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## Partnership cooperation of Lublin and Western Ukraine

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## **PARTNERSHIP COOPERATION OF LUBLIN AND WESTERN UKRAINE**

### **ABSTRACT**

Lublin, one of the largest eastern cities on the Vistula River, is in new geopolitical situation and is attempt to build its images as the “Gateway to the East.” Lublin’s cooperation with the East is based on official contacts of the city and the private involvement of business and individuals in the development of good neighborly relations. This article is a small attempt at summarizing the cooperation of the city with its largest partner in the East – Ukraine.

### **Key words**

regional cooperation, twin city, Lublin, Eastern Ukraine, economic and cultural cooperation

### **STRESZCZENIE**

Lublin, jedno z największych miast na Wschód od Wisły, w nowej geopolitycznej sytuacji stara się zbudować swoją koncepcję działania miasta, jako miasta Wschodniego. Działania te wychodzą z predysponowania Lublina do bycia w nowym położeniu geopolitycznym. Współpraca Lublina ze Wschodem Ukrainy opiera się za równo na kontaktach oficjalnych miasta, jak i wielu instytucji, firm a także osób prywatnych zaangażowanych w rozwój dobrosąsiedzkich stosunków. Ten artykuł jest próbą przybliżenia współpracy tego miasta z jego największym partnerem na Wschodzie – Ukrainą.

### **Słowa kluczowe**

współpraca regionalna, miasto partnerskie, Lublin, Wschodnia Ukraina, współpraca ekonomiczna i kulturalna

## **1. Introduction**

Lublin is now on its way to realize its role in the present relations of Poland and the EU. Poland’s admittance into the EU family has contributed considerably to the shift of emphasis to different regions of the country.

Lublin’s cooperation with the East is based on official contacts of the city and the private involvement of business and individuals in the development of good neighborly relations. Due to its geographical position and its potential, Lublin

is broadly developing cooperation with Ukraine. This cooperation permeates through all spheres of life, including economy, science, and culture. Lublin has signed partnership agreements with Lutsk, Lugansk, Starobielsk, and Lviv; it has also established contact with Sumy and Ivano-Frankivsk, among others. Lublin is also a member of the International Silk Road Club in Sudak.

The new geopolitical disposition has made and is making the regions and capital cities find their position. It concerns Lublin as well. The city must reorient itself with the new reality that it faces. It must get its bearings in order to determine the best plan of action, so that it is not merely a recipient of the new reality, but can also create it.<sup>1</sup>

The cooperation of Lublin and Ukraine started not so long ago. Since the mid-eighties there had been a considerable revival of cooperation. After the borders were opened, this cooperation intensified, lasting until the mid-1990s. This period is called "Lublin's first sailing to the East." Then, cooperation declined until 2000, when the "second sailing" began and cooperation resumed. Since Poland's accession to the European Union, interaction has intensified.<sup>2</sup>

During the last decade, Lublin has been developing close relations with Ukraine. Lublin has definitely headed towards the East. In the present geopolitical situation and since its membership in the EU, the actions of the city are rooted in Lublin's natural disposition to be the ambassador of the eastern affairs, especially towards affairs involving Ukraine. It is main objective for the city. Our location and many years of experience with Ukraine affect the city's actions. As the city's experiences set the objectives, we must meet the objectives if we want to play the role of ambassador in the Polish-Ukrainian relationship, especially in the sphere of culture; this was the position of former Mayor of Lublin and this is the position taken up by the present mayor.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The main spheres of cooperation

### Economy

Thanks to favorable conditions as a result of local authorities cooperating, Lublin-based firms are entering the Lviv market. Kom-Eko, Lift Serwis, and Wamaco all

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<sup>1</sup> *Łączy nas granica. Rozmowa z Włodzimierzem Wysockim, wiceprezydentem Lublina* [What Unites Us Is the Border. Interview with Włodzimierz Wysocki, Vice President of Lublin], <http://www.kew.org.pl/index.php?page=152> [access: 14.06.2012].

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem.

have Ukrainian subsidiaries. There are also exchanges of Lublin businessmen to Ukraine and of Ukrainian businessmen to Lublin. Lately, there have been about a dozen exchange visits to different regions of Ukraine, such as border territories of Volyn (Novovolynsk, Lutsk), Lviv, Lugansk, and Svirodlovska.

