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Borderless co-operation of local communities for the landscape heritage of “Fabulous” Hetés

*Iron Curtain Trail Association and Greenways Methodological Association, Hungary;
Local governments of Bödeháza, Gáborjánháza, Szijártóháza and Zalaszombatfa, Hungary
Local authorities of Genterovci, Kamovci, Radmožanci, Žitkovci, Mostje and Banuta, Slovenia*

Participants of the programme

In the Hetés region Hungarian settlements have been cooperating with settlements on the Slovenian side of the border since 2003. The cooperation of ten tiny settlements soon became wider as follows:

Hungarian Applicants	Iron Curtain Trail Association;
	Greenways Methodological Association;
	Local government of Gáborjánháza;
	Local government of Szijártóháza;
	Local government of Zalaszombatfa;
Hungarian partners	Local government of Bödeháza;
	Common Local Government of Rédics;
	National Agricultural Advisory, Educational and Rural Development Institute (Budapest);
	Órség National Park Directorate; Balaton-felvidék National Park Directorate
Slovenian partners	Mura Region Hungarian Local-Government National Community (Muravidéki Magyar Önkormányzati Nemzeti Közösség - Pomurska madžarska samoupravna narodna skupnost)
	Local communities of Genterovci (Göntérháza);
	Local communities of Kamovci (Kámaháza);
	Local communities of Radmožanci (Radamos);
	Local communities of Žitkovci (Zsitkóc);
	Local communities of Mostje (Hídvég);
	Local communities of Banuta (Bánuta);
	Local authority of Dobronak;
	Local authority of Lendava;
	Bánffy Center; Goricko National Park Directorate;
The programme was financed by	Local governments;
	National Agricultural Advisory, Educational and Rural Development Institute (now: Herman Ottó Institute);
	European Union through South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme;
	Local people by voluntary contribution;

Presentation of the programme

In 2004, citizens restored the immediate environment of the border in voluntary work, and built the **Road of Friendship** linking the two neighbouring countries, Slovenia and Hungary.

A **memorial of the accession to the European Union** was erected between the villages Zsitkóc and Bödeháza. Every year before New Year's Eve the local governments, civil organisations and citizens celebrate belonging together along the border, in the forest at the memorial.

As part of the cooperation, the settlements in the Hetés microregion regularly submit a joint application to organise the **Hetés Gastronomy Fair**, which was held to great success for the 10th time this year.

In 2014, applicants organised restoration works by mobilising volunteers, the **Park of Friendship were created exactly on the border** in the territory of both countries. In the middle of the new green space, right at the border line, the statue of „Borderless Bird” for set up. This new unique landscape feature of the micro region was made from the rusty wire of the former Iron Curtain found in the forest around. This new community place with this new statue now became the symbol of the landscape's unity of Hetés.

In 2013 and 2014, the **detailed survey of the unique landscape features** of the Hetés region was carried out in two stages. The first stage comprised an expert assessment with the participation of landscape architects and landscape geographers based on a national standard¹. In the second stage the assessment materials were amended and finalised in cooperation with the local communities relying on their „local knowledge”. **Totally, 118 landscape values were surveyed and documented.** Several „hidden” landscape features came to light. All these valuable landscape elements were recorded in the registers after joint site visits.

In winter of 2014, in the second stage of surveying so called **Winter's Evening Discussions** were organised on 10 occasions to involve local people. On the meetings, the methodology of surveying unique landscape features and the importance of their preservation, as well as the greenways' methodology were introduced to local inhabitants.

The **„Fabulous Hetés” Landscape Walks** were launched for the locals and all interested parties. On this field walks not only valuable landscape elements were presented, but it also promoted community building and deepened the connections between landscape and local communities.

On the Hungarian side of the border a **proposal was drawn up for the integration of unique landscape elements into municipal planning documentation.**

Linking the surveyed valuable landscape elements of Hetés, a **greenway was established.** This path system was established for hikers and cyclists, and it enables the sustainable use of these landscape features for tourism.

A map showing both sides of the trans-boundary landscape of Hetés were compiled in the frame of the application programme. This map contains the routes of the greenway system connecting the unique landscape features of the area. This map was edited with the financial support of South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme in the frame of the EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail (ICT) project. With co-operation of the ICT project, a **publication were compiled and edited on the landscape heritage of Hetés, and its role in the sustainable development of the micro region.** This publication is for local people to raise their awareness for their own natural and cultural historical landscape heritage of Hetés, and also for tourist for helping sustainable development of Hetés. The preservation of unique landscape features is of key importance for increasing the touristic appeal of the

¹ MSZ 20381:2009 Természetvédelem. Egyedi tájértékek kataszterezése (Nature conservation. Cadastre of unique landscape features)

area. Tourism based on natural and cultural historic features while sparing them can secure the livelihood for locals for the long term.

The results of the programme are presented by many articles in journals and online. Since 2008, the villages of the Hetés microregion have had their own independent website (hetesifalvak.hu), launched upon an initiative of local governments. In 2013, the Facebook page Fabulous Hetés (Mesés Hetés) was launched, and this community media surface seems to be an important role in community building. In December 2014, a new website of the region (hetesonline.hu), edited by the applicants in cooperation with Slovenian partners started its work.

Conclusion: Exemplary value of the programme, the programme's contribution to the implementation of European Landscape Convention

The programme has a protective approach. Its aims uncovering landscape values of local and regional significance that define the character of the landscape, putting an end to the loss of values and preserving the characteristics of the landscape. Building a local community that is active and ready to act for their living environment and the Hetés landscape plays an outstandingly important role in the implementation. Realising the significance of local human capacities the applicants reach their goals adapting to these.

One of the major values of the application is the permanent active participation of local people increasing the openness and awareness of a large part of the population to the landscape on both sides of the border, across all age groups. Its methodology (walks in the landscape) is novel and exemplary.

The most complex and the biggest outcome of the programme is the **revitalization of connection and natural co-operation among communities** were living on two sides of a state border hermetically closed for decades. Great virtue of the application is that it handles the Hetés landscape divided by the border as a single unit with **elimination of barriers have in heads and souls** in spite of demolishing physical borders, and a result of these **creating the possibility of common thinking and planning of future for landscape and life.**