

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:	[3]		
Event name:	[Activity supporting cultural exchange – Meeting on the bridge]		
Type:	[workshop]		
In situ/online:	[in-situ]		
Location:	[Slovenia], [Vinica, Municipality of Črnomelj]		
Date(s):	[Monday, April 27, 2025]		
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.ric-belakrajina.si/sl/aktualno/uspesno-izveden-tretji-dogodek-projekta-jurka-24-25/		
Participants			
Female:	35		
Male:	26		
Non-binary:	-		
From country 1 [name]:	Slovenia (total 28)		
From country 2 [name]:	Croatia (total 33)		
From country 3 [name]:			
...			
Total number of participants:	61	From total number of countries:	2
Description			
Provide a short description of the event and its activities.			

On Sunday, April 27 2025, the third event within the JURKA 24–25 project took place in Vinica, in the Municipality of Črnomelj (Slovenia).

The main theme of the event was the preservation and revitalization of tradition in the face of globalization, modernization, and cultural assimilation. The programme began with a symbolic meeting of representatives from both countries on the Vinica Bridge. As a gesture of cross-border cooperation, a ceremonial exchange of gifts was held on the bridge, featuring a green birch twig—the symbol of Zeleni Jurij (Green George) and the arrival of spring. Green George is traditionally celebrated on April 23 in Croatia and April 24 in Slovenia. Therefore, the event is held on Sunday following the holiday to honour both traditions.

The gathering continued at the Oton Župančič Memorial House with a lecture titled “The Mythological Heritage of Zeleni Jurij.” The event opened with a performance by the women's choir Viniške Cure, which helped create a welcoming atmosphere and enriched the beginning of the event.

The event was officially opened by Barbara Papež Lavrič, Director of RIC Bela krajina, who emphasized the importance of cross-border cooperation in preserving intangible cultural heritage. On this occasion, she also invited participants to the upcoming JURKA events scheduled for May 10 in Karlovac, and to the JURKA Round Table, which will take place during the traditional Jurjevanje festival in Bela Krajina in June. Andrej Kavšek, the Mayor of the Municipality of Črnomelj, highlighted the significance of joint efforts in preserving cultural identity and expressed satisfaction with the successful collaboration among project partners. Martina Furdek Hajdin, the Mayor of Karlovac County, expressed her enthusiasm for the project, praising the cooperation and support that strengthen ties among citizens and promote cultural exchange and the preservation of traditional customs.

This was followed by the main lecture on the “Mythological Heritage of Zeleni Jurij,” delivered by Gregor Jevšček, a graduate ethnologist and cultural anthropologist. The lecture included explanations about mythology and its foundations, the legend and mythological stories of Green George, divine stories, and several examples of tourism products based on mythology. After the lecture, a workshop was held in which participants shared their ideas for developing tourism products themed around Zeleni Jurij and the rich springtime traditions associated with him.

Participants were divided into groups, where they discussed and proposed ideas collectively.

Workshop summary: Development of Green George themed tourism products

As part of the event, a workshop was conducted on the topic of Zeleni Jurij (Green George), with the aim of collecting ideas from participants for the development of cross-border cultural tourism products inspired by this traditional springtime ritual. The primary objective was to involve the participants in co-creating innovative and sustainable tourism products that celebrate and preserve the heritage of Green George, especially in the cross-border region. The participants proposed several innovative products, emphasizing cultural preservation, local involvement and tourist engagement.

Below is a summary of the main product ideas developed during the session:

1. Thematic Trail “In the footsteps of Green George”

This concept proposes a hiking trail across the Slovenian-Croatian border, connecting rural communities that preserve Green George customs. The trail would include guided tours led by locals, interactive workshops (e.g., crafting Green George figures from birch branches), and tastings of local gastronomy, showcase of traditional customs and folklore performances. The product is intended to attract tourists, school groups and cultural heritage enthusiasts while strengthening the visibility of local traditions.

2. Educational workshops: “Green George customs in our village”

This idea involves organizing workshops on the customs and songs related to Green George, with active participation of cultural associations from both countries. The aim is to foster cultural exchange, mutual learning, and the strengthening of cross-border cultural networks. The workshops would be suitable for schools, tourist groups and local communities and could take place on either side of the border.

