

SUMMARY of the VI. Regional Tisza Roundtable

The VI. Regional Tisza Roundtable was held on 13rd September 2021, in Tokaj, as the final chord of the II. Bodrog Plastic Cup and the Interreg DTP Tid(y)Up project, by the Association of Environmental Enterprises and the Filmjungle Association.



Tiszalök-Tiszatardos roadstead

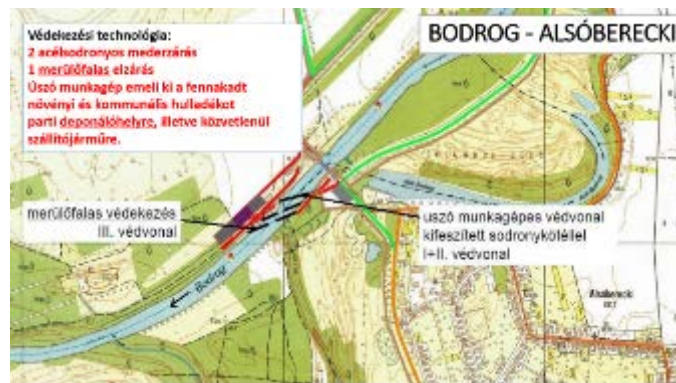
The waste, flooding our country's rivers, is common talk nowadays and the highly anticipated positive developments are in progress in the upstream countries. Meanwhile, Hungary is also implementing increasingly complex and effective protection measures, the waste removal line has been set up, the "Clean Hungary" program has started, the Plastic Cup events are running with full house (with a significant over-subscription) and other cleaning events are organized consecutively. Last year, the [INTERREG DTP Tid\(y\)Up](#) project has also launched, providing an other opportunity for exchanging fresh information and common reflection. As in the previous roundtables, some of the speakers reported inspiring and nearly historically significant developments, the networked river protection has been started.

Participants of the VI. Regional Tisza Round Table were welcomed by **Gergely Hankó**, managing director of KSZGYSZ (Hungarian Association of Environmental Enterprises) and shortly introduced the goals and measures of the INTERREG Tid(y)Up - F(ol)low the Plastic from source to the sea, **György Posta**, mayor of Tokaj, drew the attention to the touristic treasures of the Tisza and Bodrog, in his opening speech.

Balázs Horváth, the coordinator of the Water Quality Priority Area of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), presented the latest news on waste pollution in the Danube Strategy's Water Quality Priority Area. The recently completed [JoinTisza](#) project, the ongoing TidyUp project and the Plastic Cup have already taken effective steps to improve the level of river protection, and, besides this, the Hungarian participants are also promoting and support waste management developments in Ukraine and Romania.

Miklós Rácz, Director of the North Hungarian Water Management Directorate (ÉMVIK), hold his presentation about reaching a new level of protection against pollution at the Bodrog River. He spoke about the protection functions and the first experiences of the waste removal machinery line on the

Upper-Tisza, and the planned river waste filtration system with floating machineries and submerged wall protection on the Bodrog, based on these experiences.



Source: presentation of Miklós Rác

From the report we could learn that a similar protection and damage control solution to the Upper Tisza chain is already being implemented at 4 sites on the Bodrog. Miklós Rác highlighted the construction of river bank protection facilities and the necessary infrastructure, the renovation and operationalisation of existing barges, as well as the procurement of additional equipment among the future developments. As regards border water issues, it is necessary to ensure and improve forecasting to allow more time to prepare for pollution. The assistance of upstream countries is needed in this task.

Attila Kovács, from the Centre for Development of Active and Ecotourism, speaking about the relationship between regional ecotourism and environmental protection, underlined that a tourism strategy is being prepared, which will take into account the recreational interests and needs of children, students, families and pensioners, while implementing a “gentle tourism”.



Source: presentation of Attila Kovács

In the forming, wide-ranging active tourism information system, the offers of all regions will be available from one interface, and having a complete marketing portfolio (website, application, printed materials, public information system) in several languages for all active tourism regions is also a goal. He also reported about priority developments, in which they are planning constructions of tourist chalets, cycle paths, access to river routes, accommodation facilities, marinas, boat slips, pilgrimage and via ferrata routes, campsites - and the expansion of services built on these. This also means more job opportunities.

Following them, **Dr. Szilvia Balogh** designated deputy state secretary at the [Ministry for Innovation and Technology](#) reported on the results of the “Clean Hungary” program so far, the institutional changes and future goals.

In order to clean up the country from illegal waste, the staff of waste management authorities has been increased. Their main task is to implement the Clean Hungary programme, which will involve cleaning up public areas and removing abandoned or illegally dumped waste in several phases between 2020 and 2022. The next major national action will be the [Teszedd!](#) campaign, which is expected to involve clean-ups at hundreds of sites between 18 and 24 October. You can sign up as a **volunteer** or as a **coordinator** **until 10th of October**.



from the presentation of Dr. Szilvia Balogh

An other key topic was the presentation on the plans involving the border waters by Councillor **Sándor Pásztor**, representing the Romanian Ministry of Environment, Water and Forestry. The presentation showed that Hungary and Romania have agreed on the cleaning, maintenance and financing of the designated river sections, which also requires cooperation with Ukraine. He also reported on a positive step forward that has been achieved: a new barrier has been opened, built to restrain and facilitate the extraction of waste from the river.



