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PRESS RELEASE

Positive effects of walking for more livable cities

2,38 million € for cooperation on establishing walkable cities in the Danube Region

Better connected and energy responsible Danube Region is one of the 4 priority axes of the Danube Transnational programme. The cooperation tackles common challenges related to environmentally-friendly, low-noise, low-carbon and safe transport systems in order to contribute to sustainable regional and local mobility, modal integration and intelligent transport.

17 partners from Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Austria, and Serbia have launched the **CityWalk project – “Towards energy responsible places: Establishing walkable cities in the Danube Region”**. The partnership is led by the Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj from Slovenia. The 30-months long project (December 2016 - May 2019) was approved within the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The main goal of the Danube Transnational Programme is to develop coordinated policies and actions in the programme area reinforcing the commitments of the Europe 2020 strategy towards the three dimensions of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

CityWalk project helps cities in the Danube Region to reduce emissions, noise and to become safer, better places to live, by increasing the role of more sustainable forms of mobility in the urban transport mix, especially active transport forms – like walking and biking. To do so the main focus of project is to improve the key conditions of walkability.

The kick-off meeting of the CityWalk project took place from **7th – 8th February 2017 in Szeged**, hosted by **First Hungarian Responsible Innovation Association**. Partners and participants were learning about good practices in improving walkability (presented by **Petra Szűcs**) and sustainable urban mobility actions in Szeged (presented by **Dr. Gábor Dávid Kiss**). Urban development expert **Béla Kézy** gave an inspiring presentation on the topic of walkability and how it can be used as innovative urban development tool. Hosting partner also organized a sightseeing walk in the city center of Szeged.

Ana Leganel, project officer from Joint Secretariat of Danube Transnational Programme, has shown her interest and support of DTP by attending the CityWalk project kick-off meeting: *»CityWalk is a very relevant project for the Danube Transnational Programme in terms of sustainable mobility in the Danube*

region. The fact that it is the only project approved in the first Call for Proposals tackling the first and most sustainable mode of transport, i.e. walking makes it even more relevant. Walking is beneficial on three different levels - cities, communities and individuals. Walking offers us more than we may realize at a first glance: we exercise and get in a better shape and mood, we have the possibility to fully enjoy the surroundings, we get in direct contact with nature and have a chance to interact with other people. Walking is environmentally-friendly and socially inclusive. Considering today's heavy traffic and consequences thereof on the environment and the general wellbeing of people, CityWalk project is very much welcome and it will certainly bring a significant change in terms of transport safety but also in creating more livable cities. As the partners involved in this project represent small and medium size municipalities, we expect that the experiences and good practices to be established within the project will be transferred towards bigger cities as well in order to ensure a larger geographical scope of the project impact to the benefit of the inhabitants of the Danube region.»

The CityWalk kick-off meeting started a process of interregional exchange and cooperation addressing common challenges related to the improvement of mobility through efficiently combining various means of transport in urban areas in the Danube Region. Project CityWalk is focused on three specific objectives – (1) reducing transport related CO₂ emissions, (2) enhancing the integrated use of sustainable transport modes, and (3) increasing the safety of urban transport networks and livability.

Two more public events are planned in the projects duration time: **Mid-term Symposium in Ptuj, Slovenia** and **Final event in Oradea, Romania**. Partners will be working closely with local and transnational stakeholder groups to promote uptake of CityWalk outputs across Danube Region. Project outputs cover training courses, interactive workshops, a guidebook for designing walkability plans, local walkability plans, pilot actions, policy proposal package, etc.

Efficient urban transport systems, with an emphasis on active forms of transport – especially walking have various conditions. CityWalk project helps cities in the Danube Region to identify the obstacles, develop and implement a plan to address those obstacles.

For more information about the CityWalk project please visit:

www.interreg-danube.eu/citywalk

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List of partners in CityWalk project:

- Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj, Slovenia
- First Hungarian Responsible Innovation Association, Hungary
- Development Centre of the Heart of Slovenia, Slovenia
- Nyíregyháza Industrial park Ltd., Hungary
- Cassovia Life Sciences, Slovakia
- City municipality Varaždin, Croatia
- Municipality of Oradea, Romania
- Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar", Bulgaria
- Regional Development Agency of the Pilsen Region, Czech Republic
- Municipality of Weiz, Austria
- Varna Municipality, Bulgaria
- City of Valjevo, Serbia
- Chamber of Commerce and industry of Serbia, Serbia
- City municipality Ptuj, Slovenia
- City of Stříbro, Czech Republic
- Municipality of Nyíregyháza City with County Rank, Hungary
- Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Serbia