



**BRIDGES  
OF TRUST**

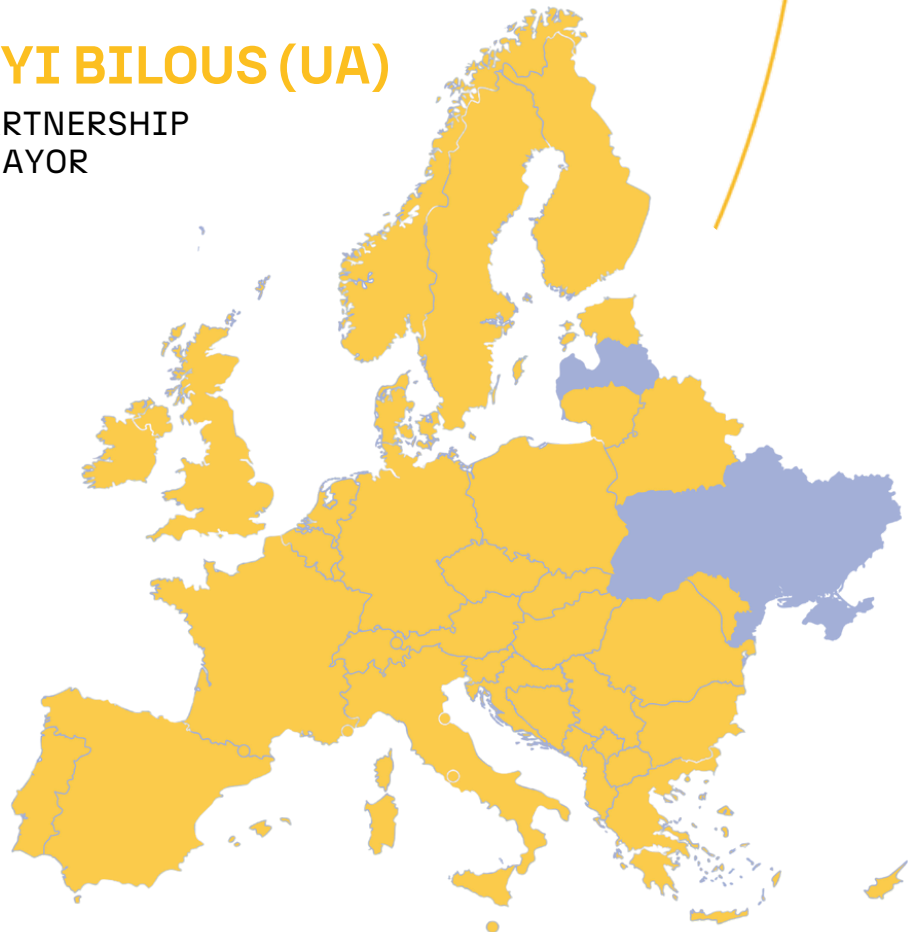
# LATVIA UKRAINE

Empowering Cooperation with  
Ukrainian Municipalities

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**KEKAVA (LV) & NOVYI BILOUS (UA)**

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





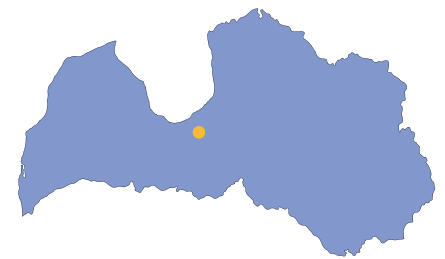
# OVERVIEW

## INTER-MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP

### MARCH 2023

#### *BILATERAL MEETING*

The first bilateral meeting between representatives of Novyi Bilous and Kekava took place on 31 March 2023 where the municipalities explored the main information about the new partners and got the opportunity to discuss different areas of cooperation. The municipality of Novyi Bilous was under temporary Russian occupation and suffered heavy destruction. Therefore, the main points of interest for the partnership with Latvian colleagues are the restoration of destroyed communal and residential infrastructure, construction of bomb shelters in educational institutions, purchase of utility equipment and school buses, exchange of experience in setting up the educational process and optimising the network, water supply/water treatment, introduction of RES, energy efficiency measures.

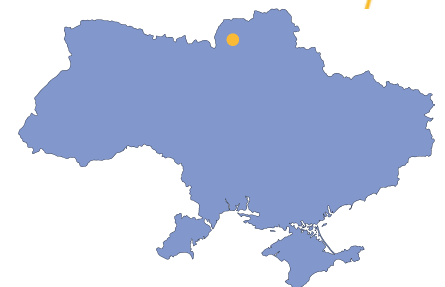


**KEKAVA (LV)**

### MAY 2023

#### *SOLIDARITY FORUM*

On 8 May, the Latvian-Ukrainian Municipalities' Solidarity Forum was held at the European Union House in Rīga, focusing on the challenges and opportunities for local governments in the face of the war and Ukraine's EU accession process. The event featured presentations on municipal resilience, including the experiences of Novyi Bilous and other Ukrainian municipalities, and explored funding opportunities for Latvian and Ukrainian municipal cooperation within European Union programmes. The Forum highlighted the importance of solidarity and cooperation in times of crisis, underscoring the role of municipalities in fostering sustainable growth and resilience. Both the study visit and the Forum reflected the ongoing solidarity between municipalities in Latvia and Ukraine, reinforcing their collective efforts to build a better future together.



