



UDRUGA PODRAVSKIH STUDENATA PODRAVINA STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

A. PARTNER ORGANISATION	
PIC	869903858
OID	E10264563
Full legal name (National Language)	Udruga podravskih studenata
Full legal name (Latin characters)	Udruga podravskih studenata
Acronym	UPS
National ID (if applicable)	21013492 (registry number), 66817087052 (OIB)
Address (Street and number)	Ulica kneza Branimira 23
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B. PROFILE	
Type of Organisation	Youth Association (Non-Governmental)
Is the partner organisation a public body?	NO
Is the partner organisation a non-profit?	YES
D. BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE	
Please briefly present the partner organisation.	Udruga podravskih studenata (UPS) (English: Podravina Students' Association) continues an almost century-long tradition of bringing together students from the Podravina region. As early as 1926 the Akademičar Society was founded, followed by the Podravec Society in 1969, and the Podravina Students' Association in 1994. After the dissolution of the first association of Podravina students, the current Podravina Students' Association was established in 2019. In the academic year 2024/2025, the Association gathered more than 130 members originating from Podravina (Koprivnica-Križevci, Varaždin and Virovitica-Podravina counties), aged between 18 and 30. It is among the largest regional student associations in Croatia. UPS is a volunteer-led organisation, yet agile in implementing projects with limited resources. Over the years, skills have been developed in the organisation of events



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(concerts, public forums, excursions), promotion via social media, financial management of small-scale projects, and cooperation with institutions (universities, local authorities). The Association's experience is particularly relevant in the fields of youth and culture, as its members have successfully implemented projects for their peers, providing a solid basis for future Erasmus+ initiatives. Although formally a newcomer to Erasmus+, its leadership and members already have experience both as organisers and as participants in numerous Erasmus+ projects.

Mission

UPS brings together students from Podravina studying in Zagreb, as well as all those with an affinity for Podravina, in order to preserve a sense of community and regional identity among young people. The Association supports students from Podravina who have come to study in Zagreb, assisting them in adapting and maintaining ties with their place of origin. Through social, cultural and educational activities, its mission is to enrich the student experience in Zagreb and to foster solidarity among Podravina students.

Vision

To be a recognised student association that nurtures Podravina's traditions, promotes the values of solidarity, and supports the personal development of its members. UPS seeks to preserve regional identity among young people in an urban environment, while remaining open to other communities and cultures.

Objectives of activity

- (a) **Regional identity and culture** → To maintain young people's connection with Podravina's cultural heritage, customs and dialect through events and educational activities (for example, organising traditional festivities and presenting Podravina's culture in Zagreb).
- (b) **Student support network** → To create a network of mutual assistance among students from Podravina. Senior students provide guidance to newcomers (mentorship for first-year students, advice on studies and life in Zagreb), thereby sustaining a spirit of solidarity within the student population.
- (c) **Socialising and networking** → To organise regular gatherings, excursions and sporting activities, enabling members to build friendships and connections. This helps reduce the sense of isolation experienced by students living far from home.
- (d) **Personal development and mobility** → To encourage students to be active, to engage in non-formal learning and to participate in various projects (both local and international). Although primarily a regional association, UPS also serves as a platform for members' skill development – organisational, cultural, and international (for example, participation in Erasmus+ mobilities in the future).
- (e) **Promotion of Podravina in the academic community** → Through its activities, UPS also promotes the Podravina region in Zagreb by presenting its customs, gastronomy, music and notable figures, thus contributing to a positive representation of Podravina within the wider student community.



