

Interreg Lakes connect: The story of the project

from October 2022 to May 2024 and beyond...

Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



Co-funded by
the European Union

 SUSTAINABLE WATERS
Lakes connect

**Clean water as a foundation
for sustainability**

**Reduction in pollution levels in lakes
is a prerequisite for enhancing water quality
and promoting sustainable tourism in the region.**

● Reflections on project success: challenges and joys...



“Although implementing this project was a huge challenge, it brought us a lot of joy.”

Prof. Ewa Bulska,

Director of the University
of Warsaw Biological
and Chemical Research Centre



“Throughout the project, we benefited from the support of the Interreg Secretariat.”

Marlena Tokarska

Lakes Connect Financial Manager,
University of Warsaw Biological
and Chemical Research Centre

● Challenges...

Key challenges faced

- Effective communication;
- Lack of information on international cooperation;
- Creating understandable communication channels;
- Engaging local communities and stakeholders.

● Collaborative goals

The project aimed to address the challenges of lake pollution through collaborative efforts.



"... to protect lakes from the negative impacts of tourism, emphasizing collaboration between scientists, local authorities, and organizations."

Magdalena Michalska-Kacymirow, Ph.D.

Project Manager, University of Warsaw
Biological and Chemical Research Centre



"Lakes connect was a remarkable initiative addressing the urgent problem of surface water contamination."

Eliza Kurek, Ph.D.

Senior Researcher, R&D Office Manager, University of Warsaw
Biological and Chemical Research Centre

● Partnerships and Collaboration

Five partners from 3 countries and diverse environments collaborated on this initiative.

List of partners:

- **University of Warsaw (Leading Partner)**
- **Foundation for the Protection of the Great Masurian Lakes**
- **Gulbene Municipality**
- **Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology**
- **Siauliai Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts**



“Lakes connect – a thread of connections between people from the world of science, NGOs, and authorities.”

Magdalena Jurgielewicz

Board Member, Foundation for the Protection of the Great Masurian Lakes

● Pilot studies and findings

We conducted pilot studies on the water quality of selected reservoirs before, during, and after the holiday season. These findings will inform future conservation strategies and policies.



“Even if pilots looked like they required effort, they provided an unforgettable experience during execution.”

Ewa Babkiewicz, Ph.D.