**NOVYI BILOUS (UA)**



# OVERVIEW

## INTER-MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP

- JUNE 2024

### STUDY VISIT

From 28 June to 3 July, representatives from Ķekava visited Novyi Bilous. The visit, which included delivering humanitarian aid, highlighted the importance of mutual support during challenging times. Ķekava municipality donated a Nissan Primaster Combi-9 vehicle to Novij Bilous to assist with essential communal services. Residents of Ķekava also contributed fuel, baby carriages, a stove, and financial donations to support the Ukrainian community. The visit went beyond delivering aid. Ķekava's representatives, including Council Chairman Juris Žilko and Deputy Chairman Andris Vītols, met with local leaders and residents to discuss the impact of the war and explore areas for future collaboration. The two councils agreed to formalise their cooperation with a joint declaration focusing on nine areas of development.

- SEPTEMBER 2024

### MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

On 26 September 2024, Novyi Bilous and Ķekava strengthened their partnership by signing a Memorandum of Cooperation. The ceremony, attended by officials including Anatoly Kutsevol, Ukraine's Ambassador to Latvia, marked a commitment to collaboration on rebuilding and development. Dmytro Fedorov, head of Novyi Bilous, stressed the need for infrastructure restoration and praised the partnership as a step towards shared progress. Viktoria Bayre, head of Ķekava Municipality Council, highlighted the unwavering unity between the two nations, affirming Latvia's support for Ukraine's recovery and EU accession. The visit included discussions on education, culture, and joint projects, the inauguration of "Shelves of Ukrainian Books" at the local library, and exchanges on sustainable development practices. This agreement paves the way for cooperation in education, governance, and economic growth, underscoring the importance of solidarity in addressing common challenges.



Waste and Water Management



Culture and Heritage



Education



Communal Infrastructure Reconstruction and Recovery



Energy and Green Transition





# INTERVIEW 1/2

INSIGHTS FROM A REPRESENTATIVE OF KEKAVA

## *- INTRODUCE YOURSELF IN A FEW WORDS*

I am **Viktorija Baire**, Chairwoman of Ķekava Municipality Council. Ķekava Municipality borders the capital city of Latvia – Riga. Proximity to the capital of Latvia, nature, infrastructure and the excellent connectivity makes Ķekava Municipality attractive place to live and to do business, especially for manufacturing companies, logistics, trade and service providers.



**VIKTORIJA BAIRE**





# INTERVIEW

INSIGHTS FROM A REPRESENTATIVE OF KEKAVA

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

When our municipality was offered the opportunity to join the project “Bridges of Trust”, we agreed without hesitation. Peer exchange and possibility to learn from each other is of great value for any local government working on its sustainable development and growth. We do not need to invent a bicycle anew – it is good to be able to consult your colleagues in other municipalities and other countries. Even more, because Ukraine has started decentralization process and reform of territorial organization of power before the war. We hope our practical experience in municipal service provision and project management might be helpful to Novyi Bilous local government. We are willing to share our success stories and be frank also about mistakes. We are willing to assist our partners in the process of reconstruction and European integration with our knowledge and skills. I also want to underline that partnership is a two-way communication where both parties can share and learn from each other. There are many things where we can definitely learn from our Ukrainian partners, for example civil defence and others.



**KEKAVA (LV)**



**NOVYI BILOUS (UA)**





# INTERVIEW

INSIGHTS FROM A REPRESENTATIVE OF KEKAVA

## **2. WHAT SUCCESSES STAND OUT IN YOUR COOPERATION?**

The cooperation with Novyi Bilous started just a year ago and currently we are in the process of preparing signing of the Memorandum of Understanding which would outline several areas for further cooperation. There had been mutual exchange of visits. The leaders of Novobilous community visited ekava in spring 2023 and got acquainted with our municipality - organization of education, social, utility and other services, our energy efficiency improvement and infrastructure projects, In July 2024 the representatives of ekava visited Novobilous bringing a vehicle donated by ekava Municipality and items donated by the inhabitants to support the Ukrainian community during the war. They could witness the consequences of the occupation and determination of Novobilous local government already working on reconstruction of the damaged infrastructure of the village.



**STUDY TRIP, 2023**

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

***“I THINK WE CAN OVERCOME ANY CHALLENGE IF THERE IS A WILL TO DO IT, MAY IT BE LANGUAGE BARRIER OR ANYTHING ELSE.”***





# INTERVIEW

INSIGHTS FROM A REPRESENTATIVE OF KEKAVA

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

Ukraine is fighting for all of us – this is strongly voiced not only by the leaders of Latvia but also deeply felt in the hearts of people across the country, also in Ķekava Municipality. We stand with Ukrainian people defending sovereignty of their homeland and development of a partnership with a Ukrainian community is a way how to show our solidarity not only in words, but also in deeds.



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

I hope our Ukrainian friends and colleagues feel that they can count on us. During the time of conflict several solidarity actions have taken place in Ķekava municipality confirming that citizens of our community stand with Ukraine. The donated minibus and items were also a practical support to help our partner community.

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

The governments of countries set the framework for national foreign policy. But any country first of all is its people. Partnership between the municipalities is the living foundation of relationship between countries. It is where people meet, exchange, carry out common projects and organize common activities. Without active municipality twinning inter-state friendship would remain just an abstract notion.



# 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.

## **DISCLAIMER**

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**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