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Building Partnership

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PRESS RELEASE

TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS IN BORSI REALIZED FROM THE INTERREG V-A SLOVAKIA-HUNGARY COOPERATION PROGRAMME

The restoration of the Rákóczi Mansion (birthplace of Ferenc Rákóczi II) in Borsi (South-East Slovakia) has been going on since 2018. Construction works carried out with the support of the Hungarian and, to a lesser degree, the Slovak government, have essentially been completed. Currently, the rehabilitation of the mansion's environment and the development and manufacture of the tourist attractions to be located in the mansion are underway.



Drone photo of the mansion, 2021

In order to increase tourist attractions in the region, the organizer of the restoration works, the Ferenc Rákóczi II Not-for-profit Organization jointly with the Sátoraljaújhely Municipality submitted the application „Nature and Culture - for the Development of Tourist

Attractions in the Border Area” to the Interreg SKHU/1902 call for proposals in December 2019. The programme, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (www.skhu.eu) enables effective cooperation between border regions.

The title of the successful application was: Promotion of the Borsi Mansion through the tourist attraction development network of the Ferenc Rákóczi Not-for-profit Organization and the Sátoraljaújhely Municipality. The project was awarded a grant of € 847,645.

As we learn from Dr László Diószegi, director of the Teleki László Foundation, *"this grant will make it possible that in addition to the high-quality renewal of the building tourist and landscape architectural attractions can also be developed, which will help to place Borsi on the tourist map of Hungary and the surrounding countries."*

By focusing the development of the Borsi Rákóczi Mansion's environment on tourism the goal is to connect



The current state of the pedestrian route to the Bodrog River
manner

the site to the already existing tourist routes (cycling and walking routes from the Bodrog River). It is also a priority that the architectural landscape design of the adjoining areas can help visitors to interpret the site itself (presentation of the moat), and also to demonstrate the estate's former farming practices (vegetable garden, thematic route in the estate wood, unique thematic playground) in an experimental

One of the most important actions of the project is a footpath to be built from the Bodrog River to the mansion through the former estate wood. The main purpose of this is to ensure a direct pedestrian link between the mansion and the Bodrog. Some sections of the path will run along a raised wood-covered structure. It will be connected to the biking road leading to the mansion along the river dam. Informative boards and outdoor interactive installations will be set up along the path to raise awareness of the wildlife and values of the wood. The board installed at the junction of the footpath and the road leading from the dam will display the most interesting features of the former forestry practices. The path passes by the open air stage, which has already been operating in summers to stage various local events, thus it can also be incorporated into the attractions. A wood-covered relaxing place will be established on the shore of the lake.



Plan of the installation demonstrating the trunks of the tree species

The gravel road connecting the Bodrog and the mansion will also be renewed to facilitate biking tourism to the site.

Educative installations will be set up in the alluvial wood, while along the nature trail a variety of informative and interactive boards will be installed. These will depict the wood plants and fauna of the area. The installation demonstrating the trunks of tree species will present the trunks of five different species

The area stretching to the east of the building used to function formerly as the kitchen garden of the mansion.



Reference photo of the planned vegetable garden

The development plan allows for establishing a vegetable garden at this site with the aim of reviving the former gardening practices.

In addition to demonstrating the plants grown in the Rákóczi era, the garden will also supply with fresh vegetables the kitchen of the hotel and restaurant, which will open in the building. It will be also open to visitors.

To the south of the planned vegetable garden an area suitable for outdoor events can be found. As part of the exhibition concept a playground, linked to the theme of the exhibition, will be established close to this place, on the edge of the estate wood. The installations of the playground are all developed individually.



Visual design of the playground

With a view to strengthening experience based tourism at the site an escape room will be set up inside the building. It will be realized partly in the framework of the Interreg project. The grant gained from the project will



Visual design of the escape room

be used to support the construction of this attraction.

The escape room is conceived to support the conventional exhibition, where by solving interactive tasks visitors' historical knowledge of the era can be deepened in an entertaining way. The equipment of the VR (virtual reality) room will also be funded from

the grant. The essence of the VR room is that visitors can **slide back in** time to the Rákóczi era with the help of VR goggles, and can gain a vivid experience of the everyday life conducted in a castle.

The municipality of Sátoraljaújhely participates in the project as a partner. The city is contributing to the project in several ways, e.g. by preparing light paintings in the town to promote the Borsi Mansion. Besides, visitors will have the opportunity to cycle up to the mansion along the bank of the Ronyva River by riding electric bicycles. For this purpose e-bikes will be purchased and docks will be established. In addition, a panoramic telescope focused on the mansion will be set up on Szárhegy in Sátoraljaújhely.

"This is a level of development that can raise Borsi among the region's most prominent tourist destinations" says Dr László Diószegi.

We are working on connecting Borsi to the network of the Rákóczi-related memorial sites existing on both the Hungarian and Slovak side of the region. We believe that these attractions can contribute to increasing the attractiveness of the region by reinforcing each other."

The contents of this press release do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union