The Lublin International Market always hosts big Ukrainian companies and more and more attend the event. A project of trade cooperation with border regions of Ukraine and Belarus has been prepared and it presupposes the organization of exhibitions to partner cities across the eastern border.<sup>4</sup> There are also international conferences in Lublin devoted to eastern cooperation, including trade issues. In April 2000, the "Poland-East 2000" Forum took place with the assistance of Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek and the governors of counties. Its main topic was Polish cooperation with Central and East European countries. The Lublin Business Club has organized twice organized the International Economy Forum Poland-Ukraine. In the second edition, businessmen from Germany also took part. The International Cooperation Project "Poland-Italy-Ukraine" organized in Lublin by M.G. Poland and EM ente mostre di monza e brianza also a trilateral character.<sup>5</sup>

### **Education and Science**

Universities in Lublin are productively collaborating with their partners in Lviv, Lutsk, Lugansk, Kiev, Drohobych, Odessa, and others. More than 500 students – Ukrainian citizens – study in Lublin. During his visit to Lublin as Prime Minister of Ukraine (2000) Viktor Yushchenko, received the title of doctor honoris causa at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University. The city of Lublin has strongly supported the idea of creating a Polish-Ukrainian university. It is a project with great scientific potential, based in the fruitful cooperation between Polish and Ukrainian universities, and the advantageous location of our city. Among the achievements, there is European PhD College of Polish and Ukrainian Universities inaugurated on 6 October 2001 in the presence of the Presidents of Poland and Ukraine. Nowadays, the College hosts 170 PhD students, most of whom are from Ukraine and Poland.<sup>6</sup>

The idea of creating a Polish-Ukrainian university was presented by Bogdan Osadchuk. The European PhD College of Polish and Ukrainian Universities

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<sup>4</sup> *Współpraca miasta Lublin z Ukrainą* [Lublin City Cooperation with Ukraine], <http://www.um.lublin.pl/um/index.php?t=200&fid=5815> [access: 14.06.2012].

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> About Koledium, <http://www.centrum.umcs.pl/w> [access: 14.06.2012].

was supposed to unite the efforts of Lublin, Lviv, and Kiev in order to create Central East European University that would focus on social-political subjects of Central and Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, in March 2011, the existence of European PhD College of Polish and Ukrainian Universities came to an end, and the Center of Eastern Europe was established.

Furthermore, Lublin schools continue to develop partnerships with schools in the East. According to a resolution of the Lublin City Council, every city school must have a partner school across the eastern border. It is especially important to give our children and youth the chance to know each other, to appreciate cultural heritage, and places that are meaningful to our peoples.

## Culture

In general culture can be seen as a special kind of communicational infrastructure, which subjectively cuts down the objectively existing distances. Culture is connected with creating external relations, but it is also a kind of soft power. In terms of interhuman communication, it fosters an atmosphere of acceptance for people who differ from the majority in their origin, language, traditions, and interests. Cultural openness must accompany all actions connected with making external contacts by Lublin (city development strategy of 2012–2020). That is why it is creating its image based on cultural exchange with eastern neighbors.

Recently, it is possible to see and listen to Ukrainian authors at many cultural events organized in Lublin (“Poland-Ukraine-Europe” – program PTP Gardzienice, “Musical Meeting of Musical Families”, “International Folk Meeting”, “Theatre Confrontation”). The biggest event of this kind is the Polish-Ukrainian Culture Festival. During two editions of the festival, Lubliners could listen to outstanding Polish and Ukrainian musicians representing the pop, rock, folk (among others Mietek Szcześniak, Raz Dwa Trzy, Tercja Pikardyjska, Mandry, Płacz Jeremiji, Hajdamaky, Orkiestra św. Mikołaja, Lubelska Federacja Bardów<sup>7</sup>) music genres; see the works of the famous Lviv photographer Vasyl Pylypiuk; buy handmade folk craft works of Hutsulshchyzna; participate in the conferences “Stanisław Wincenz – Humanist of the XX century,” “Ukraine in the works of Lublin writers,” and many other cultural events.<sup>8</sup> One of the biggest cultural events is the “Ukraine in the center of Lublin” festival. During this

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<sup>7</sup> *Sprawozdanie z działalności Ref. ds. Współpracy Międzynarodowej* [Report on the Activities of the Department of International Cooperation], <http://www.um.lublin.pl/um/index.php?t=200&fid=5820> [access: 14.06.2012].

