

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.)

 Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

PROJECT	
Participant:	[[Razvojno informacijski center Bela krajina] ([RIC BK])]
PIC number:	[891209326]
Project name and acronym:	[Without the Schengen border, by creating cultural content, we would encourage stronger connections among the citizens of both countries across the border and create a shared cultural space] — [JURKA 24 - 25]

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	[5]		
Event name:	[Activity supporting the presentation of culture and mutual cooperation between municipalities]		
Type:	[roundtable]		
In situ/online:	[in-situ]		
Location:	[Slovenia], [Črnomelj]		
Date(s):	[Sunday, June 22, 2025]		
Website(s) (if any):	https://ric-belakrajina.si/sl/aktualno/uspesen-zakljucek-projekta-jurka-24-25-povezovanje-skozi-kulturo/		
Participants			
Female:	30		
Male:	38		
Non-binary:	-		
From country 1 [name]:	Slovenia (total 33)		
From country 2 [name]:	Croatia (total 35)		
From country 3 [name]:			
...			
Total number of participants:	68	From total number of countries:	2
Description			
Provide a short description of the event and its activities.			

On June 22, 2025, the one-year JURKA 24-25 project, co-funded by the European Union, officially concluded with a final event featuring a roundtable discussion titled "Preserving cultural identity through festivals," with main theme Cultural diversity and inclusion: How folklore festivals can promote inclusion and respect for all cultural identities. The event occurred during the international folklore festival in Črnomelj and brought together experts, cultural workers and representatives of local communities from Slovenia and Croatia.

The programme opened with a musical performance by the vocal and tamburitza ensemble of the Folklore group from Karlovac.

Welcoming speeches were given by Mr. Andrej Kavšek, Mayor of the Municipality of Črnomelj (project partner), and Ms. Ivana Fočić, Deputy Mayor of the City of Karlovac (project partner). Both emphasized the importance of cross-border cooperation and the shared cultural heritage of the two regions.

The roundtable discussion highlighted the role of folklore festivals as vital spaces for preserving and strengthening cultural identity, building community and fostering intercultural dialogue.

Panellists:

- Kristina Medarić, Vice President of CIOFF International and Vice President of the Karlovac International Folklore Festival,
- Anja Verderber, M.A. in Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology and
- Barbara Papež Lavrič, Director of RIC Bela krajina (lead partner) and organizer of Jurjevanje v Beli krajini.

The panel addressed key issues such as the importance of authenticity, intergenerational participation, inclusion of vulnerable groups, collaboration between festivals and cooperation with the academic community. Special attention was devoted to the challenges and opportunities of organizing traditional cultural festivals, particularly in promoting inclusivity and respecting cultural diversity.

The discussion served as a powerful reminder that folklore festivals are far more than staged performances of dance and costume, they are vibrant spaces of cultural exchange, learning and pride. Mrs. Kristina Medarić, the representative of CIOFF International emphasized the role of international cooperation and networking in maintaining high standards and fostering cultural understanding through folklore. She highlighted the importance of regional collaboration between countries.

Mrs. Anja Verderber stressed the value of ethnographic research in shaping festival programs that are both respectful of local traditions and meaningful to contemporary audiences. She also pointed out that involving local communities in the planning process strengthens cultural ownership and long-term sustainability.

The interactive segment of the roundtable focused on the challenges and opportunities faced by festival organizers in promoting inclusivity, particularly in balancing the preservation of cultural traditions with the need to adapt to diverse audiences and the demands of modern times. Speakers shared examples of best practices and discussed how festivals can remain engaging and relevant in today's world. On Karlovac folklore festival, the event Flavours of the World is example how culinary heritage can be brought closer to the public. Visitors can enjoy dishes from the countries participating on the festival.

The session encouraged open dialogue between panellists and audience members. Participants explored how folklore festivals can remain faithful to tradition while becoming more inclusive and accessible to all members of the community, regardless of cultural background, age or social status. They also discussed how organizers can actively engage young people in traditional cultural events. Panellists emphasized the importance of collaboration with local schools and cultural institutions. For example- festival includes performances by international folklore groups in kindergartens and schools, where performers teach children their traditional songs and dances. Panellist Barbara Papež Lavrič highlighted how Jurjevanje festival includes performances by children's folklore groups, more than 350 performers, who preserve and protect cultural heritage through folklore.

Barbara Papež Lavrič, Director of RIC Bela krajina, the lead partner of the project, presented the successful collaborative Town Twinning project JURKA 24-25, outlining its objectives, scope, implemented activities and achieved results.

