country. Finally, concerning information and communication technologies, the Ministry coordinates the establishment of e-Governance initiatives, as well as the implementation of modern and effective information and communication technologies in the public sector.

Read further on the next page. ➤

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia  
Interreg A Latvia-Lithuania Programme  
[www.varam.gov.lv](http://www.varam.gov.lv)



## CONTINUATION OF MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF LATVIA.

With regards to European Territorial Cooperation Programmes in Latvia, the Ministry is responsible for the implementation and administration of these programmes in Latvia. It hosts, among others, the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg V-A Latvia-Lithuania cross-border cooperation programme – a policy instrument aimed at contributing to sustainable and cohesive socio-economic development of the Programme regions by helping to make them more competitive and attractive for living, working and visiting.

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Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia  
Interreg A Latvia-Lithuania Programme  
[www.varam.gov.lv](http://www.varam.gov.lv)



PARTNERS

## SLOVAK BUSINESS AGENCY

THE SLOVAK BUSINESS AGENCY (SBA) IS THE OLDEST SPECIALIZED, KEY NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION FOR THE SUPPORT OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMES) IN SLOVAKIA, FOUNDED IN 1993 BY A COMMON INITIATIVE OF THE EU AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC.

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It is the unique platform of public and private sectors and has been supporting development and growth of Slovak SMEs for more than 25 years.

The SBA's **mission** is:

- To support SMEs at the national, regional and local level.
- To provide complex support for SMEs in compliance with the principles of the Small Business Act.
- To improve the competitiveness of SMEs within the EU single market and non- EU markets.

The SBA is currently employing more than 250 staff members located in eight geographic regions across Slovakia and has been implementing **two key national projects aimed at the support of SMEs and non-entrepreneurs**: the National Business Centre - Bratislava region (for the capital city region) and the National Business Centre in other regions (for seven self-governing regions outside Bratislava).

These **centres serve as one-stop-shops for SMEs**, providing comprehensive systematic support and expert consultancy in form of group activities like seminars, workshops, discussion forums, etc., as well as short- and long-term individual mentoring support for SMEs and non-entrepreneurs. In doing so, the SBA maintains a pool of experts,

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Slovak Business Agency  
Operational Programme "Human Resources"  
[www.sbagency.sk](http://www.sbagency.sk)



SLOVAK | BUSINESS | AGENCY

PARTNERS

mentors, as well as contacts and agreements with various local and international stakeholders dealing with business support issues. The centres also provide SMEs with opportunities to visit international fairs.

In the Bratislava centre, the SBA runs a business incubator for start-ups, as well as a **creative point** - providing access to new technologies – enhancing creativity, knowledge sharing, proven procedures and further resources for creative ideas to a wide target group and inspiring entrepreneurs. The SBA is also a partner within the national project **Internationalization of SMEs**, which is aimed at supporting SMEs in entering international markets.

In addition, the SBA also carries out **unique research activities related to the SME support and the business environment**. As a part of these analytical and research activities, the SBA **operates the Better Regulations Centre**, whose mission is the reduction of regulatory burdens for businesses and the promotion of a favourable business environment in Slovakia.

Besides these activities, the SBA also offers **financial services**, and thanks to the ongoing SBA microloans programme and its venture capital, small businesses can be provided access to finance with accessible microloans of up to 50.000 EUR under more favourable conditions than in commercial banks.

Last but not least, the SBA is also very active in **international projects** within the framework of various EU programmes such as Interreg (Central Europe, Danube-Transnational-Programme, Interreg Europe, Interreg A Slovakia-Austria and Slovakia-Hungary), Horizon2020, Erasmus+ and COSME in the fields of SME support, start-up support, innovation support, clusters, circular economy, social entrepreneurship, servitization and others. As a member of the **European Enterprise Network**, an international network across the EU and beyond, the SBA also helps small businesses to make the most of the European marketplace.

