

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT OF THE STRATEGIC  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS PREPARED FOR  
THE INTERREG VI-A HUNGARY-CROATIA PROGRAMME FOR THE  
PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2021-2027**

March 2024

## 1. Introduction

Preparation of the VI-A Hungary-Croatia Programme 2021-2027 started in 2021 under managing of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. First draft of the VI-A Hungary-Croatia Programme 2021-2027 (hereinafter: Hungary-Croatia Programme) was prepared in 2021-2022 and included four priorities: "Competitive border region", "Greener and low-carbon border region", "Inclusive border region" and "Cooperating border region" with accompanying selected policy objectives (PO) / Interreg specific objectives (ISO) and specific objectives (SO).

As a part of strategic environmental assessment (hereinafter: SEA) of the Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2021-2022, scoping process was conducted in the period 06 April 2022 - 06 May 2022 with Hungarian competent authorities and in the period 05 April 2022 - 20 May 2022 with Croatian competent authorities in order to identify issues that are likely to be of most importance in SEA and to define content and structure of the Environmental report. Draft of the document "Elaboration of strategic environmental assessment of the Interreg Programme for the programming period of 2021-2027, concerning the programming area of Hungary-Croatia (Environmental report)" was prepared in May 2022. Public consultation on Draft Environmental report and Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme was conducted in the period 01 June 2022 - 01 July 2022 with Hungarian competent authorities and public and in the period 01 June 2022 - 18 July 2022 with Croatian competent authorities and public.

In November 2023 there have been changes in Hungary-Croatia Programme management. The Croatian Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds took over the managing authority role of the Hungary-Croatia Programme following the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The previously prepared Draft of the VI-A Hungary-Croatia Programme 2021-2027 was extended with a new priority "Connected border region" with accompanying policy objective PO 3 "a more connected Europe by enhancing mobility" and specific objective SO (ii) "developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility". Other priorities, selected policy objectives / Interreg specific objectives and specific objectives have not changed compared to the previous Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2021-2022.

For the need of strategic environmental assessment of the extended Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2023, a preliminary assessment of the Hungary-Croatia Programme on ecological network i.e. Natura 2000 was conducted by the Directorate for Nature Protection of the Croatian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. Preliminary assessment ended with the Decision of the Directorate for Nature Protection that Hungary-Croatia Programme is acceptable on ecological network issued on 20 December 2023. Upon preliminary assessment on ecological network, Croatian Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds conducted in the period 22 December 2023 - 22 January 2024 scoping process which included competent authorities and public, and Hungarian contact point to the UNECE Kiev (SEA) Protocol was informed as well. On Hungarian side relevant national authorities provided their opinion on extended Hungary-Croatia Programme in the period 16 January - 31 January 2024 to Hungarian National Authority. Result of the process (i.e. environmental and health impacts of the Hungary-Croatia Programme extended with new priority are not considered to be

significant) Hungarian contact point to the UNECE Kiev (SEA) Protocol forwarded to the Croatian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. New document "Elaboration of strategic environmental assessment of the Interreg Programme for the programming period of 2021-2027, concerning the programming area of Hungary-Croatia (Environmental report)" was prepared in January 2024. Public consultation on Draft Environmental report and Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2023 was conducted in the period 29 January 2024 - 28 February 2024.

## **2. Basic information on the Hungary-Croatia Programme**

Hungary-Croatia Programme plans to organize the development activities in the Hungarian and Croatian cross-border area along five priorities, within which following policy objectives (PO) / Interreg specific objectives (ISO) and specific objectives are selected:

Priority 1. Competitive border region:

PO 1 a smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation

- (iii) enhancing sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs, including by productive investments

Priority 2. Greener and low-carbon border region:

PO 2 a greener, low-carbon Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management

- (i) promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- (iv) promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches

Priority 3. Connected border region:

PO 3 a more connected Europe by enhancing mobility

- (ii) developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility

Priority 4. Inclusive border region:

