

Universities are deepening cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region



Since the beginning of December 2022, the Institute of Political Science at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn (Poland) has inaugurated the project “Strengthening the identity of the Baltic Sea Region borderlands. Building cooperation for the youth”.

The project is implemented in partnership with the University of Klaipeda (Lithuania), the University of Latvia in Riga (Latvia) and the University of Tartu (Estonia). The main objective of the project is to strengthen the sense of belonging to the Baltic Sea Region and to build a regional identity among young people living in countries bordering the Baltic Sea. Today, information largely influences human identity because it models the way we think, decide and act. Through this project we want to help prepare young people for threats such as fake news, disinformation, cyber threats and propaganda. These challenges are even more relevant when we realize their importance in the face of the war in Ukraine. Another problem we want to solve is to increase civic engagement among young people and to identify the barriers that prevent them from getting involved, especially at a cross-border level. In the world of globalisation, virtual reality, unification, mass culture and consumerism, the processes of building regional communities based on their own traditions, shaping regional identity and a sense of belonging are especially important.

Target groups and beneficiaries of the project are the following: students and pupils from the border regions from 4 countries; Academic teachers and teachers from the border regions from 4 countries; Local government employees and NGO representatives who work with young people. Building regional identity and awareness in the Baltic Sea Region dimension is to be achieved through:

- The participation of young people in the initiatives implemented as part of the project;

- Transfer of content related to the multifaceted issues of building regional identity;
- Exchange of knowledge about the specificities of the Baltic Sea Region;
- Exchange of experiences and good practices in the field of cultivating local traditions, borderland heritage and etc;
- Strengthening cooperation between young people and local actors, authorities and institutions of higher education in nurturing the specificity of the region and borderland;
- Improving the civic skills of young people in order to build civil society.

The implementation of the project is to serve the development of international youth cooperation as a method of supporting regional identity, promoting acceptance and tolerance in the educational and academic environment, promoting democratic values among young people. The implementation of the project is to achieve lasting benefits in the form of their greater openness to others, the development of social contacts, including intercultural, improving social relations in the borderlands, increasing the motivation of students and pupils to learn and enriching the educational objectives.

One of the most important events of the project was summer school “Baltic Camp” which took place in September 2023 in Olsztyn. Participants in the summer school included students from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

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