



**BRIDGES
OF TRUST**

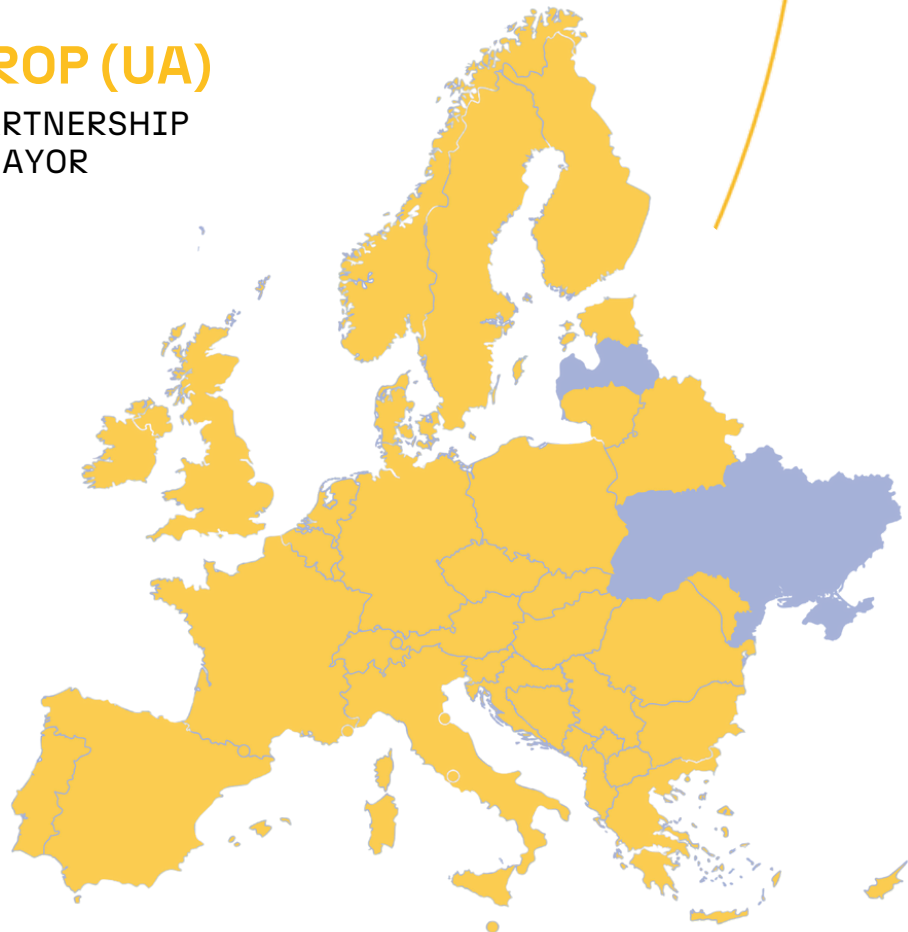
LATVIA UKRAINE

Empowering Cooperation with
Ukrainian Municipalities

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GULBENE (LV) - KOROP (UA)

**OVERVIEW OF MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP
INTERVIEW WITH LATVIAN MAYOR**





OVERVIEW

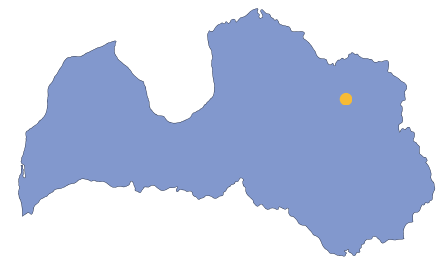
INTER-MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP

MARCH 2023

BILATERAL MEETING

On 28 March 2023, representatives of Korop municipality (UA) and Gulbene municipality (LV) held a bilateral online meeting to initiate cooperation. The event, organised by the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LALRG), with support from the U-LEAD with Europe Programme, centered on sharing expertise in community development.

Korop, heavily impacted by the war, emphasised priorities like forest industry development, water supply projects, waste management, and acquiring special municipal vehicles. Gulbene, with extensive experience in social and infrastructure projects, offered to share its expertise and collaborate on joint initiatives. Both communities aim to develop projects for international funding and strengthen long-term cooperation.