PO 4 a more social and inclusive Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights

- (vi) enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation
- (ii) improving access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing accessible infrastructure, including by fostering resilience for distance and on-line education and training

Priority 5. Cooperating border region:

ISO 1 a better cooperation governance

- (b) enhance efficient public administration by promoting legal and administrative cooperation and cooperation between citizens, civil society actors and institutions, in particular with a view to resolving legal and other obstacles in border regions
- (c) build up mutual trust, in particular by encouraging P2P actions

### 3. Activities conducted within strategic environmental assessment

(1) Scoping process: As part of strategic environmental assessment of the Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2021-2022, scoping process was conducted in the period 06 April 2022 - 06 May 2022 with Hungarian competent authorities and in the period 05 April 2022 - 20 May 2022 with Croatian competent authorities. List of competent authorities involved in scoping process is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: List of competent authorities included in scoping process as part of strategic environmental assessment of the Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2021-2022.

<b>Hungarian Authorities</b>
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Baranya County Government Office
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Somogy County Government Office
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Zala County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Baranya County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Somogy County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Zala County Government Office
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Baranya County Government Office
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Somogy County Government Office
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Zala County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Baranya County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Somogy County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Zala County Government Office
State Chief Architect's Office, Baranya County Government Office
State Chief Architect's Office, Somogy County Government Office
State Chief Architect's Office, Zala County Government Office
Department of Agriculture of the Department-General for Forestry and Agriculture, Baranya County Government Office
Department of Agriculture of the Department-General for Forestry and Agriculture, Somogy County Government Office
Department of Agriculture of the Department-General for Forestry and Agriculture, Zala County Government Office
Plant and Soil Protection Department of Department-General for Agriculture, Baranya County Government Office
Plant and Soil Protection Department of Department-General for Agriculture, Somogy County Government Office
Plant and Soil Protection Department of Department-General for Agriculture, Zala County Government Office
Budapest Capital Government Office
Prime Minister's Office, Deputy State Secretariat for Construction and Heritage Protection
Ministry of Internal Affairs' National Directorate-General for Disaster Management
Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate
Danube-Drava National Park Directorate
Őrség National Park Directorate
<b>Croatian Authorities</b>
Croatian contact point to the UNECE Kiev (SEA) Protocol

No objections were given in relation to the proposed structure of the Environmental report, which followed requirements of the Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of

27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (hereinafter: SEA Directive).

(2) Preparation of the Environmental report: One joint single document "Elaboration of strategic environmental assessment of the Interreg Programme for the programming period of 2021-2027, concerning the programming area of Hungary-Croatia (Environmental report)" was prepared for both countries. Draft of the Environmental report was prepared by Ex Ante Consulting Ltd in May 2022.

(3) Public consultation on Draft Environmental report and Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme: Public consultation included competent authorities and public. Hungarian competent authorities were informed on public consultation by the hosting body of the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg V-A Hungary-Croatia Programme 2014-2020 in an official letter (sent through electronic system) and inviting them to participate in the SEA process. Croatian contact point to the UNECE Kiev (SEA) Protocol informed Croatian competent authorities on public consultation. Notice on public consultation was published on Hungary-Croatia Cross-border Co-operation Programme official website<sup>1</sup> inviting public to participate in the SEA process. Public consultation was conducted in the period 01 June 2022 - 01 July 2022 with Hungarian competent authorities and public and in the period 01 June 2022 – 18 July 2022 with Croatian competent authorities and public. List of competent authorities involved in public consultation is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: List of competent authorities included in public consultation as part of strategic environmental assessment of the Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2021-2022.