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Slovak Business Agency  
Operational Programme “Human Resources”  
www.sbagency.sk



## RZESZOW REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

**RZESZOW REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (RRDA) IS A PUBLIC, NON-PROFIT INSTITUTION ESTABLISHED IN 1993 BY THE SELFGOVERNMENT OF PODKARPACIE REGION.**

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It is one of the key regional institutions supporting social, economic and technology growth in the Podkarpackie Region in Poland, and significantly contributes to the national and international development in these areas through the implementation of a number initiatives and projects. The objective of the RRDA is to support the economic development of the region, to create and stimulate the region`s economic potential, and to help promote Podkarpackie as a modern and innovative region. Besides its business development activities, the RRDA also manages Podkarpackie Science and Technology Park AEROPOLIS, the Academic Pre-Incubator for students, graduates and PhD students, as well as the Business Incubator for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

RRDA has significant experience in implementing and managing regional, national, cross-border and international projects. Since 2007, RRDA has been actively involved in the establishment of new social enterprises and supporting the existing ones in the Podkarpackie Region. Since 2015, RRDA is the official Regional Support institution for Social Economy in Podkarpackie Region, accredited by the Polish AKSES accreditation – an official accreditation and operating standards system for social economy support institutions in Poland.

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Rzeszow Regional Development Agency  
Operational Programme of Podkarpackie Voivodeship  
www.rarr.rzeszow.pl



# UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA

THE UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA (LU) IS A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY AND A MAJOR ACADEMIC CENTRE IN LATVIA. IT INCLUDES 13 FACULTIES AND MORE THAN 20 RESEARCH INSTITUTES, AND CENTRES, SUCH AS, AMONG OTHERS, THE MICROSOFT INNOVATION CENTRE, A BUSINESS INCUBATOR AND THE CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN AND TRANSITION STUDIES (LU CETS), WHICH SUPPORTS THE BRESE PROJECT AS THE ADVISORY PARTNER.

The LU has, so far, participated in more than 400 projects funded by the European Union in the fields of cross-border research cooperation, interregional cooperation, defence and security cooperation, innovation systems, climate change, migration studies, infrastructure development, employment, social policy and labour market, gender equality, international relations and trade, SME promotion, and others. The LU maintains a substantial exchange of knowledge and several dissemination networks at regional, national and international levels.

The LU CETS is a structural subdivision of the LU. It aims to promote research activities in the fields of European integration, transnational and interregional cooperation of the EU, international relations with non-EU countries and other areas relevant to Latvia and the EU. Moreover, the CETS facilitates interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary activities, and supports both academic and applied research through the development of research networks with relevant stakeholders, public institutions, ministries, and international organizations. In order to achieve its goals, the CETS is actively involved in international project and research work.

University of Latvia  
CETS, Advisory Partner  
[www.lu.lv/cets](http://www.lu.lv/cets)



HAMAG-BICRO

Euregio Rhine-Waal

Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia

Slovak Business Agency

University of Latvia

Rzeszow Regional Development Agency

03.

# GETTING INVOLVED.

## GETTING INVOLVED!

WITH THE BRESE PROJECT, WE NOT ONLY AIM TO DECONSTRUCT BARRIERS, RAISE AWARENESS AND IMPROVE BUSINESS SUPPORT SCHEMES FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES, BUT WE ALSO WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE FUTURE OF REGIONAL POLICY.

IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL, WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

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As a local stakeholder of the BRESE project in your respective region, you get the opportunity to get involved in the project, its activities and progress. Once a semester, all local stakeholders gather in their respective region to discuss the BRESE project's lessons learnt, potential good practices for the region and next steps. Moreover, local stakeholders can also get the opportunity to participate in the project's interregional meetings and site visits taking place once per semester in one of the BRESE partner regions – or, due to the current situation in which physical meetings are not possible, online. During these visits, the local stakeholders can get first-hand impressions on good practices, innovative approaches and existing policy instruments in the other European regions and exchange ideas and experiences with peers.

Thus, the local stakeholders from each region play a key role in shaping the BRESE project and its success!

Are you interested in participating in the BRESE project's activities as a local stakeholder? Do you want to work with us on improving regional policy for Social Enterprises? Do you have any ideas and recommendations on how to better support Social Enterprises in the future? Please let us know! ▶

Do not hesitate to contact the BRESE project partner in your region! Make sure to check out our BRESE website, Facebook and Twitter to get the latest news on project activities and results.

We are looking forward to your input that helps us fully harvest the BRESE project's potential! ■

### REGIONAL ANALYSES

Every BRESE project partner conducted an analysis of the landscape of social enterprises in their region. These analyses form the quantitative basis for our project and are unique in the sense that analyses on this topic on a cross-border or regional level do not really exist yet. All the analyses are published on our project website. Make sure to check them out for unique insights in cross-border and regional data on social entrepreneurship.

► [WWW.INTERREGEUROPE.EU/BRESE/LIBRARY](http://WWW.INTERREGEUROPE.EU/BRESE/LIBRARY)



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