

Press Release

76.6 million euros' worth investment for the Hungary-Serbia border region

New programme of cross-border cooperation between Hungary and Serbia officially opened

Novi Sad, Serbia, October 7, 2016 – European Union finances a new programme of cross-border cooperation between Hungary and Serbia with over 76.6 million EUR (76,616,474 EUR), via IPA fund (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) and through national counterparts, thus providing opportunities for non-profit organizations from the two countries to implement joint projects in the border region aimed at improving its infrastructure, economic cooperation and tourism offer, as well as nurturing its common cultural heritage and supporting the sustainable development.

New programme – **Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Serbia** was officially opened at a media conference held at the congress center of the Novi Sad Fair in Serbia. The launch of the new programme also marked the closure of the previous one – Hungary-Serbia IPA Cross-Border Co-operation Programme, which between 2008 and today enabled implementation of 204 projects of cooperation between non-profit organizations from the both sides of the border with the total of 50.1 million EUR from the IPA fund. The projects addressed three priorities of the programme: *Infrastructure and Environment, Economy, Education and Culture and Technical Assistance*.

“Alongside the increased cooperation of organizations from the two sides of the border, The projects implemented within the previous programme helped improvement of the overall quality of life in the border region – 34 kilometers of new bicycle paths were constructed; 11 actions in flood protection; 66 events were organized to enhance the economic cooperation; 44 products were developed in the area of joint culture and tourism; 335,604 people were in one way or the other involved in the projects; 181,690 people visited the cultural and historical attractions alongside the thematic routes supported by the Programme; 13,858 persons were trained in the joint educational activities in various fields; 494 scientific researchers were involved in the R&D projects activities, and many other initiatives,” pointed out Mr Péter Rácz, Head of the Joint Secretariat of the Programme, while summarizing the achievements of the previous programme Hungary-Serbia IPA CBC Programme.

“Programmes of cross-border cooperation play an important role in the development of

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the border regions. By supporting economic cooperation which is in the mutual interest of the two partnering countries, these programmes nurture good neighborly relations, foster stability and prosperity,” explained Mr Zsigmond Perényi, Deputy State Secretary at Hungarian Prime Minister’s Office, which represents the Managing Authority and Hungarian National Authority of the Programme.

“IPA funds are of enormous importance for EU-candidate countries, such as Serbia, as the cooperation with the EU member country facilitates the process of their integration into the EU,” explained Ms Sanda Šimić, Assistant Director at the European Integration Office of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, which represents the Serbian National Authority of the Programme. Ms Šimić added that in addition to the Hungary-Serbia programme, Serbia participates in the same type of IPA cross-border programmes with the neighboring EU member countries: Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania.

On the basis of “shared management system” of the participating countries – Hungary and Serbia, the new programme – Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Serbia funds and supports cooperation projects of non-profit organizations located in the Programme-eligible area, which includes Hungarian counties Csongrád and Bács-Kiskun, and Serbian territories: West Bačka, North Bačka, South Bačka, North Banat, Central Banat, South Banat and Srem.

Projects must address one out of four Priority areas of the Programme: ‘Improving the cross-border water management and risk prevention systems’, ‘Decreasing the bottlenecks of cross-border traffic’, ‘Encouraging tourism and cultural heritage cooperation’, or ‘Enhancing SMEs’ economic competitiveness through innovation driven development’.

At the same time, projects must contain the cross-border element, which means that they must be implemented in partnership, consisting of at least one organization from Hungary and one from Serbia. The organizations comprising the partnership are also required to apply together for the Programme financing.

According to Mr Rácz, the Programme will fund projects within three Calls for Proposals. “The Strategic Call for Proposal was launched on March 29 this year and it closed on September 30. It is intended for the projects which are in line with the relevant national

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and regional strategies and which have the capacity to make a high impact and improve the quality of life in the Programme area. The remaining two calls for proposals are intended for a broader range of Applicants and actions. The Second Call for Proposals was launched a few days ago, on October 3rd, and it will be open until January 31st, 2017," Mr Rácz confirmed.

In addition to the representatives of the Programme bodies – Mr Zsigmond Perényi, Ms Sanda Šimić, and Mr Péter Rácz, the guest speakers at the media conference were: Mr Steffen Hudolin, Head of Operations, Section 2 of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia, His Excellency Ambassador of Hungary in Serbia Mr Attila Pintér, Mr István Pásztor, President of Vojvodina Assembly, as well as representatives of several project implemented within the previous programme – Hungary-Serbia IPA Cross-Border Co-operation Programme. Along with the media representatives, the guests of the conference were representatives of the governmental organizations and ministries from both countries.

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Note to Editors:

Press Kit of the media conference containing several supporting documents to this press release may be obtained in the section [Media](#), and the photos from the event are available in the section [Gallery](#), on the website of the Programme.

About Interreg-IPA CBC Hungary-Serbia Programme

The Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Serbia is implemented within the 2014-2020 European Union financial framework, under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). On the basis of "shared management system" of the participating countries - Hungary and Serbia, the Programme funds and supports co-operation projects of organizations located in the Programme-eligible area - Hungarian counties Csongrád and Bács-Kiskun, and Serbian territories: West Bačka, North Bačka, South Bačka, North Banat, Central Banat, South Banat and Srem.

The Programme helps the development of a stable and co-operating region and the overall quality of life in the border region. It enables economic collaboration of organizations from the two countries, nurtures the common identity, and cultural and historical heritage of the border region, and contributes to its environmental sustainability and safety.

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For more information, please visit: www.interreg-ipa-husrb.com.

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