Researcher, University of Warsaw

Biological and Chemical Research Centre

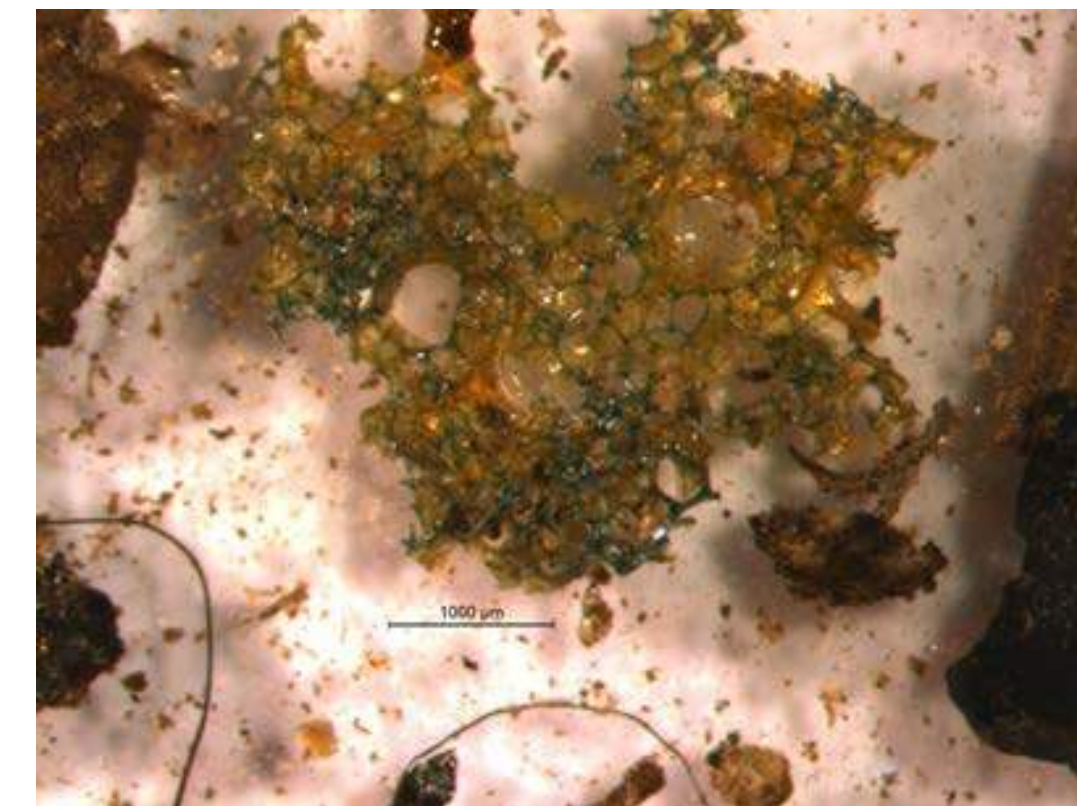
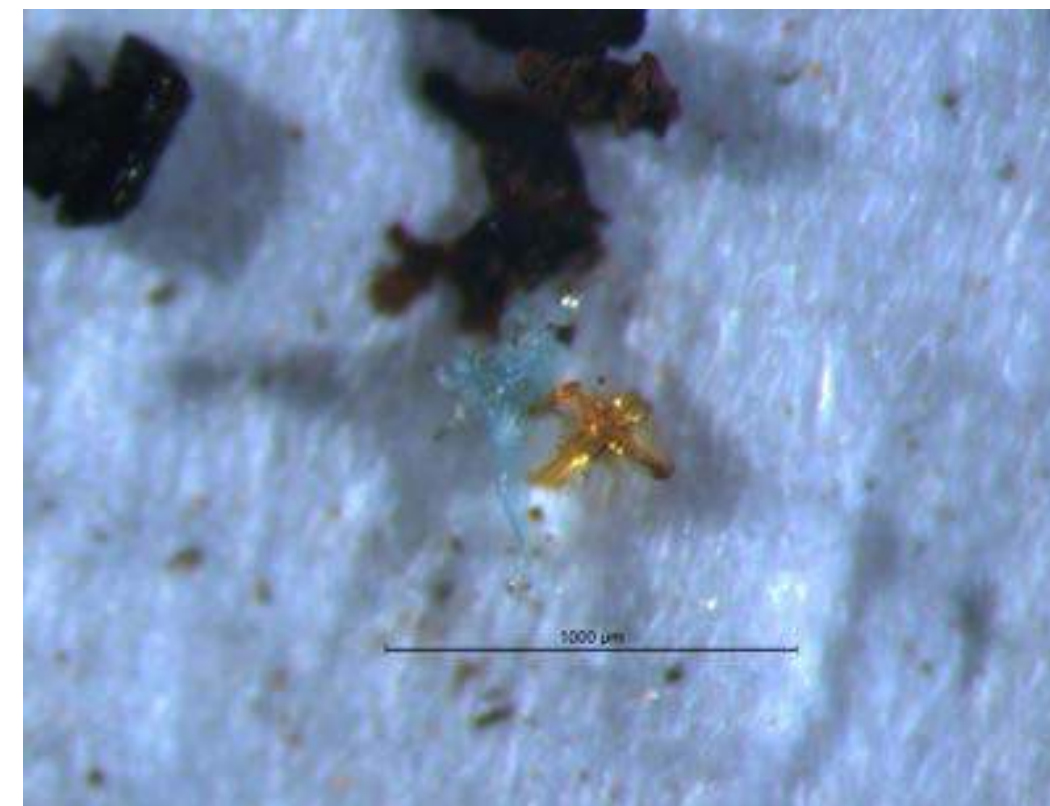
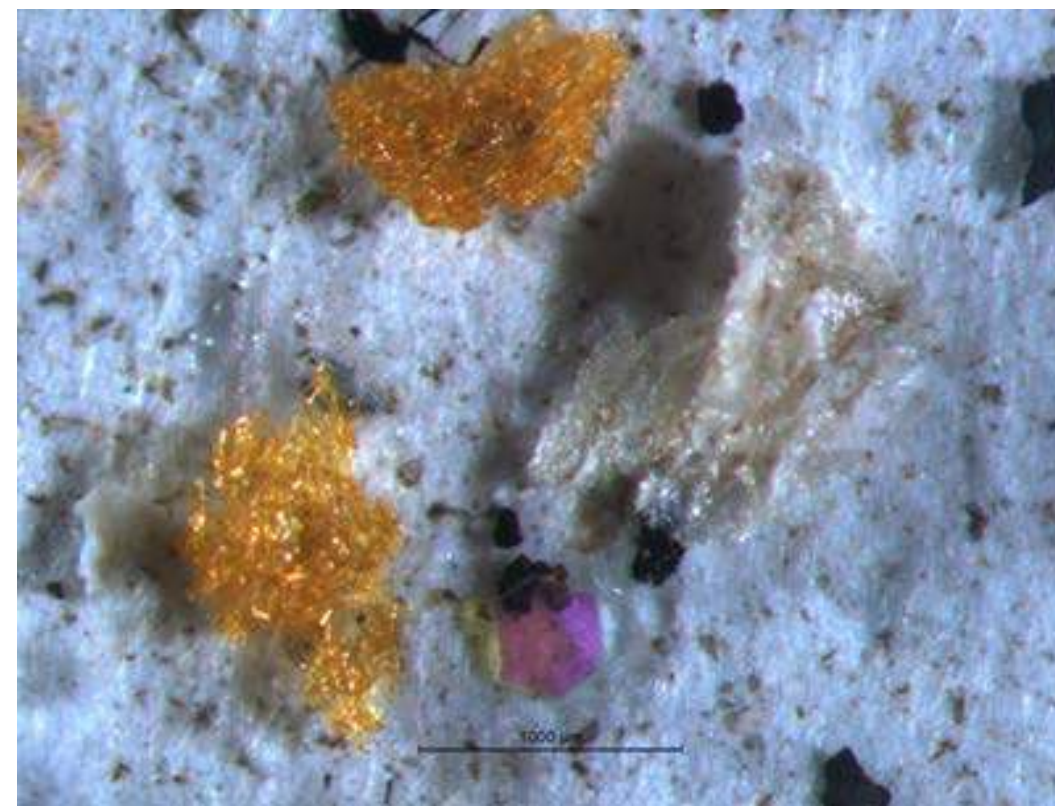