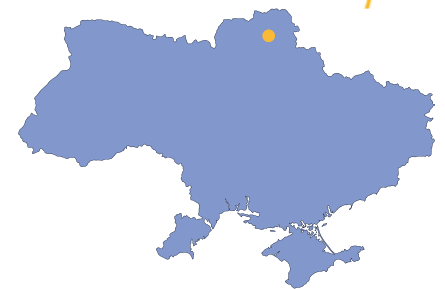


GULBENE (LV)

MAY 2023

STUDY VISIT

From 8 to 12 May, representatives from Ukrainian and Latvian municipalities participated in an in-depth exchange of expertise. Key areas of focus included the restoration of communal and residential infrastructure, innovative approaches to water supply, drainage, and heat supply systems, as well as the implementation of energy-efficient measures and renewable energy sources. Participants also discussed the construction of bomb shelters in educational institutions, procurement of essential utility vehicles such as school buses, ambulances, and firefighting trucks, and improvements in educational processes. Additionally, the program explored investment opportunities in the production of wood-based building materials and best practices in solid household waste management, including the separate collection and sorting of waste.



KOROP (UA)



OVERVIEW

INTER-MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP

- MAY 2024

"NO PLACE FOR WASTE!" PROJECT

On May 3, representatives of the Korop settlement territorial community and Gulbene municipality held an online meeting to plan a joint initiative for sustainable development. The discussion focused on the project concept "No Place for Waste!", aimed at improving the ecological situation and establishing a sustainable solid waste management system in Korop. Key objectives include enhancing landfill operations, improving waste management practices, and increasing environmental awareness among residents. This collaborative effort seeks to benefit not only the Korop community but also neighboring areas, fostering regional sustainability and cooperation.

- JULY 2024

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

On July 26, representatives of Korop municipality, including the Mayor, visited Gulbene municipality to sign a Memorandum of Understanding. The visit was attended by H.E. Anatolii Kutsevol, Ambassador of Ukraine to Latvia, and Mudīte Juhna, Secretary General of the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments (LALRG). Facilitated under the "Bridges of Trust" initiative, the Memorandum sets out joint goals in energy efficiency, culture, education, and local governance. Ms. Juhna emphasised the significance of this collaboration in strengthening ties between Latvia and Ukraine and supporting Ukraine's European integration.



Waste and Water Management



Business Development and Agriculture



Culture and Heritage



Communal Infrastructure Reconstruction and Recovery



BILATERAL MEETING, 2023, GULBENE (LV)





INTERVIEW

INSIGHTS FROM THE MAYOR OF GULBENE

- INTRODUCE YOURSELF IN A FEW WORDS

We are the Mayor of Gulbene municipality council **Mr Andis Caunītis** and Vice Mayor of Gulbene municipality council **Ms Guna Švika**, representing a municipality located in the northeastern part of Latvia and comprising approximately 20 000 inhabitants.



ANDIS CAUNĪTIS



GUNA ŠVIKA





INTERVIEW

INSIGHTS FROM THE MAYOR OF GULBENE

1. WHAT MOTIVATED YOUR MUNICIPALITY TO PURSUE A PARTNERSHIP WITH A UKRAINIAN ONE?

The main reasons are new cooperation, transfer of experience, learning from each other. Gulbene municipality has already been open to cooperation with Ukrainian municipalities for some time, because many European Union's projects are also based on new cooperation, especially highlighting Ukraine. We are the Member State of the European Union for many years and have acquired knowledge and experience in various municipal issues. We would also like to mention, that Latvians understand the mentality Ukrainians quite well.



