

March 3, 2017

Szentendre, Hungary

## **PRESS RELEASE**

***JOINTISZA partners cover key project details at successful “Kick-Off Meeting” and share project outline during livestreamed “First Stakeholder Event”***

The **JOINTISZA Project** (*Strengthening Cooperation between River Basin Management Planning and Flood Risk Prevention to Enhance the Status of Waters of the Tisza River Basin*) concluded a successful “Kick-Off Meeting and First Stakeholder Event” on March 1–2, 2017, which was held at the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC).

REC Executive Director Mihail Dimovski opened the “Kick-Off Meeting” by wishing the participants a productive and interesting session. “The whole Tisza sub-basin region faces serious threats from pollution and structural challenges, and is also affected by climate change,” Dimovski said. “The JOINTISZA project is a continuation of established cooperation efforts that will continue beyond the scope of the project itself.”

Istvan Joó from the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade acknowledged that five years of groundwork and cooperation between partners have made the JOINTISZA project possible. “Having taken over the presidency of the Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), one of Hungary’s most important objectives is to oversee its implementation,” stated Joó. “To this end, the JOINTISZA project is more than simply the harmonisation of the countries involved. We also have key international institutions on board, such as the ICDPR (International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River), which is crucial.”

Participants discussed expected outcomes and benefits of the two-year project, including: producing a set of recommendations for upgrading the Tisza River Basin Management Plan (TRBMP); facilitating and enhancing cooperation between project partners; building on previous water management and flood protection efforts; and serving as a stepping stone for future strategies and actions. The inclusion of two non-EU countries in the project (Serbia and Ukraine) was also noted as a highly important project feature.

The “First Stakeholder Event”, held on March 2, was livestreamed to the public from the REC Conference Center in Szentendre. The two-hour event featured two panel sessions: five speakers during the first session offered general remarks about the nature of the project, while participants during the second session provided specific details of the JOINTISZA project’s six work packages.

“INTERREG basically refers to EU programmes that involve territorial cooperation,” Gusztav Csomor, Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) Secretariat, explained during the first panel session. “Project achievements should be taken up by all stakeholders and target groups, and the

focus should be on taking an integrated approach. Projects like this shouldn't be developed simply to be carried out and concluded without taking on board everything that comes before and will continue later.”

Many of the project partners involved in the JOINTISZA project have been collaborating for many years, both in national and transboundary contexts, so there is good reason to hope that their work together during this project will bring lasting, positive impacts.

JOINTISZA, supported by the Interreg Europe through the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP), brings together 17 partners across five countries sharing the Tisza River Basin (Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Ukraine).

JOINTISZA falls into the *Environment and Culture Responsible Danube Region* priority area of the DTP, with a specific objective to strengthen transnational water management and flood risk prevention.

The overall funding for JOINTISZA is 2.2 million euros.

**For more information**

[JOINTISZA Project and the Danube Transnational Programme \(DTP\)](#)

Press contacts:

JOINTISZA Project Communication Team

+36 1 225 44 00 / +36 26 504 000

[jointisza@ovf.hu](mailto:jointisza@ovf.hu) / [ikoszta@rec.org](mailto:ikoszta@rec.org) / [yponzo@rec.org](mailto:yponzo@rec.org)