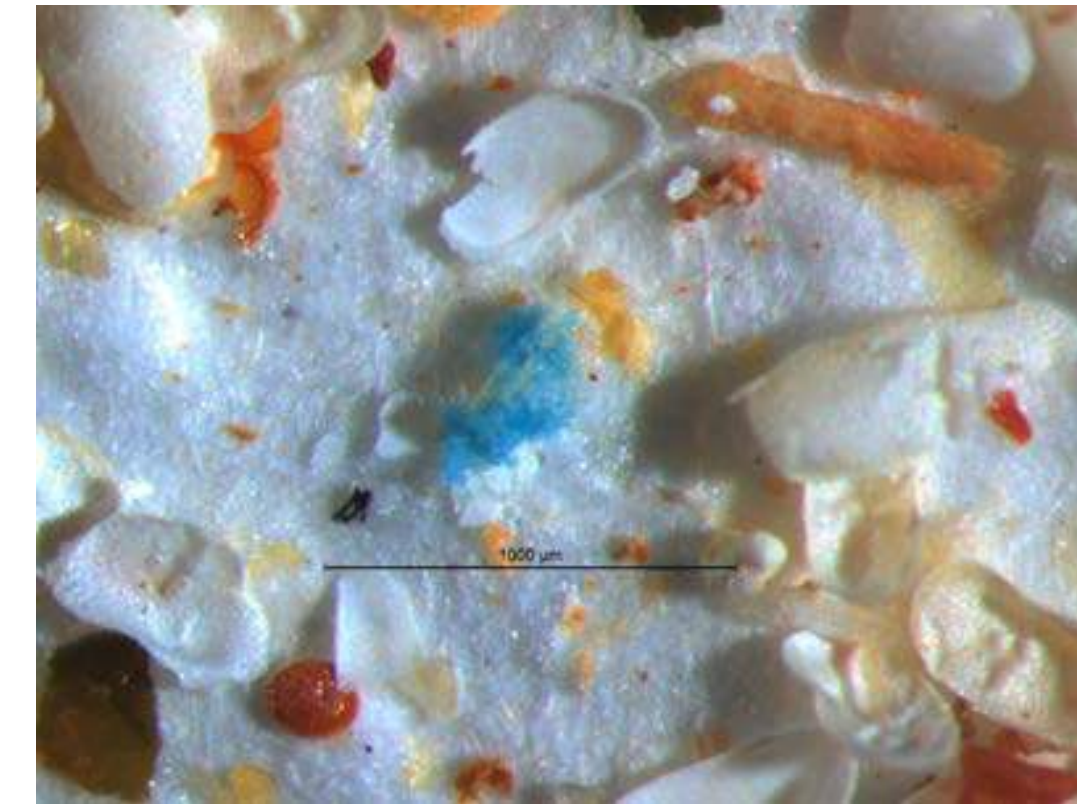
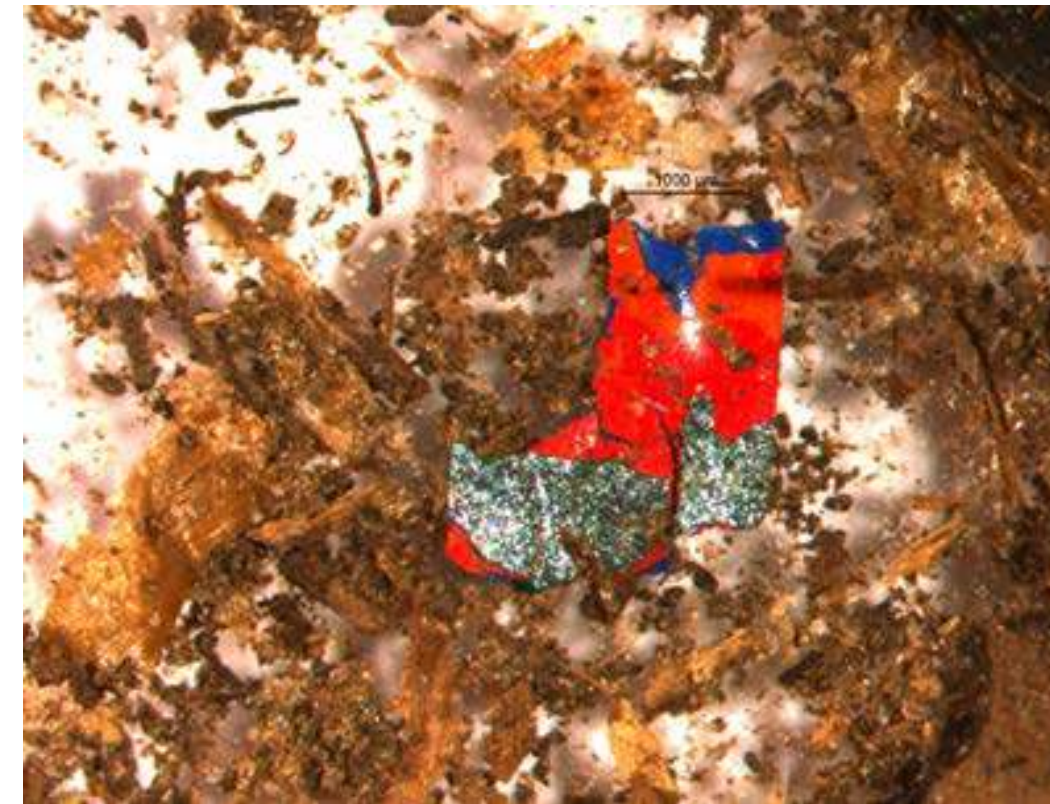