<sup>8</sup> *Współpraca miasta Lublin z Ukrainą...*, op.cit.

festival, the citizens of Lublin and the guests of the city can enjoy Ukrainian music and political discussion about Ukrainian problems with a famous guest from Ukraine. Also, this festival includes plenty workshops, plays, and performances.

### 3. Activity within the Bug Euroregion<sup>9</sup>

Thanks to good access to resources for assisting trans-border cooperation, the cooperation within the Bug Euroregion relies mainly on the realization of projects that received grants from supporting institutions.

The Agreement of the Bug Euroregion Youth runs the project “Building Europe Together,” co-financed by Program RITA and the Polish-American Foundation Freedom. The most important effects of these activities is the creation of the European Information Centre in Lutsk; 8–10 European School Clubs in Volyn region; the Lublin Media-Centre “Bug,” which offers a three-language version (Polish, Ukrainian, and English) of the internet site “Bug Euroregion Youth;” Bug Euroregion information newsletter “Euromix.” This initiative uses the experience of the Nowy Staw Foundation in the field of informing society about the process of integration and sharing this knowledge with the East.

Thanks to the Small Projects Fund grants within the program PHARE 2001 Easter Border, Lublin city administration initiated the project Route: “Euro Friendship Triangle Lublin – Lutsk – Brest.” This initiative aims at developing tourism in the Lublin region within the Bug Euroregion, encouraging youth travel and the growth of access to information on tourism in the border area, and also the promotion of Lublin and the Euroregion as an attractive holiday destination. The realization of the project helps to eliminate stereotypes and barriers caused by the lack of easily accessed information, which limits tourism in the region.

Two more projects are waiting to be accepted in the framework of PHARE<sup>10</sup>:

- “Closer and Closer – Euroregional Centre for Information and Cultural Cooperation in Lublin”. The purpose of this project is to create the Centre for Information and Cultural Cooperation in Lublin with the objective to support trans-border cultural cooperation between Lublin, Lutsk, and Brest;

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<sup>9</sup> *Europejskie projekty Lublina* [European Projects of Lublin], <http://www.um.lublin.pl/um/index.php?t=200&fid=5820> [access: 14.06.2012].

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem.

- “Centre for Trans-border Tourism in Lublin,” which aims to develop information about the travel opportunities in the border regions, starting with the tourist route Lublin – Lutsk – Brest (Phare 2001). The project is supposed to develop good neighborly cooperation between Poland and Ukraine thanks to high quality service for local and foreign customers.

Every partner city has its particularities and cooperation relies on more or less intensive contact.

Contacts with our eastern partners – Lutsk and Lviv – can be an example of the most intensive contacts. With its contact with 18 partner cities, Lublin sets the following tasks:

- Creating a positive image of Lublin by spreading as much information about our city as possible in the partner cities;
- Facilitating contact between Lublin cultural, scientific and commercial institutions with their counterparts abroad;
- Encouraging interest and exchange among different groups of Lublin inhabitants.

The projects Lublin realized with its partner cities.<sup>11</sup>

Lutsk (Ukraine)<sup>12</sup>:

- Constant help to subjects of commerce in making contacts in Lublin and Lutsk, Lublin region and Volyn region;
- Sports exchange of youth – participation of young football players from Lutsk in the Lublin Mayor Cup;
- Exchanges between city departments, politicians from Lublin and Lutsk, the municipal police departments, and economic missions to promote the sharing of best practices and experiences;
- Organizing open air art and carving exhibitions in Lutsk with participation of Lublin artists;
- Conferences of PE teachers (there were conferences on basketball, swimming, football, and volleyball conference is being prepared);
- Preparing and implementing joint projects within Bug Euroregion, for example the following projects: “Eurotriangle of Friendship Lublin –

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<sup>11</sup> *Miasta partnerskie i zaprzyjaźnione* [Twin and Befriended Towns], <http://www.um.lublin.pl/um/index.php?t=200&fid=5019> [access: 14.06.2012].

<sup>12</sup> *Miasta partnerskie i zaprzyjaźnione. Łuck* [Twin and Befriended Towns of Łuck], <http://um.lublin.eu/um/index.php?t=200&id=40900> [access: 14.06.2012].