The event concluded with the recognition that the JURKA 24-25 project stands as a successful model of cooperation, which could be replicated in other cross-border initiatives both within the region and across Europe. The project has demonstrated how a shared vision and mutual trust can lead to tangible outcomes, such as greater visibility of cultural events, enriched programming, increased community involvement and the promotion of cultural diversity as a core value.

During the Jurjevanje Folklore Festival (June 18 - 22), the project was promoted at information booth, where attendees could learn about its goals and activities. Visitors received promotional materials, helping to increase the project's visibility and foster greater public engagement.

The Jurjevanje Festival attracted approximately 8,000 visitors, representing a broad and relevant target audience. This impressive turnout provided an excellent opportunity to disseminate information about the JURKA 24-25 project to a diverse public and significantly enhance its outreach and promotional impact.

The evening concluded with performance by the Matija Gubec Folklore Ensemble from Karlovac, which symbolically marked the successful end of a year-long partnership within the JURKA 24-25 project.

Over the past year, the JURKA 24-25 project brought together partners from RIC Bela krajina, the Municipality of Črnomelj, the City of Karlovac, and the Tourist Board of Karlovac County to strengthen cultural ties between border regions and contribute to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Five major events were held, along with numerous workshops and expert discussions.

Project JURKA 24-25 was presented at a workshop organized by the CERV National Point in Slovenia.

Key Findings – Event Outcomes

- Strengthened cross-border cooperation

The event reinforced the value of collaboration between Slovenian and Croatian cultural institutions and local authorities. Both municipalities emphasized that mutual trust and coordinated efforts are essential for the successful implementation of joint cultural projects.

The presence of representatives from both Črnomelj and Karlovac, as well as shared programming and dialogue, demonstrated how cultural events can effectively serve as a platform for ongoing cross-border partnerships. The roundtable encouraged further planning of joint initiatives beyond the scope of this project, underlining culture as a bridge for long-term cooperation.

- Promotion of inclusion and diversity

The roundtable emphasized the importance of including different age groups and vulnerable communities in cultural events. Inclusive festival practices can foster a deeper sense of belonging and respect for diverse cultural expressions.

Examples such as performances in schools, kindergartens and retirement homes demonstrated how events can be made accessible to all members of society.

- Exchange of best practices

Panellists shared practical experiences from their festivals, offering insights into how events can evolve to remain relevant, engage younger generations, vulnerable communities and maintain authenticity while adapting to contemporary contexts. The listed examples are performances by a folklore group from a VDC (Occupational Activity Center) at such events. Another excellent example of including vulnerable groups is the presentation of dances and music by foreign groups participating in folklore festivals at retirement homes, for residents who cannot attend the event at the main venue.

- Interdisciplinary and community collaboration

The discussions highlighted the benefits of integrating academic expertise, community participation and festival organization. This triangulation strengthens the educational and cultural value of festivals. Panellists agreed that cooperation with schools, cultural institutions and civil society adds long-term value and relevance to festivals.

- Increased visibility and cultural impact

The JURKA 24-25 project contributed to raising the visibility of participating festivals and regions, resulting in broader audience reach and deeper community engagement across borders.

- Sustainability and transferability of the project model

Participants concluded that the roundtable format, combining expert insight, community experience and audience participation offers a sustainable model for future cultural cooperation. The event's inclusive and practical approach can inspire similar initiatives aiming to build cultural bridges in other European contexts. The project was recognized as a replicable example of good practice for other European regions seeking to use culture as a means of cross-border dialogue and regional development.

Description of the programme, Črnomelj (SLO), June 22, 2025:First part:

13.30 Arrival of participants from CRO: welcome drink, meeting with partners from SLO

16.00 Round table: *Preserving cultural identity through festivals*

Welcome Speech:

- Andrej Kavšek, Mayor of the Municipality of Črnomelj (project partner),
- Ms. Ivana Fočić, Deputy Mayor of the City of Karlovac (project partner)

Panellists:

- Kristina Medarić, Vice President of CIOFF International and Vice President of the Karlovac International Folklore Festival,
- Anja Verderber, M.A. in Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, and
- Barbara Papež Lavrič, Director of RIC Bela krajina and organizer of Jurjevanje v Beli Krajini

Interactive session: Challenges and opportunities in organizing traditional cultural festivals for promoting inclusivity and respect for all cultural identities

Sharing best practices: Successful collaborative project between festivals (JURKA 24-25 Town Twinning project)

Second part:

19.00 Performance by folklore group Matija Gubec from Croatia on the International folklore festival Jurjevanje v Beli krajini (SLO)

21.00 Dinner with networking

The fifth event of the JURKA 24-25 project successfully addressed several key priorities and objectives of the European Union's CERV (Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values) programme.

