

## Closing Conference of "Cross-border Cooperation in Healthcare between the Hospitals of Balassagyarmat and Veľký Krtíš" project was organised 7th June 2023, in Budapest



The InterReg programmes, and especially cross-border projects, are a long-standing instrument of EU cohesion policy to support cross-border territorial cooperation assisting border regions to address jointly identified challenges successfully. In accordance with that in the field of health, InterReg grants encourage establishing joint networks and projects among cross-border health institutions with the aim to improve the quality of health care for the local population.

The project titled "Cross-border Cooperation in Healthcare between the Hospitals of Balassagyarmat and Veľký Krtíš" (SKHU) is one these initiatives, which aimed to optimise the available, but so far isolated radiological and neurological capacities on both sides of the border. The elaboration of a joint consultation mechanism between the two cornerstone hospitals will reduce and prevent the prevalence and incidence of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases among the cross border population, and the medical treatment and intervention for patients in need of acute care will be significantly shortened in time.

Further more, medical equipment to be purchased in the course of the project will not only increase hospital capacity, but will also facilitate faster diagnosis and reduce handover/patient turnover times.

National Directorate General for Hospitals (OKFŐ), as the Lead Partner organised the project's closing conference 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023, in the Uzsoki Street Hospital with the participation of nearly 50 people in

person. In addition to the two hospitals involved in the project, staff of several Budapest and county hospitals joined and honored the closing event with their presence, which was opened by Dr. Andrea Ficzere, Director General of Uzsoki Utcai Hospital and also Vice President of the Hungarian Hospital Association. In her speech, she highlighted the importance of telemedicine and digital technologies in Hungarian healthcare and wished the project participants a successful completion of the project.

Mr. Attila Srágli, head of the Directorate for Programme Management and Project Coordination of OKFŐ, stressed in his welcome speech that the radiological and neurological experience of the institutional cooperation gained from the project and the knowledge transfer within the two corner hospitals would result in improving access to preventive and acute care in the shortest possible time for the benefit of patients living in the border region. He also thanked the managers and staff of the hospitals in Veľký Krtíš and Balassagyarmat for remaining committed to the project and brought it to a successful conclusion despite of the Covid 19 epidemic and several other difficulties encountered.

The greetings were followed by a presentation of the host, the neurology department of the Uzsoki Utcai Hospital. Dr.med. Ádám Gyulai, Deputy Head of Department and Dr. med. Géza Szilágyi, neurologist introduced the protocols of care for stroke patients, then participants were given the opportunity to visit the neurology department and received a first hand experience on the operation of the emergency stroke care wards.

Ferenc Weigl, project manager of the Directorate for Programme Management and Project Coordination of OKFŐ, summarized the content and commitments of the SKHU project. He noted that the neurological speciality selected in the project was the most suitable field for piloting the common emergency care service the project appointed to achieve in the long term, which could be a next step and objective of a new project funded by the Interreg V A Slovakia-Hungary Programme.

After lunch, the leading staff members of the National Institute of Mental Health (OMI) - Prof. Dr. Anita Kamondi, D.Sc. Orsolya Győrfi, Ph.D. and Dr. med. Robin Ézsi, MD, gave presentations on the processes of cross-border protocol development, with a focus on clinical guidelines and international standards.

The conference concluded with presentations on the importance of capacity building between the two hospitals as a basis for medical cross-border professional cooperation. Dr. med. Judit Tóth, Director General of the Dr. Kenessey Albert Hospital - Outpatient Clinic, spoke about the importance of the development of the capacity building in the field of neurology, Dr. med. Petra Kozarova, Chief Physician of the Hospital and Outpatient Clinic of Veľký Krtíš , reported on the steps of radiological capacity expansion and optimization.

They both underlined that the operating protocols of the two collaborating corner hospitals were of high professional standards and could be well harmonised, which facilitated the mutual coordination and both institutions were open to further cooperation to improve the quality of cross-border healthcare in the future.