3. Natural sculpture: “The Green George basket”

A large, plant-based sculpture representing Green George would be created as a landmark installation, potentially at a symbolic cross-border site such as Vinica. The structure would be made from natural vegetation and would serve both as a monument and a tourist attraction. Around this central site, events could be organized, including souvenir markets and a designated photo point. Maintained by local associations, the installation could host seasonal celebrations and community activities.

4. Revival of traditional caroling on Green George Day

This proposal aims to revive the custom in which young people go from house to house singing Green George songs. In return, hosts offer small gifts or treats, and the singers express their thanks through song. The activity promotes cultural continuity, social cohesion, and intergenerational participation and is especially suited for rural villages on both sides of the border.

5. Green George Festival

A large-scale annual festival celebrating Green George is held one year in Slovenia and the next in Croatia. The festival would include a ceremonial procession of Green George, international folklore performances, markets, ethno-workshops (e.g., wreath-making), face painting with Green George symbols, traditional food stalls, evening concerts and fireside storytelling of local myths and legends. The event would bring together a wide range of participants: local residents, tourists, diaspora communities, artists and volunteers, requiring the engagement of cultural associations, local authorities and sponsors.

Participants highlighted the importance of involving local folklore groups, cultural associations, schools and the broader community, while also recognizing the need for funding and cross-border cooperation to realize these ideas.

All participants, including local citizens, were actively involved in the debates.

Conclusion

The workshop confirmed that there is strong local interest and creativity when it comes to using traditional heritage as a foundation for new, experience-based tourism products. Participants stressed the importance of preserving authenticity while adapting elements of the Green George tradition to appeal to modern audiences. Collaboration between Slovenian and Croatian communities is seen as essential, not only for the successful implementation of these ideas, but also for reinforcing shared cultural identity across the border.

Activities on the main square and project promotion

On Vinica's main square, KUD Oton Župančič Vinica performed the traditional Zeleni Jurij ritual, which attracted significant attention from visitors. Folklore groups KUD Frankopan and KUD Netretić from Croatia enhanced the atmosphere with traditional dance performances. In addition to the shows, they conducted a dance workshop. The groups also presented the richness and diversity of traditional folk costumes, showcasing the cultural identity.

Visitors could also observe live basket weaving demonstrations, where skilled artisan shared knowledge of working with natural materials, allowing attendees to create baskets.

The JURKA 24–25 project had its own information booth at the Mala Južina event, where attendees could learn about the project's goals, current activities, and cross-border initiatives. Visitors received promotional materials and small gifts, helping to increase visibility and engagement with the project.

The Mala Južina event attracted approximately 1.000 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.

Key Findings – event outcomes:

This summary outlines the main findings and recommendations of the event:

- Cross-border collaboration: the workshop successfully connected Slovenian and Croatian participants, reinforcing shared cultural identity and cooperation.
- Creative tourism concepts: participants proposed innovative, experience-based tourism products rooted in the Green George tradition.
- Heritage preservation: ideas focused on preserving intangible cultural heritage through events, education and intergenerational exchange.
- Engaging diverse audiences: activities were designed to engage local communities, promoting inclusivity.
- Support for rural development: concepts like thematic events aim to boost tourism in cross-border rural areas.
- Strong community involvement: Local cultural associations play a central role, ensuring authenticity and sustainability.

We assess that the third event of the JURKA 24–25 project was very well received and successfully implemented.

Description of the programme, Vinica-Črnomelj (SLO), April, 27 2025:

9:00 – Meeting of representatives from both countries at the Vinica Bridge, exchange of green birch twigs

9:45 – Participant registration and welcome drink, Oton Župančič Memorial House, Vinica

10:00 – Opening addresses:

- Martina Furdek Hajdin, Mayor of Karlovac County
- Andrej Kavšek, Mayor of Črnomelj municipality,
- Barbara Papež Lavrič, Director of the RIC Bela krajina

Lecture: "Mythological Heritage of Zeleni Jurij" followed by a workshop for participants

Folklore Group Vinica: Ritual of Zeleni Jurij

Promotion of cultural heritage, workshops, and project presentation during the Mala Južina event at the Vinica town square:

KUD "Frankopan" and KUD "Netretić" (CRO)

Basket weaving workshops

Free guided tours of the exhibit Župančič – Master of Words, showcasing literary heritage

15:00 – Lunch and social gathering for participants

17:00 – Closing of the event

Alignment with EU CERV Programme Objectives

The third 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.