<b>Hungarian Authorities</b>
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Baranya County Government Office
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Somogy County Government Office
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Zala County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Baranya County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Somogy County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Zala County Government Office
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Baranya County Government Office
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Somogy County Government Office
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Zala County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Baranya County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Somogy County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Zala County Government Office
State Chief Architect's Office, Baranya County Government Office
State Chief Architect's Office, Somogy County Government Office
State Chief Architect's Office, Zala County Government Office
Department of Agriculture of the Department-General for Forestry and Agriculture, Baranya County Government Office
Department of Agriculture of the Department-General for Forestry and Agriculture, Somogy County Government Office

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.huhr-cbc.com/en/news/public-consultation-regarding-the-interreg-programme-between-hungary-and-croatia-for-the-period-2021-2027/316>

Department of Agriculture of the Department-General for Forestry and Agriculture, Zala County Government Office
Plant and Soil Protection Department of Department-General for Agriculture, Baranya County Government Office
Plant and Soil Protection Department of Department-General for Agriculture, Somogy County Government Office
Plant and Soil Protection Department of Department-General for Agriculture, Zala County Government Office
Budapest Capital Government Office
Prime Minister's Office, Deputy State Secretariat for Construction and Heritage Protection
Ministry of Internal Affairs' National Directorate-General for Disaster Management
Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate
Danube-Drava National Park Directorate
Őrség National Park Directorate
<b>Croatian Authorities</b>
Croatian contact point to the UNECE Kiev (SEA) Protocol
Vukovarsko-srijemska county*
PORA, Regional Development Agency of Koprivničko- križevačka county*
PANORA, Regional development coordinator of Požeško-slavonska county*
Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Nature Protection Directorate*
Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Directorate for Environmental Impact Assessment and Sustainable Waste Management*
* Croatian competent authorities that sent their suggestion and comments.

All suggestions and comments received on Draft Environmental report during public consultation were implemented in final version of the Environmental report (February 2023).

(4) Approval of the Environmental report: Final version of the document “Elaboration of strategic environmental assessment of the Interreg Programme for the programming period of 2021-2027, concerning the programming area of Hungary-Croatia (Environmental report)” (February 2023) was approved in the 6<sup>th</sup> written procedure of the Programming Committee held in the period 24 January 2023 – 8 February 2023.

(5) Changing of managing authority: In November 2023 there have been changes in Hungary-Croatia Programme management. The Croatian Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds took over the managing authority role of the Hungary-Croatia Programme following the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The previously prepared Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme was extended with a new priority "Connected border region" with accompanying policy objective PO 3 "a more connected Europe by enhancing mobility" and specific objective SO (ii) "developing and enhancing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to TEN-T and cross-border mobility". Other priorities, selected policy objectives / Interreg specific objectives and specific objectives have not changed compared to the previous Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2021-2022.

(6) Preliminary assessment of the Hungary-Croatia Programme on ecological network: For the need of strategic environmental assessment of the Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2023, a preliminary

assessment of the Hungary-Croatia Programme on ecological network i.e. Natura 2000 was conducted by the Directorate for Nature Protection of the Croatian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. Preliminary assessment ended with the Decision of the Directorate for Nature Protection that Hungary-Croatia Programme is acceptable on ecological network issued on 20 December 2023 and published on the Croatian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development official website<sup>2</sup>.

(7) Scoping process: Croatian Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds conducted in the period 22 December 2023 – 22 January 2024 scoping process which included competent authorities and public, and Hungarian contact point to the UNECE Kiev (SEA) Protocol was informed as well. On Hungarian side relevant national authorities provided their opinion on the Hungary-Croatia Programme extended with the new priority and PO 3 (ii) in the period 16 January - 31 January 2024 to Hungarian National Authority. Result of the process (i.e. environmental and health impacts of the Hungary-Croatia Programme extended with new priority are not considered to be significant) was forwarded to Croatian Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds by the Hungarian contact point to the UNECE Kiev (SEA) Protocol. List of competent authorities included is provided in Table 3 and in Table 4.

