

Bulgaria

2019

- The City of Nis has accepted the participation in the project “United Europe – Security, Solidarity and Stability for All”, implemented by the Municipality of Sliven, Bulgaria and funded by the European Union within the program Europe for Citizens. The aim of the United Europe-Security, Solidarity and Stability for All Project is the cooperation of local authorities in Sliven (Bulgaria) with the cities of Nis (Serbia) and Bydgoszcz (Poland) in European contexts and promotion of solidarity in times of crisis, their mutual cooperation in economy, education, health, social activities, tourism and the arts, as well as intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. The project leader is Sliven Municipality, Bulgaria, and the partners in the project are the City of Nis, Serbia and the City of Bydgoszcz (Poland). The time of realization of the proposed project is in the period from 08/09/2019 until 29/09/2019. The total value of the project is EUR 24 990 and the project is fully funded by EU funds. Activities within the project are divided into the following activities: 1) An international meeting to sign the Letter of Intent; 2) Cultural Forum Europe – Our Common European Home; 3) Economic Forum “The future of Europe – Employment, Growth and Investment – We Can Do More Together” 4) Youth forum on “United Europe – Security, Solidarity and Stability”.
- After eight months of construction the Visitor Center near Cerje Cave is open to all visitors. Here, adrenaline lovers, cavemen, and tourists alike will be able to get all the information they need, as well as the equipment they need to get into the cave. The Visitor Center is a joint project of the Tourism

Organization of Nis, the City of Sofia and the Association of Citizenens "Love and Light" from Montana, Bulgaria, and it was implemented within the Interrerg IPA Program of Cross-border Cooperation between Serbia and Bulgaria.

- Organized by the Consul General of the Republic of Bulgaria in Nis, prof. Edwin Sugarev, the roundtable entitled "The European Perspective of Serbia and the Bulgarian Experience in European Integration" was held in the great hall of the University of Nis Seat. The participants were greeted by Radko Vljakov, Ambassador of Republic of Bulgaria in the Republic of Serbia, Goran Milosavljevic, Assistant Mayor of the City of Nis, Yugoslav Milacic, Advisor to the Minister for European Integration in the Ministry of European Integration of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and Snezana Andric, from EU Info Corner in Nis. The first panel on the topic of Bulgarian experience in Eurointegration and the Serbian view on the perspective of Eurointegration was opened by Tanja Mihailova, Director of the Diplomatic Institute at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria and Rector of the University of Nis Dragan Antic. In the second panel, Prof. Edwin Sugarev, Consul General of Republic of Bulgaria spoke on the topic EU membership – chances and challenges.
- Nis City Mayor Darko Bulatovic spoke with Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister Mariana Nikolov at Nis City Hall. The theme of the meeting was how to create conditions for improvement, first of all, of economic cooperation, but also of opportunities for establishing closer ties in science, education and culture. Nis brewery and Trace company, owned by Bulgarian companies and successfully operating for many years in nis, were highlighted as examples of such cooperation, as well as numerous Nis companies that have developed businesses in the

neighboring country.

2018

- An International Conference “EU Enlargement from Sofia to London and Beyond: Results and Perspectives for the Western Balkan Countries” was held in the Hall of the University of Nis, organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria in Belgrade. The conference was opened by Nis City Mayor Darko Bulatovic and Bulgarian Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia Radko Vljakov. Among the participants of the event were representatives of Sofia and Nis University, representatives of the Center for European Policies, Association for Research and Development Eurobalkan and the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung Foundation. The conference participants spoke about Bulgaria’s EU Council Presidency priorities in 2018 and the achieved results, as well as the European Commission’s strategy and EU vision for the Western Balkans.

2017

- The Bulgarian delegation led by Dmitri Glavchev, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Bulgaria, visited Nis on the occasion of which the meeting with Nis City Mayor was held. The two officials discussed the possibilities for improving cooperation, particularly emphasizing the accelerated growth in tourism, with the steady increase in the number of Bulgarian tourists in Nis.