The fifth event matches the general objectives of the call:

To promote exchanges between citizens:

The primary aim was to foster exchanges between citizens from Slovenia and Croatia, enriching their understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage shared at the event. The event was attended by 68 participants, 35 came from Croatia. A positive atmosphere was created among the attendees, who actively participated in presentations, discussions and networking activities.

To allow citizens to discover the cultural diversity of the European Union and to make them aware that European values and cultural heritage constitute the foundation for a common future:

The event provided a platform to explore the cultural richness of the traditions. Speakers and participants showcased how festivals serve as gateways for citizens to discover the diversity of the rich cultural heritage. Participants also had the opportunity to experience the rich cultural heritage of Croatia through traditional dances and songs.

To guarantee peaceful relations between Europeans and to ensure their active participation at the local level:

By bringing together cultural experts, local representatives from Slovenia and Croatia and citizens, the event fostered dialogue and cooperation rooted in mutual respect. The discussion encouraged community engagement. Such inclusive practices promote peace and cohesion by actively involving citizens in cross-border cultural collaboration.

To reinforce mutual understanding and friendship between European citizens:

The event created an open and interactive space where participants could exchange experiences and best practices. Through honest dialogue and shared goals, it helped strengthen interpersonal and cross-cultural bonds between attendees from different regions. The event addressed non-discrimination. It promoted inclusivity. The event promoted gender equality - equal participation of women and men in cultural activities. The event emphasised the importance of cultural rights as fundamental human rights.

To encourage cooperation between municipalities and the exchange of best practices:

The partnership between Črnomelj and Karlovac on the implementation of a joint event is a powerful means of enhancing European unity and citizen connectivity. The event supported the cooperation between the partnership municipalities and local and regional authorities.

Raising awareness of the importance of reinforcing the European integration process based on solidarity:

The event promoted solidarity by bringing people together through shared cultural experiences. The event enabled citizens to actively participate and engage in mutual meetings.

About project: <https://ric-belakrajina.si/sl/projekti/>

<https://visitkarlovacounty.hr/hr/jurka/>

Črnomelj Municipality : <https://www.crnornelj.si/sl/o-obcini/projekti-in-investicije/2024070210202912/jurka-24-25>

Karlovac City: <https://www.karlovac.hr/grad-karlovac/eu-projekti/projekti-u-tijeku/>

About fifth event with photos: <https://www.ric-belakrajina.si/sl/aktualno/uspesen-zakljucek-projekta-jurka-24-25-povezovanje-skozi-kulturo/>

<https://www.ric-belakrajina.si/en/aktualno/successful-completion-of-the-jurka-24-25-project-connecting-through-culture/>

Facebook RIC Bela krajina:

<https://www.facebook.com/100063476231267/posts/pfbid06nKAWwGcqUurRXWuYTuH7vUgFTRUqzBE7NC5u6RRoyKXqBUowNbJZcnEQizfkaLAI/?app=fbl>

Jurjevanje (slo): <https://jurjevanje.si/sl/novice/uspesen-zakljucek-projekta-jurka-24-25-povezovanje-skozi-kulturo/>

Jurjevanje (eng): <https://jurjevanje.si/en/news/uspesen-zakljucek-projekta-jurka-24-25-povezovanje-skozi-kulturo/>

Karlovac county facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/100064752850395/posts/pfbid02j9baY3KbwCULVvc8JKez5Z4jSP8LVRgyMLMvFJEa67XjBB4qoSNB7CnGLsVvbnfRI/?app=fbl>

Črnomelj municipality facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/100064367935148/posts/pfbid02u9Pmr1D6efuAdnmViR9AxXpXTToyMmsdNZi5qXLX6wrNBkiRVmNkvnJGHBvJdCxf6l/?app=fbl>

Facebook Folklore group CRO:

<https://www.facebook.com/100063470470071/posts/pfbid02JeZ9Uvi9zL6sca2B9bb6KJsBeec6Uf8i44ksTMKACdGYfZE22soX7nFWxx4o7PxLI/?app=fbl>

Press: <https://radiokrka.svet24.si/clanek/kultura/uspesen-zakljucek-projekta-jurka-2425-povezovanje-skozi-kulturo-1828268>

<https://vaskanal.com/zakljucek-projekta-jurka-24-25-povezovanje-skozi-kulturo/>

<https://lokalno.svet24.si/novice/projekt-jurka-2425-okrogla-miza-1828525>

<https://svet24.si/lokalno/posavje/novice/projekt-jurka-2425-okrogla-miza-1828525>

Belokranjec, local newspaper, Jun2025



HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).