

**Building Partnership**

## **Medical/Wellness Tourism Development in the World Heritage Caves of Aggtelek And Slovak Karst (SKHU/1601/1.1/035)**

### **Press Release**

#### **Project goals, activities:**

The joint Slovak-Hungarian project aims at the development of the Aggtelek and Domica solutional caves. The aim of the project is to prepare the cave system for the performance of medical/wellness therapy, i.e. to perform various surveys and use their results to develop services of therapeutic tourism within the cross-border Baradla-Domica cave system of the Aggtelek karst and the Slovak karst with 250,000 visitors annually, to increase public awareness in conjunction with the unique natural values of the cross-border region, to increase the attractiveness and the numbers of the tourists visiting this cross-border region.

The direct goal of the project is to perform the surveys required to achieve certification of cave Baradla as a therapeutic cave in Hungary, to implement the certification process, to create the infrastructure required for medical therapy, to prepare the certification renewal of the cave Béke [Peace] in Jósvalő, Hungary; while in cave Domica, Slovakia the goal is to develop a climate therapy section and to finalise the visitor infrastructure.

Therapeutic caves use their subterranean microclimate of proven medical effect, primarily for the therapy of those suffering from respiratory illnesses. The therapeutic effect depends on the components of the cave atmosphere, the airflow and the water in the cave; therefore, this project is aimed also at the surveying and metering of these.

Main activities, development items of the project:

- Renovation of the storage building in Aggtelek (HU)
- Construction works within the cave
- Demolition of the former visitor building in Jósvalő, Hungary
- Development at Domica (Domica cave, Demek-lápa), Slovakia
- Surveys required for the cave certification procedure
- Test therapy
- Development of medical therapy infrastructure
- Purchase of equipment required for the cave surveys

The Baradla-Domica cave system, reaching across the Hungarian and Slovak border is one of the most renowned and most significant cave systems of the two countries. This cave system has reached global fame, since back in the middle of the 19th century, it used to be one of the longest caves in the world.

The cave system has been researched for centuries; the surveys performed as part of this project also contributed to these activities. Due to the ongoing research, the length of the cave system constantly increases - this is how it has reached the 30 km milestone this year.

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The measurements performed during the project implementation have led to numerous, yet unanswered questions - hopefully, this fact will motivate current and future cave researchers to continue unveiling these secrets and exploring the most precious cave treasure of our countries.

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**Our event takes place within the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme, with the support of the European Regional Development Fund. Detailed information on the program is available at the Programme's official website: [www.skhu.eu](http://www.skhu.eu). The content of this press release does not necessarily represent the official position of the European Union.**