Lutsk – Brest”, “Closer and Closer – Euroregional Centre for Information and Cultural Cooperation in Lublin “ and “ Centre for Trans-border Tourism in Lublin”;

- International Conference Architecture Without Frontiers in Lublin (organized annually) in which the chief architect of Lutsk participated;
- The Municipality of Lublin has created favorable conditions for promotion of partnerships between municipalities of Lublin region, other cities and regions of Poland, and the following regions of Ukraine: Ostrówiec Świętokrzyski – Biała Cerkiew, Kraśnik – Żółkiew, Opole Lubelskie – Sokal, Częstochowa – Kamieniec Podolski, Spiczyn Municipality – Rejon Lubeszowski; as well as between Drohobych University, Edinboro University in Pennsylvania, and Lancaster College in England.

Lugansk (Ukraine)<sup>13</sup>:

- The most important element in cooperation with the Lugansk is the Lublin Permanent Mission of Commerce, which was established in 1999, through which many Polish companies have established economic relations;
- Cooperation between social welfare institutions, including boarding schools for the deaf and hard-of-hearing children;
- Participation of music bands and representation nights of Lugansk at occasional projects in Lublin;
- Cooperation between the Eastern Ukrainian University and UMCS;
- The opening of a book café called “Lublin” in Lugansk.

Starobilsk (Ukraine)<sup>14</sup>:

- Assistance in establishing cooperation with companies;
- Sumy (Ukraine, letter of intent) – Cooperation between the University of Education in Sumy and UMCS;
- Exchange of experience of local self-governments;
- Ongoing support of businesses in making contacts for small and medium businesses in Sumy and Lublin regions;
- Participation at the MTL convention.

<sup>13</sup> *Miasta partnerskie i zaprzyjaźnione. Ługańsk* [Twin and Befriended Towns of Ługańsk], <http://www.um.lublin.pl/um/index.php?t=200&id=40911> [access: 14.06.2012].

<sup>14</sup> *Miasta partnerskie i zaprzyjaźnione. Starobielsk* [Twin and Befriended Towns of Starobielsk], <http://www.um.lublin.pl/um/index.php?t=200&id=40902> [access: 16.06.2012].



Ivano-Frankivsk (Ukraine)<sup>15</sup>:

- Ivano-Frankivsk governmental and NGO representatives have participated in projects prepared by the City of Lublin from EU funds. One significant project was fundraising for flood victims in Ivano-Frankivsk and Kaliningrad. 20 thousand zł, along with food and cleaning products, were collected.

Lviv (Ukraine)<sup>16</sup>

- Constant support to subjects involved with commerce in making contacts with small-and-medium enterprises from Lviv and Lublin and their surrounding regions;
- Youth exchange in sports;
- Regular kayaking competitions between the Lviv Water Sports Club and the Lublin Kayaking Club “Fenix” for the Consul General of Poland in Lviv and the Mayor of Lviv Cup;
- Participation of young Ukrainian kayak sportsmen in Lublin competitions;
- Sports exchange of city administration staff members;
- Conferences of PE teachers (there were conferences on basketball, swimming, football, and a volleyball conference is being prepared);
- Authorities, legal entities, and economic missions from Lublin participated in the Economic Forum of Lviv;
- School cooperation;
- Joint realization of the project “Integrated Tourist Marking of Lublin”;
- Joint preparation of a project on environmental protection by the Environmental Protection Department of Lublin Administration and Lviv Centre for Environmental Initiatives;

## Common development of the following projects are in progress:

- Cooperation between community organizations;
- International Conference “Architecture Without Borders” in Lublin will be attended by the chief architect of Lviv;

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<sup>15</sup> *Miasta partnerskie i zaprzyjaźnione. Iwano-Frankiwsk* [Twin and Befriended Towns of Iwano-Frankiwsk], <http://www.um.lublin.pl/um/index.php?t=200&id=49680> [access: 16.06.2012].

<sup>16</sup> *Miasta partnerskie i zaprzyjaźnione. Lviv* [Twin and Befriended Towns of Lviv], <http://www.um.lublin.pl/um/index.php?t=200&id=40911> [access: 14.06.2012].

- Co-participation of choirs in the Festival Choir of Lviv, which is organized by the Wieniawski Music Society;
- Lublin also initiated the restoration of the Adam Mickiewicz monument in Lviv.

Attention should be paid to the three major program implementations planned for 2013–2020. Thanks to such financial initiatives, many joint activities between Polish and Ukrainian partners have been and continuing to be implemented. Featured financing activities in the Polish-Ukrainian projects for 2010–2013: Some of the financing activities are the Polish Aid Programme (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland), the CBC Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007–2013 ([www.pl-by-ua.eu/ua](http://www.pl-by-ua.eu/ua)), and the Eastern Partnership.