2016

- Nis City Mayor Zoran Perisic accepted the invitation of Mayor of Sofia Jordanka Fandakova, whom he visited together with the members of Nis City Council Milan Pesic and Mihajlo Zdravkovic. The meeting between the Mayor of Sofia and the Mayor of Nis was dedicated to the

possibilities of improving economic relations between Nis and Sofia. During the official visit to the Bulgarian capital there were also discussions on tourism development, financing of cross-border projects, infrastructure development.

2014

- The Bulgarian delegation led by the Deputy Mayor of Sofia visited the City of Nis to discuss opportunities for co-operation in the fields of security and health and social care. The City of Nis and neighboring Sofia both have center for responding in emergency situations and in 2010 the two cities signed the Protocol on Cooperation in Emergency Situations.

2013

- Within the IPA Cross-border Cooperation Program Serbia-Bulgaria 2007-2013 the City of Nis with the Dr Stamen Grigorov Foundation from Bulgaria, the Municipality of Tran and the Association of Cheese Cluster SOUTH implements the project Strengthening the Capacity of Milk and Dairy Producers. The aim of the program is to strengthen the territorial convergence of the Bulgarian-Serbian border region, increase its competitiveness and stable development through economic, social and environmental cooperation. The project is aimed at farmers and dairies in rural unpolluted regions on both sides of the border where climate and agro-eco-friendly factors are a good predisposition for the breeding of mountain cattle. The total value of the project is 184.352,63 E The value of the project for Serbia is 75.903,14 Euros, of which the EU donation is 64.517,67 Euros, and the participation of the City of Nis and the Association Cheese Cluster South is 11.385,47 Euros.
- The delegation of the Bulgarian town of Lovech, led by the Mayor of this municipality, visited the City of Nis.

Since 2007, this city has been the leader in Bulgaria in the use of European operational programs for regional development. The guests from Bulgaria presented part of their tourist offer related to gastronomy and production of cheeses and spirits.

- Nis City Mayor Zoran Perisic, visited City of Sofia where he met with the Mayor of the Bulgarian capital, Ms. Jordanka Fondakova. During the meeting of the two mayors it was pointed out that Nis and Sofia could cooperate in the field of culture, tourism and education and implement joint initiatives to promote the cultural heritage of both cities. Also, the Sofia-Nis Tourism Destination Management project has been launched under the Bulgaria-Serbia IPA Cross-border Cooperation Program. The project has a total value of € 150,000 and involves the development of a common tourist route, the setting up of information desks in the cities and the creation of a common portal and mobile phone application. In this way tourists will be able to quickly and easily plan their holidays, select the sites to see and events they will be able to visit.

2012

- Nis City Mayor and his associates held the meeting at Nis City Hall with Sofia Deputy Mayor for Culture Todor Chobanov and the representatives of the Bulgarian capital in charge of investment, construction and tourism. The cities of Nis and Sofia, which renewed their close cooperation a year and a half ago, will jointly apply for EU funds with two projects in the cross-border cooperation program.

2011

- The representatives of the City of Nis participated as part of the state-economic delegation at the Serbia-Bulgaria Business Forum in Sofia. This was an

opportunity for the businessmen of Bulgaria and Serbia to get acquainted with the economic and investment climate in Bulgaria as well as the climate for investing in Serbia.

2010

- Nis City Mayor Milos Simonovic and Sofia Deputy Mayor Ivan Georgiev Sotirov signed the Protocol on Cooperation in the field of disaster response and crisis management between the City of Nis and the City of Sofia expert services. It is the first protocol of its kind in Serbia, and it is the result of the systematic work of the city management for achieving the planned goals in the field of emergency response. Cooperation between Nis and Sofia will be based on exchange of information and experience in the field of firefighting and emergency management, civil protection and crisis management, mutual visits of expert delegations, organization of professional training and expert practice and practical exercises.
- Mayors of Nis, Sofia and Skopje, Milos Simonovic, Jordanka Fondakova and Koce Trajanovski met in the Bulgarian capital to intensify cross-border cooperation and activities within the Euroregion project. The meeting in the Bulgarian capital was an opportunity to define once again the issues of joint regional development, needs and interests in the Nis-Sofia-Skopje triangle. The intensifying of the economic cross-border activities of the regions around Nis, Sofia and Skopje is a priority and a process of vital interest for the development and functioning of the three regions, as it was agreed by the leaders of the cities in Nis-Sofia-Skopje triangle. The three regions naturally lean on each other and will provide an opportunity for a large number of companies from the border regions of all three countries to present their activities, share valuable

experiences in their fields of expertise, and find new ways to intensify cooperation within the enlarged market.

