



MINISTRY OF
AGRICULTURE

Department of Environmental Conservation

Ref. No. KmF /84- 8 / 2021.

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

To National SEA Contact Points of Ukraine, the Slovak Republic and Romania

Ukraine

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Romania

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The letter is sent only electronically

Subject: Notification on the ongoing SEA procedure of the *HUSKROUA Interreg NEXT 2021-2027 Programme*

Dear Mrs. Stavchuk,

Dear Ms. Donevova,

Dear Ms. Mocanu,

I am writing you now to inform you that the ongoing SEA procedure of the *Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine Interreg NEXT Programme 2021-2027* (hereinafter referred to as Programme) has arrived to its next stage. The aim of the Programme is to enhance the cross-border cooperation between the participating countries. As you know and have already been informed about, the Programme is being prepared with a significant involvement of your country as well, and covers a territory of 83 057 km², including 10 counties providing homes for over 8 million citizens such as

- *Zakarpatska, Ivano-Frankivska, and Chernivetska* Regions in Ukraine
- *Satu-Mare, Maramureş, and Suceava* Counties in Romania,
- *Prešovský and Košický* Regions in Slovak Republic,
- *Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg* Counties in Hungary.

The Programme requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be conducted before its adoption according to the legal provisions of the *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (known as SEA Directive) as well as of the *Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context done in Kyiv 2003* (known as SEA Protocol). The SEA process includes two rounds of transboundary consultations as follows:

- Consultation with the relevant environmental authorities in the participating countries concerned that aimed to solicit inputs on the scope and the level of detail of the assessment has been carried out in April-May, 2021 with involvement of your country as well. **Hereby I thank you for your valuable inputs as well as your kind agreement with the Scoping Report received within this procedure in May 2021 (Ref. No.: KMF/84/2021.).** The Programme developer took them into consideration and finalised the Scoping Report accordingly, please kindly find attached the summary of the responses received.
- Based on the outcome of the scoping procedure, independent external experts of the Ex Ante Ltd. had **prepared the *Environmental Report as well as the Programme draft (i.e. the SEA documentation) for consultation with the relevant environmental authorities and the public concerned*** according to the stipulations of the Article 6 of the SEA Directive as well as of the Articles 8 and 9 of the SEA Protocol.

The Programming Committee approved the SEA documentation on 5 October, 2021, therefore the Budapest-based **Managing Authority requested the Ministry of Agriculture in Hungary to launch the SEA procedure in all participating countries.**

Based on provisions of the Article 6 of the SEA Directive as well as of the Articles 8 and 9 of the SEA Protocol, the SEA documentation comprised of the following documents:

- **HUSKROUA Interreg NEXT 2021-2027 Programme draft,** and
- **Environmental Report.**

Please note that **both documents are provided in full length** and – for the effective public participation – **in your national languages (i.e. Slovakian, Romanian and Ukrainian)**, as agreed previously. For your convenience, please **find the translated version ... to your national language attached** (3MB).

Further language versions (including English and Hungarian as well) **can be downloaded** from the following link:

<https://huskroua-cbc.eu/news/programme-news/documents-available-for-slovakia-romania-and-ukraine-regarding-the-sea-process-of-interreg-a-next-programme-between-hungary-slovakia-romania-and-ukraine-for-the-period-2021-2027>

To comply with the provisions of the Article 6 of the SEA Directive and of the Article 8 and 9 of the SEA Protocol, please **make the full documentation available to the public concerned for 30 days to allow them to comment** and thus conduct an effective public participation in the process. Please **ensure the same period for consultation with the environmental and health authorities** in your country.

As you are aware, European Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes are special types of programmes as they are developed jointly by the participating countries, so they do not follow a clear domestic or a clear transboundary procedure and not ruled explicitly by either the SEA Directive, or the SEA Protocol. Indeed, all involved countries have to go through their own SEA procedures before their respective Governments can adopt them, therefore in practice, it should be conducted and coordinated in a very pragmatic way allowing the participating countries to be able to fully comply with the general provisions of the SEA legislation.

Bearing in mind the responsibility of carrying out the necessary SEA process successfully but still pragmatically in terms of information exchange and timing, the *Hungarian-based Managing Authority of the HUSKROUA Programme* decided to take advantage of the Espoo contact/focal network published on the website of the SEA Protocol (http://www.unece.org/env/eia/points_of_contact.html), and decided to distribute all SEA-related information of the HUSKROUA Programme through one channel asking the national contact points/focal points to initiate the procedure required by the country specific laws by forwarding the documents whom it may concern within the country. Feedback, comments and all remarks are expected through the same channel.

Therefore you are kindly asked to arrange the necessary steps in your country to fulfil the legal requirements of the SEA Protocol and the SEA Directive as detailed above.

Taking into account that (1) all documents, which are required by the legal stipulations to be provided for commenting with the official notification of the SEA procedure in transboundary context are available in full length in your national language, as well as, (2) sending the notification letter and its annex electronically to the national contact points to the SEA Protocol is concerned official delivery, **we expect to receive the official standpoint of your country by electronic means within 45 days i.e. by 9 December, 2021, but definitely no later than 15 December (Wednesday), 2021.**

Any comments should be provided in English language, as working language of the Programme.

Please, note that in case of no response received by 15 December, 2021, it **would be considered as approval of the Environmental Report and draft Programme and it allows the Managing Authority to finalise the procedure.**

All correspondence in this regard should be arranged via email by sending your response

- **to the Hungarian contact point to the SEA Protocol (Zsuzsanna Pocsai, PhD, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Environmental Preservation; e-mail address: zsuzsanna.pocsai@am.gov.hu), as well as**
- **as carbon-copy (cc.) of to the official e-mail address created for coordinating transboundary SEA cases in Hungary to ensure the smooth and effective communication (skv@am.gov.hu).**

Please note that by sending this notification and its annex by electronic means via e-mail to the inbox of the national point of contact for notification being published on the website of the UNECE, **Hungary considers the SEA procedure is officially open with Ukraine, the Slovak Republic and Romania.** In order to ensure faster and efficient administration, Hungary prefers direct e-mail correspondence on the matter under the Espoo Convention and the SEA Protocol through the up-to-date network of contacts indicated on the official website of the UNECE.

Should you encounter any difficulties regarding this procedure, or in case of any questions, I am at your kind disposal by email.

You are kindly invited to acknowledge the receipt of this email and the letter as well as the documents attached to it.


Your kind co-operation is highly appreciated.

Attachments:

- *Environmental Report of the HUSKROUA Interreg NEXT 2021-2027 Programme in your national language*
- *Draft of the of the HUSKROUA Interreg NEXT 2021-2027 Programme in your national language*
- *Summary of the responses received within the scoping procedure*

Budapest, ²⁵ October, 2021.

Sincerely yours,


Dr Zsuzsanna POCSAI
National Contact Point
to the UNECE Kyiv (SEA) Protocol

