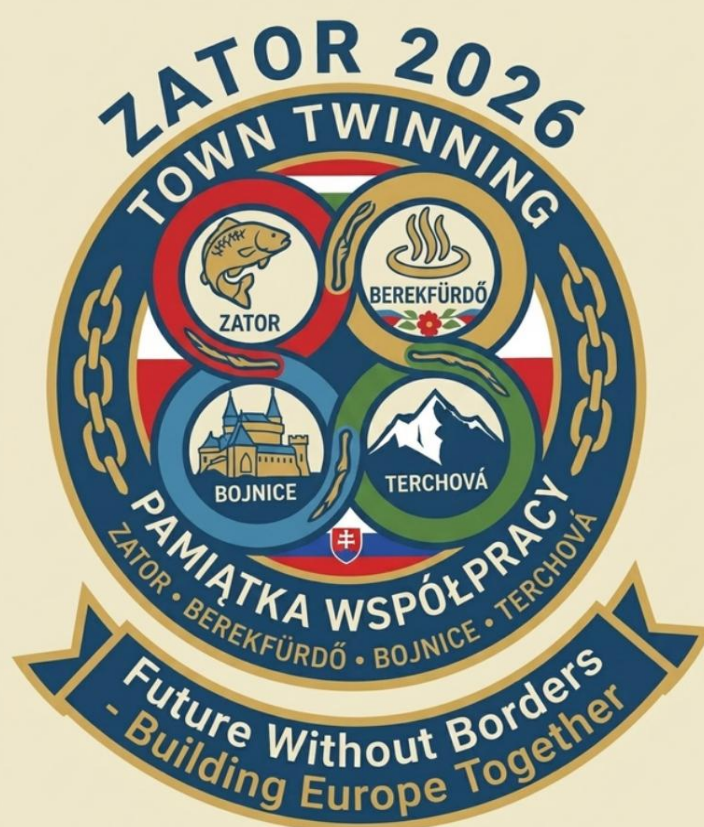


PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

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2 - 6 LIPCA 2026

BASIC PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Future Without Borders – Building Europe Together

Implementation Period: 2–6 July 2026

Location: Municipality of Zator, Poland

Programme: CERV – Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (Town Twinning)

Project Partners: Municipality of Zator (Poland), Town of Bojnice (Slovakia), Municipality of Terchová (Slovakia), Municipality of Berekfürdő (Hungary)

INTRODUCTION

From 2 to 6 July 2026, the Municipality of Zator hosted the international project “Future Without Borders – Building Europe Together” implemented under the European Union’s CERV Town Twinning Programme. The event brought together representatives of local governments, civil society organisations, cultural institutions, and residents from Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, who participated in educational, civic, cultural and integration activities over the course of five days.

The project was a continuation of the long-standing partnership cooperation between the Municipality of Zator, the Town of Bojnice, the Municipality of Terchová, and the Municipality of Berekfürdő. The event was particularly significant as it marked the 25th anniversary of the partnership between Zator and Berekfürdő, providing an opportunity to review past achievements and define new directions for future cooperation. The event also celebrated the 15th anniversary of cooperation with Terchová and anticipated the 20th anniversary of cooperation with Bojnice in 2027, which may serve as a foundation for future joint initiatives.

The aim of the project was to strengthen intercultural dialogue, promote active European citizenship, build lasting relationships among residents of partner municipalities, and encourage joint reflection on the challenges facing contemporary Europe. The programme addressed issues related to security, local governance, entrepreneurship, tourism development, digitalisation, historical memory, and the protection and promotion of local cultural heritage.

The project enabled participants not only to become more familiar with their partners and their experiences, but also created a platform for the exchange of knowledge and good practices that may be used by municipalities and civil society organisations in the future.

DAY 1 – ARRIVAL AND PROJECT OPENING

2 July 2026

The first day of the project was dedicated to welcoming foreign delegations and organising participants' stay. Representatives of partner municipalities and residents participating in the project arrived in Zator throughout the afternoon.