Pilot studies were conducted on selected lakes in Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland...



**Then the collected samples were analyzed
in the laboratories in Poland and Latvia...**

- **During pilot studies on microplastics, many interesting and concerning findings were uncovered**



Microplastics: The invisible threat in our environment

● Project Dissemination

Community engagement efforts

We organized meetings with representatives from local communities, environmental organizations, and other relevant societies to discuss key issues and initiatives.



“One of the goal was to disseminate knowledge to society, thereby enhancing public awareness and understanding of this pressing environmental issue.”

Piotr Jachimowicz

Researcher,
University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn



"There was no limit to how difficult the subject could be; we always found a way to explain it to kindergarten kids, school pupils, university students, and local inhabitants."

Inta Dimante-Deimantoviiča

Senior Researcher,
Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology – LIAE

● Collaborative solutions for lake conservation

Increased public awareness and participation in lake conservation.



**“Intersectoral cooperation
was key to successful change.”**

Anna Nicińska, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor,
Faculty of Economic Science University of Warsaw



**“Through effective communication
and international collaboration,
we were discovering solutions
to maintain the beauty
and cleanliness of lakes.”**

Edyta Woźniak-Dudzińska

Lakes connect Communication Manager,
University of Warsaw Biological and Chemical Research Centre

● **Project dissemination around the society and stakeholders....**



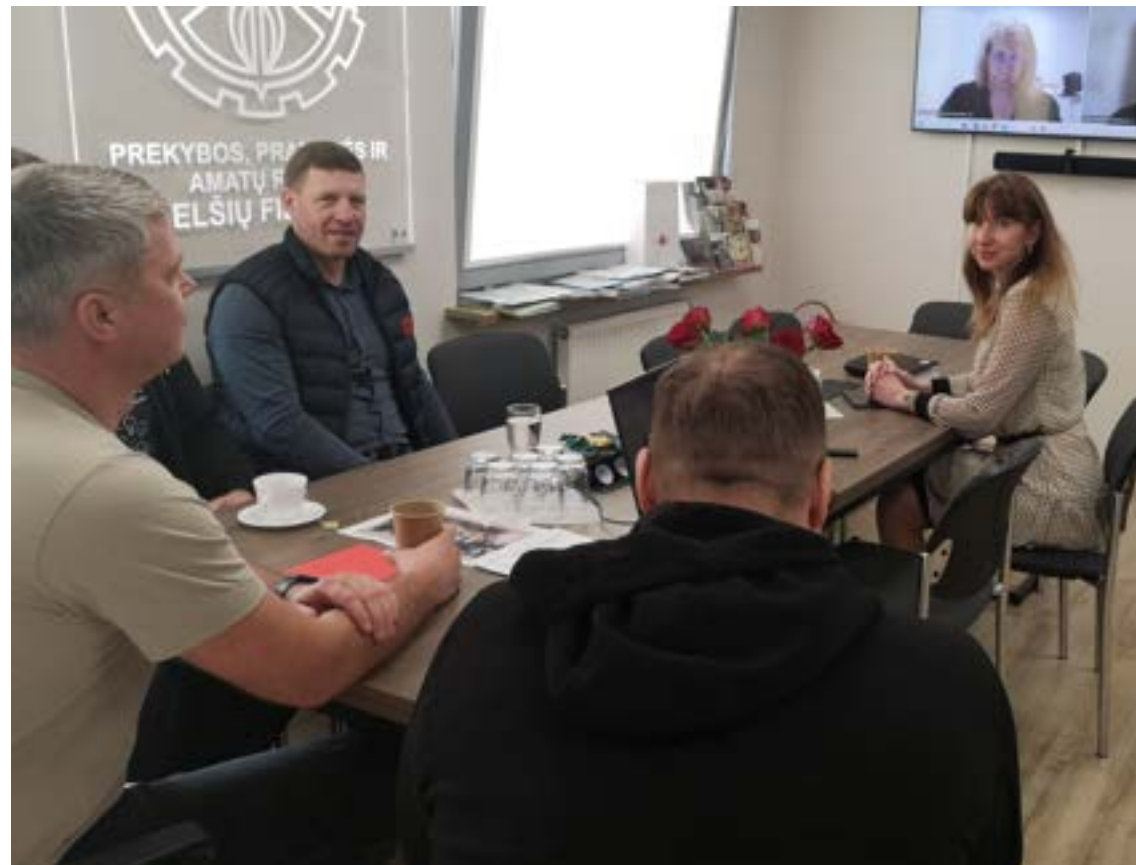
On the Polish TV (TVN), we discussed the project and its research