Source: Sándor Pásztor presentation – the new barrier

As a quest speaker, Ruslan Shvarts, managing director of LLC Zakarpatekovtorsyrovyna and environmental engineer, presented their gap-filler initiative "Value-saving waste management in Transcarpathian

Region". He spoke about their actions in recent years, which included school courses and selective waste collection actions to increase the culture of waste management efficiency. Their aim is to reduce the amount of secondary waste going to landfill or other places.



from the presentation of Ruslan Shvarts

As part of their river clean-up activities, together with the water authority, the disaster management authorities and the forestry, they cleaned a section of the Borzsa River with nets stretched between the river banks, so that the waste extracted in this way - after sorting - can be used to produce secondary raw material by the firm.

"We are planning to set up individual collection points and forming a network from this points at the municipalities, where the population will be responsible for collection and the municipality will be for processing, so that people in the region can learn the correct way to sort the waste and, last but not least, sell the secondary raw material, thus making a significant contribution to the development of their local communities. ..." *"The improvements will result in less waste going to landfill and create jobs."* - The Ukrainian waste management expert outlined the plans



Waste trap, a.k.a. „szitka” at Borzsa River

Their heroic struggle is showcased in a video series featuring the pioneers who have started the change in the Transcarpathian Region. In the first part, one can learn more about the work of Ruslan.



[River guards series by Plastic Cup, Part 1.](#)

About the results and plans of the [Plastic Cup](#), Attila Dávid Molnár, President of the Filmjungle Association, the founder of the Plastic Cup, reported besides the experiences and outcomes of the 2nd Bodrog PET Cup, which ended the day before. With the support of the [Blue Planet Climate Protection Foundation](#), the pontoon convoy was inaugurated in Sáropatak, and the floating moorings (made of PET bottles) were completed in Olaszliszka and Bodrogkeresztúr. The inauguration ceremony of these ports took place during the 2nd Bodrog PET Cup, within the framework of the "5 countries 1 river" project, in the previous days.



River-saving centre at Kisköre (Photo from the presentation of Attila Dávid Molnár)

To support this, after a long technical preparation, the [Mobile Plastic Workshop](#) was completed, with which they have been touring the country and have also had a great success in the Transcarpathian Region. They have also installed an open-air river-saving centre at Kisköre, where, after sorting, they can bale various waste streams as a preparation for transport and recycling. Volunteering is a significant part of this work, which has become a community organizing force and a career guidance tool.

The founder also highlighted the international importance of the Plastic Cup and described the most important, cross-border projects and efforts to eradicate the problem. He is pleased to see how many

people are motivated by Plastic Cup ideas and are doing what they can for the cause. This multiplier effect is the real success.



Mobile plastic Workshop (MÜMÜ) (Source: presentation of Attila Dávid Molnár)

Gergely Hankó, CEO of the Association of Environmental Services and Manufacturers, gave presentation on river pollution and its legal environment. He stressed that the maintenance of river water in good condition, its biological and chemical purity and the prevention of pollution are essential for the long-term provision of natural and human "services" such as biodiversity, wetlands, natural, agricultural, industrial and domestic water needs, tourism, fisheries.

He considers particularly important the development of commonly accepted standards for measuring microplastics, establishment of a framework for cooperation in prevention and response, and the development of a monitoring system based on common principles laid down in international agreements to solve the problems.

He then also gave a presentation on "Waste reduction and prevention", referring back to the INTERREG TidyUp project, presenting one of the project's outputs, the soon-to-be completed "Plastic-free waterfront" waste reduction toolkit, which is an educational and communication package to support the efforts of riverside resorts and restaurants, local authorities, educational institutions and the general public to reduce waste.



Awareness raising

posters

Interactive brainstorming on two themes - sharing ideas and finding solutions

In the afternoon session of the conference, there were two themes for facilitated joint reflection and planning. On the topic of **how we can help the upstream countries to manage waste more effectively**, participants agreed that possible next steps must include

- uniformized data collection, data reporting, operation of a transnational monitoring system, a common platform for joint analysis, conclusions and action;
- measurements based on the same methodology;
- further harmonization of EU legislation to ensure river protection measures based on clear, comparable and credible data;
- a comprehensive and long-term education and awareness-raising plan on separate waste collection and re-use and prevention;
- establishing appropriate infrastructure (regional/territorial waste collection and recycling centres), even involving EU funding;
- strengthening the circular economy: shifting to a product cycle and model that allows a higher percentage of waste to be recycled (e.g. green public procurement).

The toolbox of experiential pedagogy, complemented by field work, using communication tools appropriate to the target group, is crucial nowadays (social media, smart devices, etc.), and this must be taken into account. Spectacular posters, leaflets and banners are essential and must be displayed at events. It is important to support decision-makers and public service providers in the field of raising awareness about selective waste collection, which should not be a single action but an ongoing, systemic activity.



Joint resolution



The project is implemented through the INTERREG Danube Transnational Programme, with the support of the European Regional Development Fund, co-financed by the European Union and the Hungarian State.

#interregdtp #dtp tidyup #boldogbodrog #rivercleanup

More information about the professional details:

Gergely Hankó managing director, KSZGYSZ

00 36 20 383 62 42 ugyvezeto@kszgysz.hu

www.kszgysz.hu; www.petkupa.hu