Following accommodation, participants attended an organisational meeting during which the detailed programme, project objectives, and key implementation assumptions were presented. The themes of the workshops, study visits, and conferences planned for the following days were also discussed.

In the evening, the official opening ceremony took place. Representatives of the partner municipalities emphasised the importance of long-term cooperation and the role of local authorities in building a European community based on mutual respect, trust, and dialogue.

They highlighted that municipal partnerships are not limited to official relations between local authorities but primarily serve to build connections among residents, civil society organisations, and institutions operating within partner communities.

The welcome dinner provided the first opportunity for participants to integrate. The gathering took place in a friendly atmosphere, encouraging the establishment of new contacts and the renewal of relationships formed during previous partnership meetings. From the very first day, it became evident that the project would not only provide a platform for discussing Europe but would also strengthen friendships and mutual trust among residents of the partner municipalities.



DAY 2 – SHARED TRADITION

3 July 2026

The second day focused on the exchange of experiences among partners regarding tourism development, regional promotion, local governance, entrepreneurship, and security. The day had a predominantly educational and workshop-based character.

Tourism and Local Brand Promotion Workshops – Part I

The first workshop session explored tourism as a tool for social and economic development. Participants analysed the experiences of individual municipalities in building recognisable place brands, creating attractive tourism offers, and utilising cultural and natural resources.

Representatives of the Municipality of Zator presented the process of developing the Carp Valley brand and activities undertaken to promote the region at national and international levels. Discussions focused on the importance of cooperation between local governments, entrepreneurs, and civil society organisations in ensuring effective tourism sector development.

An integral part of the workshop was a study visit to Energylandia, the largest amusement park in Poland and one of the largest in Europe. Participants learned about the history of the investment, the scale of the park's operations, and its impact on the economic development of the Municipality of Zator and the wider region.

During the visit, good practices regarding public-private sector cooperation were presented. Particular attention was paid to the influence of large tourism investments on local infrastructure development, job creation, and increasing regional visibility. The visit provided a practical example of successfully utilising tourism potential for local development.



Workshops on Local Governance and Entrepreneurship

The second part of the day focused on the functioning of local governments and support for entrepreneurship.

Participants compared solutions applied in Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary. Discussions addressed the significance of civic engagement, the role of citizens in decision-making processes, and methods of involving local communities in development activities.

Municipal representatives presented examples of effective cooperation with non-governmental organisations and local entrepreneurs. Discussions also covered challenges relating to the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, civic activation, and creating favourable conditions for business activity.

The workshops enabled participants to identify common challenges and discuss potential solutions that may be implemented by partner municipalities in the future.



Workshops on Security, Civil Protection and Civil Defence

The third workshop block focused on citizens' safety and the functioning of civil protection and civil defence systems.

In the context of the war in Ukraine, hybrid threats, energy crises, and climate change impacts, participants analysed the role of municipalities within contemporary security systems. Topics included crisis management, cooperation between emergency services and local administrations, and public education on emergency preparedness.

The workshops allowed participants to exchange experiences and learn about solutions implemented in partner countries, contributing to a deeper understanding of how to build resilient local communities.





DAY 3 – SHARED HISTORY, SHARED FUTURE

4 July 2026

The third day constituted the main substantive component of the project.

Study Visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum (Oświęcim)

In the morning, participants visited the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim.

The visit was an important element of historical education and reflection on Europe's shared history. Visiting the memorial site enabled participants to gain a deeper understanding of the tragedy of the Second World War and the importance of peace, democracy, and respect for human rights in the modern world.

The joint reflection on Europe's historical experiences reinforced the importance of dialogue, tolerance, and international cooperation as foundations for building a future free from conflict and division.





International Conference

“Future Without Borders – Building Europe Together”

One of the central events of the project was an international conference devoted to contemporary challenges facing Europe and the role of local governments in building strong and resilient communities.

The conference brought together representatives of partner municipalities, experts, civil society organisations, and local residents. It became a platform for exchanging experiences, dialogue, and presenting good practices.

The first part of the conference focused on the 25th anniversary of the partnership between the Municipality of Zator and Berekfürdő. The history of cooperation and the most significant joint initiatives were presented. Speakers emphasised that long-term partnerships are among the most important mechanisms for building European unity at the local level.