GULBENE (LV)

2. WHAT SUCCESSES STAND OUT IN YOUR COOPERATION?

In the framework of the project two representatives of Korop municipality (Ukraine) have participated in the study visit in Gulbene municipality taking place in May 2023. We have showed presentations on our municipality and taken our cooperation partners for sight visits to introduce with municipal institutions, enterprises. The Ukrainian partners were especially interested in such areas as social sphere, wood processing companies and communal services. The second visit of representative of Korop municipality has taken place in July 2024, when we have them to visit the celebrations of Gulbene municipality. The delegation of two representatives of Korop municipality, including the Mayor, has participated in this visit during which the Memorandum of Understanding between the Gulbene municipality and Korop municipality was signed on July 26 at the presence of H.E. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to the Republic of Latvia Anatolii Kutsevol.



KOROP (UA)





INTERVIEW

INSIGHTS FROM THE MAYOR OF GULBENE

3. WHAT HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN MAINTAINING THIS PARTNERSHIP?

At the moment, the biggest challenge is to organise the visit of Gulbene municipality in Korop. On the one hand, we have seen presentations on Korop municipality, but on the other hand it is important to see everything in real life. Face-to-face meetings allow you to get to know people, with whom you are cooperating, better. Likewise, it is an opportunity to find out if it is really feasible to introduce our examples in the existing structure and daily life of Korop municipality.



4. WHAT HAS BEEN THE REACTION OF YOUR CITIZENS TO THIS PARTNERSHIP?

The reaction has been rather positive. The attitude of inhabitants doesn't change according to the country the municipality has established cooperation with. People are rather concerned about the goals of the project related to restoration of Ukraine, but we in the municipal administration have explained, what does it mean in our understanding and planning, that it does not relate to the budget of Gulbene municipality and we are having the role of intermediary among different sectors, entrepreneurs, who would like to be involved in the restoration processes.

“FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS ALLOW YOU TO GET TO KNOW PEOPLE, WITH WHOM YOU ARE COOPERATING, BETTER.”





INTERVIEW

INSIGHTS FROM THE MAYOR OF GULBENE

5. HOW HAS THIS PARTNERSHIP BEEN BENEFICIAL DURING THE TIME OF CONFLICT?

We have started the cooperation with Korop municipality not so long ago, that's why it is difficult to evaluate the benefits of it during the time of conflict. We have hosted four representatives of Korop municipality, and all of them have appreciated the opportunity to get acquainted with our municipality in peace and quiet. We cannot talk about the benefits of cooperation between our countries or local governments yet, but rather would like to stress the opportunity to exchange with information and gain experience.

6. HOW DO YOU SEE THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY?

It is an opportunity for the municipality to become more visible not only on the scale of Latvia, but also outside it. With each cooperation we become more open to other views and opinions, and this is also the formation of society's attitude towards cooperation partners. If the cooperation develops successfully also with the respective country's embassy, then it is of great support for the municipality. The embassy serves as a safe bridge between the two municipalities providing contacts and supporting this cooperation in specific areas.

“WITH EACH COOPERATION WE BECOME MORE OPEN TO OTHER VIEWS AND OPINIONS, AND THIS IS ALSO THE FORMATION OF SOCIETY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS COOPERATION PARTNERS.”



ABOUT

BRIDGES OF TRUST PROJECT & CEMR TEAM

As a part of the Bridges of Trust Initiative supported by the U-LEAD with Europe Programme, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) are implementing activities that foster peer-to-peer relationships between Ukrainian and EU municipalities with the help of 14 participating National Local Self-Government Associations (LGAs) and other relevant networks representing Local Self-Governments.

WHAT WE AIM TO

- Fostering partnerships building with Ukrainian municipalities with the ambition to have at least one partner municipality from EU countries.
- Deepening cooperation between existing partner municipalities by capacity development in preparing joint activities to strengthen resilience and reconstruction efforts in Ukraine.
- Supporting the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine.
- Develop and promote Bridges of Trust Initiative into the future Bridges of Trust Community.



**BRIDGES
OF TRUST**

Durmish Guri
Project Director -
Projects & Programmes
durmish.guri@ccre-cemr.org

Stanislav Taran
Project Officer -
International Partnerships (U-Lead)
stanislav.taran@ccre-cemr.org

Léa-Agathe Hetz
Project Officer -
Communications & Events
lea.hetz@ccre-cemr.org