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What are the activities and experience of the organisation in the areas relevant for this application?	The Podravina Students' Association has carried out numerous projects aimed at its members, but also at other students interested in supporting the promotion of Podravina and its students. Some of the more significant projects funded by the Student Centre of the University of Zagreb include: Pleasant Conversations of the Podravina People (October–December 2019) Three well-known figures from Podravina (Zoran Vakula, Professor Hrvoje Petrić, PhD, and Goran Šafarek) visited the Association's premises and engaged with students on the topic of climate change. Quiz at Podravec (October–December 2019) Five rounds of the Podravec Quiz were held. The innovation lay in the structure: 16 categories were offered, and each of the eight participating teams selected one category that all teams were then required to play. Winners received symbolic prizes. UPS Belot Club (entire year 2020) Weekly belot card games – a popular game in Podravina – were organised at the Association's premises every Tuesday. Selection of the Podravina Freshman of the Year (November 2019, October 2020 and 2021) For three consecutive years, the Association organised the selection of the best Podravina first-year student. Through various games and challenges, knowledge and skills were tested, and the winning student received a symbolic award. Student Martinmas (November 2019 and 2021) For the first time in many years, the Martinmas tradition – the blessing of wine accompanied by live tamburitza performances – was revived. The “bishop” roles were performed by well-known Podravina figures Vid Balog (2019) and Adam Končić (2021), with performances by TS Diversa and TS U Prolazu. Orientation Day for Podravina Freshmen in Zagreb (October 2020 and 2021) First-year students often lack sufficient and accurate information when beginning their studies in Zagreb. Accordingly, students were introduced to the city centre and attended a presentation on studying and student life in Zagreb. In 2021, the programme also included a visit to the Zoo. Hurry Up, the Bus is Honking (April and November 2021) Study trips were organised for approximately one hundred students to Plitvice Lakes and to Siget and Pécs. Although the Podravina Students' Association has not yet formally participated in Erasmus+ projects, its leadership and members have relevant experience in international mobility, volunteering, and organising student and cultural activities at local and national levels. Combined with its large active membership base of more than 130, this makes the Association a reliable and motivated partner for future Erasmus+ projects. Most members come from rural parts of Podravina and many face economic obstacles and limited opportunities to take part in international programmes, which makes participation in Erasmus+ especially significant for them.
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	All members are students, and virtually all speak at least one foreign language, most often English, with some also proficient in German, French or Italian, which facilitates international communication and cooperation. Coming from diverse faculties (natural and technical sciences, social sciences and humanities, arts, and biomedical studies), the members bring a wide range of knowledge and skills of practical relevance to projects – from technical and digital literacy to cultural management, law, economics, communication and organisational competences. Through its work to date, the Association has demonstrated its capacity to design and implement high-quality activities that combine cultural heritage, education and youth inclusion. This combination of values provides particular added value in the Erasmus+ context. Moreover, as an organisation built on regional identity and solidarity, UPS offers partners a stable structure, a motivated community, and experience in creating an enabling environment for young people with fewer opportunities, which makes it an excellent choice for international cooperation.
What are the skills and expertise of key staff/persons involved in this application?	Leo Fel, President of the Association Leo holds a Master of Laws degree from the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb, and is currently a doctoral student at the University of Luxembourg. In 2017/2018 he was President of the Student Union and a member of the Faculty Council at the Faculty of Law, and since 2019 he has served as President of the Podravina Students' Association. He was a member of the Youth Council of Virovitica-Podravina County (2018–2021 and 2021–2024), representing it at the Annual Conference of Youth Councils of the Republic of Croatia in 2019. In 2018, as facilitator of a working group, he contributed to the project establishing the Zagreb Youth Centre, which brings together dozens of youth organisations. In 2020/2021 he led two projects – “UPS Belot Club” and “Annual General Assembly of the Podravina Students' Association and Celebration of the First Anniversary” – and co-chaired the organising committee of the project “LAW&FOOTBALL 2020”. In 2020/2021 he implemented several projects supported by the University of Zagreb Student Centre, including “Hurry Up, the Bus is Honking”, “Orientation Day for Podravina Freshmen in Zagreb”, “UPS Belot Club”, and “Selection of the Podravina Freshman of the Year”, and in 2021/2022 “Hurry Up, the Bus is Honking vol. 2”. Between 2021 and 2022 he worked in the non-profit sector in the field of non-formal youth education. He remains actively engaged in civil society organisations working with young people (aged 15–29), including students. Marin Lovreković, Secretary of the Association Marin is a petroleum engineer, having graduated from the Faculty of Mining, Geology and Petroleum Engineering, University of Zagreb. He completed secondary education at Petar Preradović Grammar School in Virovitica (science and mathematics programme) with distinction. During his studies he served two terms as a member of the faculty's student union (2015/2016–2016/2017 and 2017/2018–2018/2019). He actively participated in eSTUDENT, one of the largest student associations, where he was a member of the “Business Consulting” team, providing support to start-ups, small and medium-sized enterprises, trades and family farms. He was also a member of the Croatian Association of Petroleum Engineers and Geologists (HUNIG) and the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE), within which he took part in organising conferences. Since 2019 he has served as Secretary of the Podravina Students' Association. He is also active in sport, regularly participating in the Barcs–Virovitica Half Marathon, as well as in races such as “Virovitica 1234 Experience the Century”, “Zagrepčanka 512”, and “162 Steps”. He is also a recreational cyclist and has taken part in the MTB Marathon “XCM PICOK”.



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PODRAVINA STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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