Table 3: List of competent authorities included in the strategic environmental assessment of the Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2023

<b>Croatian Authorities</b>
Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development: Directorate for Environmental Impact Assessment and Sustainable Waste Management; Directorate for Nature Protection; Directorate for Climate Action; Directorate for Energy; Directorate of Water Management and Sea Protection and Directorate for Industry, Entrepreneurship and Crafts.
Ministry of Culture and Media: Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage
Ministry of Agriculture: Directorate of Forestry, Hunting and Wood Industry and Directorate for Agricultural Land, Plant Production and Market
Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure: Directorate for Road Transport, Road infrastructure and Inspection
Ministry of Tourism and Sport: Directorate for Sustainable Development and Competitiveness of Tourist Destinations and Directorate for the Development of Entrepreneurship, Investments and Competitiveness of the Tourist Economy
Ministry of Science and Education: Directorate for Education

Table 4: List of Hungarian authorities included in the strategic environmental assessment of the Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2023

Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Baranya County Government Office
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Somogy County Government Office
Department-General for Environmental Protection, and Waste-Management of Zala County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Baranya County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Somogy County Government Office
Department for Public Health of the Public Health Department-General, Zala County Government Office
State Chief Architect's Office, Baranya County Government Office

<sup>2</sup>[https://mingor.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/UPRAVA%20ZA%20ZA%20C5%A0TITU%20PRIRODE/Prethodna%20ocjena%202023/Prethodna%20ocjena%20za%20strategije%20planove%20i%20programe%202023/21122023\\_Rjesenje\\_INTERREGMad\\_Hrv\\_2021\\_27.pdf](https://mingor.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/UPRAVA%20ZA%20ZA%20C5%A0TITU%20PRIRODE/Prethodna%20ocjena%202023/Prethodna%20ocjena%20za%20strategije%20planove%20i%20programe%202023/21122023_Rjesenje_INTERREGMad_Hrv_2021_27.pdf)

State Chief Architect's Office, Somogy County Government Office
State Chief Architect's Office, Zala County Government Office
Department of Agriculture of the Department-General for Forestry and Agriculture, Baranya County Government Office
Department of Agriculture of the Department-General for Forestry and Agriculture, Somogy County Government Office
Department of Agriculture of the Department-General for Forestry and Agriculture, Zala County Government Office
Plant and Soil Protection Department of Department-General for Agriculture, Baranya County Government Office
Plant and Soil Protection Department of Department-General for Agriculture, Somogy County Government Office
Plant and Soil Protection Department of Department-General for Agriculture, Zala County Government Office
Ministry of Construction and Transport, State Secretariat for Architectural Strategy, Deputy State Secretariat for Heritage Preservation
Ministry of Internal Affairs' National Directorate-General for Disaster Management
Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate
Danube-Drava National Park Directorate
Őrség National Park Directorate

Received opinions and proposals have been noted and Croatian Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds issued Decision on the Environmental report content<sup>3</sup>.

**(8)** Preparation of the Environmental report: Document "Elaboration of strategic environmental assessment of the Interreg Programme for the programming period of 2021-2027, concerning the programming area of Hungary-Croatia (Environmental report)" was prepared by Ex Ante Consulting Ltd and Ekonerg Ltd in January 2024.

**(9)** Public consultation on Draft Environmental report and Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme: Public consultation on Draft Environmental report and Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme was conducted in the period 29 January 2024 - 28 February 2024. Notice on public consultation was published in print media on 19 January 2024 in Jutarnji list and on 26 January 2024 on official websites of the Hungary-Croatia Cross-border Co-operation Programme<sup>4</sup> and Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds<sup>5</sup>. Draft Environmental report and Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme were presented via virtual conference of the public consultation held on 13 February 2024 at 10:00 h. Suggestions and modification requests related to the Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme and respective Draft Environmental report could be submitted by 28 February 2024 in writing form to the Ministry of Regional Development and European Union Funds via post or via e-mail. None of received opinions had suggestions and/or demands regarding Draft Environmental report and/or Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme. There were no comments submitted by public on Draft Environmental report and/or Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme.