In the framework of Polish Aid Programme,<sup>17</sup> Lublin implemented two projects with their Ukrainian partners. Needing to study long-term directions of the Polish-Ukrainian cooperation, the “Strategy for Cross-Border Cooperation: Lublin, Lutsk, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk” document was released. The document outlined the future common areas of cooperation, which allowed “Key Projects for cross-border cooperation,” a new project to be carried out.

#### **4. The main areas of support for Ukraine**

- Institutional development, the promotion of good governance, cooperation with local self-governments, and support for institutions involved in HIV/AIDS programs;
- Support measures aimed at European and Euro-Atlantic integration;
- Assistance in legal decisions concerning turnover of land, including inventory;
- Energy Saving Programs.

The European Neighborhood and Partnership (EISP) is an initiative of the European Commission, whose main goal is the development of cooperation between the European Union and partners who are not EU members by ensuring an integrated and balanced development. In Ukraine, this project covers the following regions: Volyn, Lviv, Transcarpathian, Rivne, Ternopil, and Ivano-Frankivsk.

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<sup>17</sup> *Polska Pomoc* [Polish Help], <http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Jak,pomagamy,2.html> [access: 22.06.2012].

Within the proposed joint cooperation prospects of Lublin with Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Lutsk, Rivne and Ternopil is initiative PWTPL-BY-UA 2007–2013. Prospects for cooperation between Lublin and Ukrainian cities in implementing development projects in view of the scope, funding opportunities and cross-border projects, will be the most promising in the coming years. The objectives of the program, which provide support for cross-border development processes consist of three priorities<sup>18</sup>:

*Priority 1. Increasing competitiveness of the border area;*

- Action 1.1. Improving conditions for business development.
- Action 1.2. The development of tourism.
- Action 1.3. Improving the accessibility of the region.

*Priority 2. Improving the quality of life*

- Action 2.1. Protection of environment in the border areas.
- Action 2.2. Secure and efficient borders.

*Priority 3. Institutional cooperation and support for local community initiatives*

- Action 3.1. Development of regional and local cross-border cooperation.
- Action 3.2. Local community initiatives.

## **5. Eastern Partnership (EP)**

The Eastern Partnership envisages strengthening of cooperation with Belarus, Ukraine, Moldavia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. Deepening the relations between these countries and the EU depends primarily on their progress in strengthening democratic values and implementing the principles of market economy. Poland and Sweden, as the initiators of the program, inaugurated the project at an informal EU summit in Prague. In May 2008, these countries offered to deepen relations with their eastern neighbors involved the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), although many other members of EU influenced the format of the project. All members of the Visegrad Group systematically

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<sup>18</sup> *Program Współpracy Transgranicznej Polska-Białoruś-Ukraina 2007–2013* [Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2007–2013], <http://www.pl-by-ua.eu/pl> [access: 22.06.2012].

emphasized the need for an intensified relationship with their eastern neighbors. The same position was taken by Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.<sup>19</sup>

*The main objectives of the Eastern Partnership are:*

- Facilitating the creation of political community; establishing deep and comprehensive free trade partner countries of the EU; and the gradual liberalization of visa regime, leading to the establishment of a visa-free regime;
- Developing a framework for multilateral cooperation with partner countries in the following fields: democracy, good governance and stability, economic integration and convergence with EU policies, energy security, and in the area of person-to-person contacts).<sup>20</sup>

The extensive experience Lublin has in the pursuit of EU funds and a number of model solutions for field support for 2007–2013 set by the European Union may be one of the reasons for the transfer of “good practices” to its Ukrainian partners. The PWTPL-BY-UA 2007–2013 program is particularly important, because Ukrainian partners can benefit from the projects.

The implementation of joint projects confirms the possibility and desire of cities to create new Polish-Ukrainian initiatives aimed at building a modern European government with additional financing from external resources. Participating partners and joint implementation initiatives are a guarantee for efficient and clear cooperation for both parties. In addition, the collaboration of Lublin with its partner cities began long before the development of these large events.

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<sup>19</sup> Eastern Partnership, <http://www.eastern-partnership.pl/> [access: 22.06.2012].

<sup>20</sup> *Wspólna deklaracja przyjęta podczas szczytu Partnerstwa Wschodniego w Pradze* [Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit in Prague], <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/pl/09/st08/st08435.pl09.pdf> [access: 22.06.2012].