Third event matches the general objectives of the call:

To promote exchanges between citizens:

The primary aim of the event was to foster meaningful exchanges between citizens from Slovenia and Croatia, deepening their understanding and appreciation of shared cultural heritage. The event was attended by 61 participants, of whom 33 came from Croatia, demonstrating strong cross-border interest and engagement. A positive and inclusive atmosphere encouraged active participation in presentations, discussions and networking activities, facilitating interpersonal connections and cultural exchange.

To give citizens the opportunity 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 showcased the rich cultural traditions of Slovenia and Croatia through folklore performances, traditional rituals and creative workshops. Participants experienced how shared heritage and diverse customs reflect core European values such as unity, inclusion and respect for cultural diversity. The program strengthened awareness that cultural heritage is a key pillar of a common European identity and future.

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

The event fostered cross-border dialogue and cooperation through joint cultural activities, encouraging peaceful relations between Slovenian and Croatian participants. By involving local communities, cultural associations and citizens, it promoted active civic participation and strengthened local engagement in preserving shared traditions.

To reinforce mutual understanding and friendship between European citizens:

The event brought together citizens from Slovenia and Croatia, creating opportunities for personal interaction, cultural exchange and joint creative work. Through shared experiences, participants built mutual respect, deepened understanding of each other's traditions, and formed lasting cross-border friendships. The event addressed gender equality. The event promoted the equal participation of women and men. The event promoted inclusivity.

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

The event was jointly organized by the partners, showcasing effective cross-border cooperation. 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:

By bringing together citizens from both sides of the border to celebrate shared cultural heritage, the event promoted solidarity and unity. It highlighted how cultural cooperation and mutual respect contribute to a stronger, more connected Europe. The event enabled citizens to actively participate and engage in mutual meetings.

About project:

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

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

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

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

About third event with photos: <https://www.ric-belakrajina.si/sl/aktualno/uspesno-izveden-tretji-dogodek-projekta-jurka-24-25/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ricbelakrajina/posts/pfbid02uHzLtcVqrVBrNtmyYjUn4JxG5hJGrWoZrCzEQvxxQXe5NScFhB3TJQ1hTFXWVsMpl>

<https://www.facebook.com/obcina.crnomelj/posts/pfbid02tY6KfCQkaDsc8ZMBefZFkrGQ8kDCXrvoZY5bgR41DkpD7t59QGvVzpJLKGN8wMkSI>

<https://www.facebook.com/100063864364112/posts/pfbid0XnbpffcEFTfDDmUFLWpuMPCn3eJCgxABHy7UJr9ibYpptuBjuqrmTYFah7s1gSmzl/?app=fbl>

<https://ric-belakrajina.si/sl/aktualno/uspesno-izveden-tretji-dogodek-projekta-jurka-24-25/>

<https://jurjevanje.si/sl/novice/uspesno-izveden-tretji-dogodek-projekta-jurka-24-25/>

<https://jurjevanje.si/en/news/successfully-held-third-event-of-the-jurka-24-25-project/>

<https://www.facebook.com/VisitKarlovacCounty/posts/pfbid02t57UtKKDBx6wonMEGT4exvY5fZebQthSrtY2TWSRhsVe4Ag8kT2VC5CpEkm6h46PI>

https://www.instagram.com/p/DI_hzU-O0a7/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

<https://www.crnomelj.si/sl/za-obcane/novice/2025042911154298/uspesno-zaključen-3-dogodek-projekta-jurka-24-25/>

Media/press:

https://www.radio-odeon.com/novice/cezmejno-povezovanje-v-vinici/?fbclid=IwY2xjawJ9Yz9leHRuA2FlbQlxMQBicmlkETA5ZmFMOFNvc1R6bHFFb2hhAR52Lt6FAuTtmlmSK8xKiQomR1SxKqf19wT8-FRNPKySntudrZuaT-hZBXtrA_aem_2ikhhP8J7Czn_3caxhDm0g

<https://vaskanal.com/mala-juzina-in-jurka-na-vinici> (1:04sec - 2:20sec)

<https://karlovacki.hr/projekt-jurka-cuva-i-promice-kulturnu-bastinu-bele-krajine-i-karlovacke-zupanije/>

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