Subsequent discussions addressed European security, the consequences of the war in Ukraine, demographic changes, social inclusion, and the role of local governments in mitigating crises.

Considerable attention was also devoted to the digitalisation of public services, the use of new technologies and artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and the challenges posed by disinformation.

Participants unanimously stressed that international cooperation among local communities remains one of the most effective tools for building a united Europe based on democratic values, solidarity, and mutual understanding.













DAY 4 – EUROPEAN CARP FESTIVAL: TRADITION, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

5 July 2026

The fourth day focused on promoting cultural heritage, tourism development, and community integration during the European Carp Festival.

Tourism and Local Brand Promotion Workshops – Part II

Continuing the activities initiated on Friday, participants took part in workshops and study visits concerning modern methods of regional promotion and the use of tourist attractions as tools for local development.

Participants visited Zatorland Dinosaurs and Entertainment Park. During the visit, the history of the attraction and its impact on regional tourism development were presented.

The cooperation model between local government and the private sector was also showcased, together with activities aimed at building an attractive educational and family-oriented tourism offer. Participants were able to compare different management models for tourist attractions and assess their impact on regional economic development.

Like the previous visit to Energylandia, the study visit to Zatorland provided a practical example of good practices in tourism development, place branding, and effective utilisation of local potential.



Culinary Workshops and Promotion of Local Heritage

Culinary workshops dedicated to the traditions of partner regions were organised in Zator's Market Square.

The delegation from Bojnice prepared traditional potato pancakes, while representatives of Berekfürdő presented regional lecsó. Participants prepared dishes together, learned about local recipes, and discussed the significance of culinary traditions for regional identity.

The workshops demonstrated how local cuisine and regional products can support intercultural dialogue and strengthen bonds between citizens of different countries.









European Carp Festival and Artistic Performances

The highlight of the day was the European Carp Festival.

Regional products, traditions associated with Zator Carp farming, and the rich cultural heritage of the region were presented in Zator's Market Square. The event attracted local residents, tourists, and international guests.

Performances by artistic groups from partner municipalities generated significant interest. The programme included musical, vocal, and dance presentations showcasing the cultural richness of Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary.

In the evening, an integration bonfire provided an opportunity for participants to further strengthen relationships and summarise the activities carried out during the project.







DAY 5 – SHARED FUTURE

6 July 2026

The final day of the project was devoted to evaluating activities and discussing future directions for cooperation.

During the evaluation meeting, participants assessed the implementation of the project, its impact on partnership development, and the achievement of its objectives. The importance of direct meetings between citizens, experience-sharing, and joint work on issues relevant to Europe's future was strongly emphasised.

Representatives of the partner municipalities expressed their commitment to further cooperation in education, culture, tourism, civic engagement, and youth exchanges.

The project was evaluated as an important initiative strengthening international relations and promoting European values at the local level.



PROJECT RESULTS

The implementation of the project contributed to:

- strengthening cooperation between partner municipalities;
- increasing participants' knowledge of European history and contemporary European challenges;
- promoting active European citizenship;
- exchanging experiences in local governance, security, and entrepreneurship;
- presenting good practices in tourism development and regional promotion;
- promoting local cultural heritage and regional products;
- building long-term contacts and relationships among residents of partner municipalities;
- strengthening a sense of European community and solidarity.

CONCLUSION

The project “*Future Without Borders – Building Europe Together*” confirmed that international partnerships play a crucial role in fostering cooperation between local communities and strengthening the idea of European integration.

Through a combination of conferences, workshops, study visits, cultural activities, and integration events, participants were able not only to exchange experiences but also to jointly reflect on Europe's future and the role of local governments in shaping it.

The 25th anniversary of cooperation between the Municipality of Zator and Berekfürdő symbolised the durability of partnerships built on trust, friendship, and a shared commitment to cooperation. The project established a strong foundation for future international initiatives and reinforced the belief that Europe is built above all by engaged citizens and collaborating local communities.

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