<sup>3</sup><https://razvoj.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/slike/Vijesti/2024/Sije%20C4%8Danj/Ma%20C4%91arskaa/Odluka%20o%20sadr%C5%BEaju%20Strate%20AIke%20studije.pdf>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.huhr-cbc.com/en/news/upcoming-public-consultation-on-strategic-environmental-assessment/322>

<sup>5</sup><https://razvoj.gov.hr/vijesti/pokrenuta-javna-rasprava-o-nacrtu-prijedloga-interreg-vi-a-programa-suradnje-madjarska-hrvatska-2021-2027-te-strateskoj-studiji-utjecaja-programa-na-okolis/5514>



(10) Hungary-Croatia Programme approval: Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme with accompanying documentation was sent to European Commission on 29 February 2024. Upon review, final version of the Hungary-Croatia Programme and final version of the document "Elaboration of strategic environmental assessment of the Interreg Programme for the programming period of 2021-2027, concerning the programming area of Hungary-Croatia (Environmental report)" (March 2024) were prepared. European Commission approved Interreg VI-A Hungary-Croatia Programme for the programming period 2021-2027 (version 18 March 2024) on 21 March 2024.

#### **4. Preparation of the Environmental report and integration of environmental consideration into the Hungary-Croatia Programme**

The Hungary-Croatia Programme has strong environmental component as it contains priority "Greener and low-carbon border region" and policy objective PO 2 "a greener, low-carbon Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management" through which it promotes specific objectives (i) "energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions" and (iv) "climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches".

In order to determine, describe and evaluate likely significant impacts of the Hungary-Croatia Programme on environment and to confirm its environmental component, Environment report was prepared. First Environmental report was created for the Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2021-2022, and second one was created for the Hungry-Croatia Programme extended in relation to previous version with the priority "Connected border region" and PO 3 (ii). Environmental report(s) content and structure followed requirements of the SEA directive and national regulation and provided among other analysis of the Hungary-Croatia Programme likely impacts on environment and description of reasonable alternatives, taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the Hungary-Croatia cross-border area. Performed analysis concluded that no significant negative impact of the Hungary-Croatia Programme on environment is expected. To mitigate possible slightly negative impacts on environment to the minimum possible extent, recommendations and protection measures are defined.

Regarding ecological network Natura 2000, in line with Croatian regulation, a preliminary assessment of the Hungary-Croatia Programme on ecological network i.e. Natura 2000 was conducted by the Directorate for Nature Protection of the Croatian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. Preliminary assessment ended with the Decision of the Directorate for Nature Protection issued on 20 December 2023 and stating that Hungary-Croatia Programme is acceptable on ecological network, meaning that the possibility of significant negative impacts of the Hungary-Croatia Programme on the conservation objectives and the integrity of the ecological network area can be excluded and it is not necessary to carry out the main assessment of acceptability for ecological network.

Upon sending Hungary-Croatia Programme on approval by European Commission, opinion of the Directorate-General Environment was not in line with the Decision of the Directorate for Nature Protection, so obligation of preparation of the appropriate assessment (art. 6.3 of the Habitat Directive)

of the impacts of PO 3 on all the Natura 2000 sites concerned by the planned infrastructure<sup>6</sup>, in view of the sites' specific conservation objectives was implemented into the Hungary-Croatia Programme. In the appropriate assessment, potential alternatives to the proposed infrastructure, including no intervention, sustainable mobility solutions and reusing/adaptation of existing infrastructure should be considered as well. Appropriate assessment should be sent to European Commission for approval and if needed, the Hungary-Croatia Programme will be amended in line with the results of the appropriate assessment. The implementation of the above-mentioned commitments is a condition to be fulfilled by the Hungary-Croatia Programme authorities before launching any formal activity under PO 3, including launching calls for proposals and sending payment requests to the European Commission. No funding will be disbursed before the condition is fulfilled.