2009

- The City of Niš hosted the meeting of the Supervisory Board of the Serbia-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Program regarding the definition of the documentation necessary for the submission of joint projects to be financed by the European Union Pre-accession Funds (IPA). The Bulgaria-Serbia Cross-Border Cooperation Program has been approved by the European Commission and is being implemented on the territory covered by Bor, Zajecar, Pcinja, Pirot and Nisava districts in Serbia and Vidin, Montana, Pernik, Kyustendil and Sofia districts in Bulgaria. The aim of the program is to promote sustainable economic and social development of border regions through bilateral, regional and transnational cooperation. Appropriations for both countries from the IPA Fund are € 11,551,284. This amount covers 85% of the total value of the program and the remaining 15% is financed from municipalities' own resources. The Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Serbia is the National Coordinator for the implementation of the Cross-border, Regional and Transnational Cooperation Program in which Serbia is an equal partner. The partner from Bulgaria is the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works from Bulgaria. The City of Nis provided the office for administration and implementation of the program.
- Nis City Mayor participated in the national conference called Transparency and Publicity in the Work of Regional and Municipal Authorities held in Sofia, organized by the Bulgarian Foundation for Transparent Regulations.

- Nis City Mayor and the members of the City Council met with the delegation from Sofia led by the Deputy Mayor of Sofia. Delegations of the two cities agreed that joint work on improving regional cooperation between Nis, Sofia and Skopje is of utmost importance for faster economic development. The topic of the meeting was the protection of cultural and historical heritage in the process of development of the modern city. The Bulgarian delegation offered the City of Nis the opportunity to participate in a project aimed at drafting a single act for all partner countries to work on the project, in accordance with local laws and regulations, to preserve cultural and historical heritage. Potential partners are the City of Sofia, Graz, Paris and Barcelona. The project would be funded by European Union funds.

2003

- The idea of cross-border cooperation in the Nis-Sofia-Skopje triangle, which started in Nis in 2001, received its internationally recognized form at the meeting of the mayors of these cities in Sofia by signing the Statute of the Euro-Balkan International Association, which brings together 66 cities and municipalities.

2002

- As part of the project to intensify cross-border cooperation in Sofia-Skopje-Nis triangle the Economic Forum was held in Sofia in February co-organized by the cities of Sofia, Skopje and Nis, with the active support of EASTWEST INSTITUTE. The overall assessment of all participants is that this international gathering was of great importance for the further development of economic cooperation in the region, and resulted in the making of very significant decisions that will contribute to the removal of all obstacles that impede the smooth communication of people, goods and services in these

three countries and in the Nis -Sofia-Skopje

2001

- The City of Nis, that is, the Puppet Theater from Nis, hosted puppeteers of Europe as part of the International Festival of Puppet Theater for Adults which is otherwise held in the Bulgarian town of Stara Zagora. The organization of the festival in Nis is the result of the agreement between the Mayor of Stara Zagora and the Mayor of Nis that the Second International Puppet Festival, which was to be held in Stara Zagora, would be located in Nis.

2000

- In August 2000, the US Department of State approved a grant of \$ 168,000.00 for assistance in the fields of health, ecology, utilities and education under the Material Assistance to Serbia (SMAP – Serbian Material Assistance Program) project. The grant was implemented through partnerships with the cities of Sofia (Bulgaria), Columbus (Ohio) and Nis (Serbia) within the International Resource Cities program, with material support from USAID. The SMAP program was implemented in collaboration with ICMA (International City/County Management Association) and the Szeged Stability Chance Foundation.
- The guests of the City of Nis were the representatives of the Zelimir Zelev Foundation from Sofia. The visit was an integral part of the program to form the Balkan Political Club. This project has received the support of the United Nations, the German government, the European Union Commission in Sofia and it is expected that the topic of the next meeting of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe will be devoted precisely to the work of the Balkan Political Club.

1996

- The Twinning Protocol with the Municipality of Veliko Trnovo was signed.