Meeting for the Mayor and other officials of the Telsiai District Municipality



We organized meeting of representatives from science and public administration



Meeting with stakeholders in Lithuania



We were recognized by the Polish Parliamentary Team for Lake Protection



Educational activities for youths

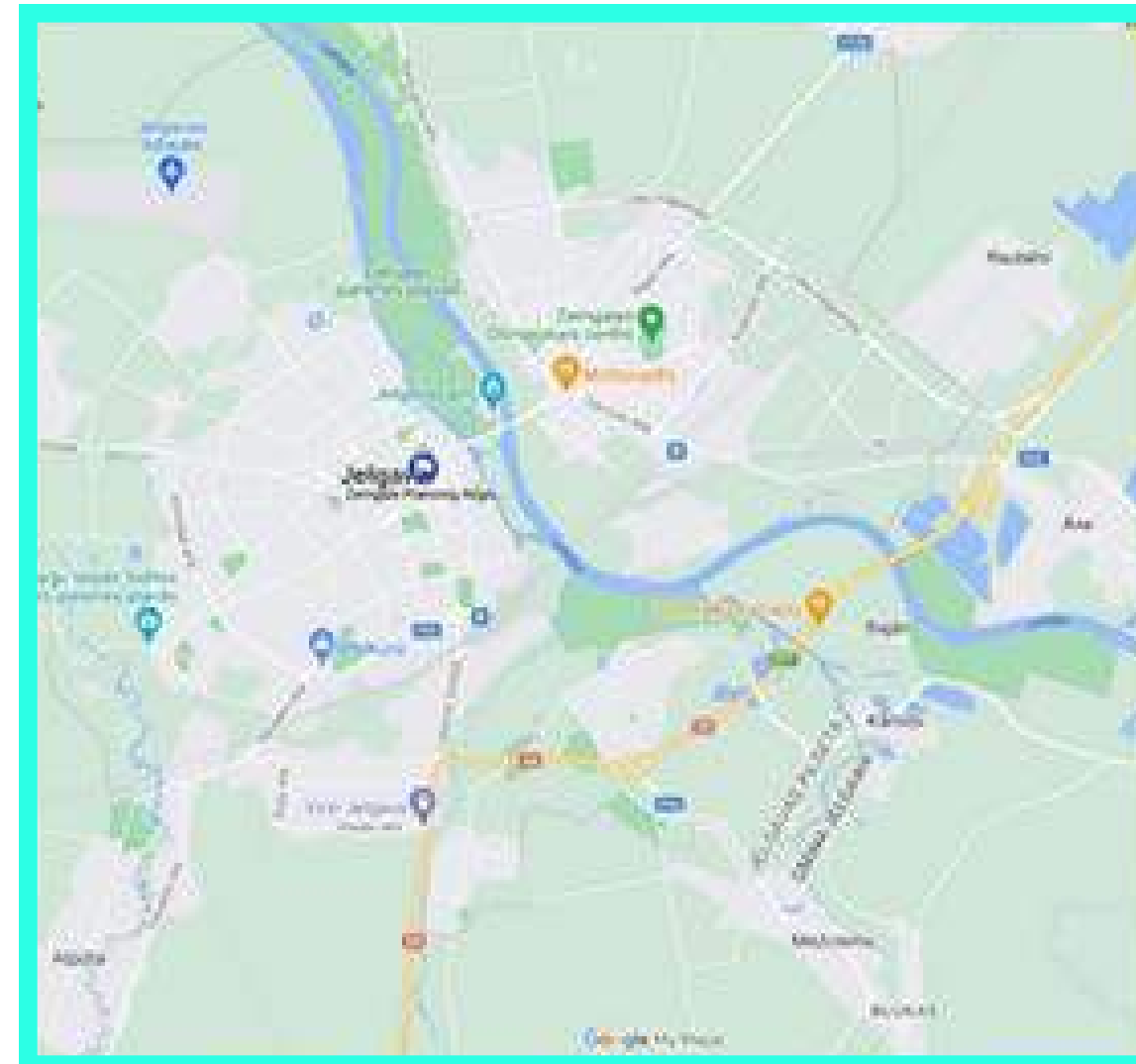
● Our solutions for the society...

Prepared some documents with our proposals and conclusions.



● Our solutions for the society...

Created an interactive map with the transnational cooperation model for local authorities, scientific units, and other organizations, along with instructions available on YouTube.



● Our solutions for the society...

Installed outdoor posters in each project partner country at the lakes in Poland, Lithuania and Latvia.



POLAND
Lake Krzywa Kuta in Jakunówko



LITHUANIA
Lake Mastis in Telsiai



LATVIA
Lake Stāmerienas in Gulbene

● **Our actions valued through increased stakeholder awareness**



“Thanks to this project the Directorate of Protected Areas of Žemaitija has for the first time drawn attention to the microplastics pollution problem and has become aware about the implications to wildlife and human health.”

Andrius Bajorūnas

Advisor to the Varniai Regional Park
Group of Žemaitija Directorate of Protected Areas



“It was very interesting to find out what kind of "wealth" Lake Mastis has accumulated.”

Kristina Jankauskienė

Head of Environment
and Civil Protection Subdivision
of Administration
of Telšiai District Municipality



“Lakes connect connects.”

Wojciech Pol, Ph.D.

Researcher, University of Białystok,
Faculty of Biology

● Continuation of efforts post-project:

- **Ongoing impact:**
Although the Lakes connect project has officially concluded, the connections and knowledge gained will continue to support lake conservation efforts.
- **International cooperation:**
The project united institutions from Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, facilitating the exchange of experiences and best practices in lake protection.
- **Stakeholder engagement:**
Collaboration with NGOs, researchers, and local authorities helped raise awareness of the pollution issues affecting lakes and addressed the real needs of local communities.
- **Sustainable solutions:** The developed collaboration models and training programs will be continued, ensuring ongoing support for lake conservation initiatives.



Explore our comprehensive project story at

www.interreg-baltic.eu/project/lakes-connect/