## **5. Short description of how results consultations are taken into consideration in the Environmental report and the Hungary-Croatia Programme**

As part of strategic environmental assessment of the Hungary-Croatia Programme prepared in 2021-2022, scoping process was conducted in the period 06 April 2022 - 06 May 2022 with Hungarian competent authorities and in the period 05 April 2022 - 20 May 2022 with Croatian competent authorities. During scoping process, no objections were given in relation to the proposed structure of the Environmental report. Public consultation on Draft Environmental report and Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme was conducted in the period 01 June 2022 - 01 July 2022 with Hungarian competent authorities and public and in the period 01 June 2022 - 18 July 2022 with Croatian competent authorities and public. All comments and recommendations of national authorities relevant for the Draft Environmental report and Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme were taken into consideration in preparation of their final versions. No comments were received from the public.

Upon extending the Hungary-Croatia Programme with priority "Connected border region" and PO 3 (ii), new scoping process was conducted in the period 22 December 2023 - 22 January 2024 which included competent authorities and public. Hungarian contact point to the UNECE Kiev (SEA) Protocol was informed as well. On Hungarian side relevant national authorities provided their opinion on the Hungary-Croatia Programme extended with the new priority and PO 3 (ii) in the period 16 January – 31 January 2024 to Hungarian National Authority resulting in final opinion that environmental and health impacts of the Hungary-Croatia Programme extended with new priority are not considered to be significant. Received opinions and proposals from Croatian competent authorities have been noted. No comments were received from the public during scoping process. Public consultation on Draft Environmental report and Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme was conducted in the period 29 January 2024 - 28 February 2024. None of received opinions of competent authorities had suggestions and/or demands regarding Draft Environmental report or Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme. There were no comments submitted by public on Draft Environmental report or Draft Hungary-Croatia Programme.

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<sup>6</sup> Mura (Croatia - HR2000364) and Mura mente (Hungary - HUBF20043; Gornji tok Drave (Croatia - HR1000014) and Nyugat-Dráva (Hungary - HUDD10002))

## **6. Transboundary consultation**

Due to the location of the Hungary-Croatia cross-border area and due to nature of projects, activities and actions planned within Hungary-Croatia Programme priorities, consultation with other countries on the likely transboundary<sup>7</sup> effects of the Hungary-Croatia Programme were not required.

## **7. Observation of the alternatives**

As the Hungary-Croatia Programme presents framework for cross-border cooperation, the observation of alternatives was narrowed down to a scenario without the implementation of the Hungary-Croatia Programme (current state) and one that includes the implementation of the Hungary-Croatia Programme and observed its possible positive and negative environmental effects. It was concluded that implementation of the Hungary-Croatia Programme contributes to development of the cross-border area.

## **8. Mitigation measures and monitoring provisions**

Analysis performed within Environmental report concluded that no significant negative impact of the Hungary-Croatia Programme on environment is expected. To mitigate possible slightly negative impacts on environment to the minimum possible extent, Environmental report provides recommendations and protection measures (chapter 10) as well as the monitoring system (chapter 11). They are accepted by the Hungary-Croatia Programme authorities as they accepted document "Elaboration of strategic environmental assessment of the Interreg Programme for the programming period of 2021-2027, concerning the programming area of Hungary-Croatia (Environmental report)" (March 2024).

Regarding impact of PO 3 (ii) of the Hungary-Croatia Programme on Natura 2000, commitment to prepare appropriate assessment on Natura 2000 is implemented into the Hungary-Croatia Programme. Appropriate assessment approved by the European Commission is condition to be fulfilled by the Hungary-Croatia Programme authorities before launching any formal activity under PO 3, including launching calls for proposals and sending payment requests to the European Commission. No funding will be disbursed before the condition is fulfilled.

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<sup>7</sup> At the borders of a countries outside of the territorial scope of the Hungary-Croatia Programme