



## “HEAL NOW” PROJECT

### Cooperation In Cross-border Healthcare Between Austria and Hungary is Launched

As a result of several project initiatives in recent years, the border regions of Austria and Hungary have strengthened their cooperation. Healthcare is subject to national regulation in the EU, and cooperation is neither prescribed nor compulsory under union law, hence, at the sole discretion of Member States. Cross-border cooperation in healthcare, thus, remains within the own initiative of governments. As a consequence, healthcare provision so far could not always succeed adjusting their services to the needs of the local population.

In line with existing regulations, ambulance cars are not allowed to cross the border even if it is a matter of life or death. HEAL NOW projects aims to lay a solid foundation for long-term cooperation in the Austro-Hungarian border region by creating a network of relevant actors. Achieving this objective is only feasible through cross-border cooperation, therefore a network comprising of all stakeholders, both governmental and health professionals including emergency services, is indispensable in order to facilitate permanent cooperation among the aforementioned.

The network to be established will follow the entire course of project implementation from the beginning, and will contribute to the formulation of a three-tier agenda "Cooperation Strategy 2030" with short-, medium- and long-term goals. This way the network will be in aid of improving access to healthcare by the general public living in the cross border region of Austria and Hungary, especially focusing on emergency services and treatment of chronic diseases.

Preparatory activities for the project started in March 2019. Structure of the project and content were elaborated by partners in the framework of several preparatory meetings and continuously harmonised with a regional coordinators. Partners formulated their final endorsements and approval of work packages in close collaboration. The final application form was submitted by the Lead Partner, Health Agency of Lower Austria. NÖ Landesgesundheitsagentur (NÖ LGA) is a body governed by public law, responsible for planning, controlling, funding and assuring the quality of the health-care and social systems in Lower Austria.

In the framework of the project:

- A relevant bilateral health network will be established to monitor the entire course of project implementation. Members of the network will regularly meet in order to discuss key themes of cross border cooperation
- Besides legal and administrative obstacles of cross border healthcare services, potential possibilities of the actual technical cooperation will be pursued as well.
- The network will contribute to the formulation of a three-tier agenda "Cooperation Strategy 2030" with short-, medium- and long-term goals. This will serve as a base for long term cross border cooperation.
- To give emphasis to their will of dedicated cooperation, project partners will produce and jointly sign a Commitment Declaration that is to ensure they will sustain their cooperation beyond this project.
- In addition, as it is central to the project, partners will also formulate policy recommendations for a bilateral agreement on cooperation in emergency services between Austria and Hungary, to be tabled before high-level political decision-makers. A future bilateral agreement for emergency will provide for quick and efficient emergency services for local citizens across borders that will result in saving more lives in the region.

In line with the already accepted (T1 & T2) work packages, in the first phase of the project the current regional healthcare situation will be assessed based on relevant data & aspects of health (actual health status of the local population, data on healthcare provision). Main tasks of the external experts and other participants of the working groups are to clarify the most crucial legal and administrative obstacles and technical requirements, which might hinder setting up the mutual cross-border services and elaborate specific solutions to tackle the situation.

In order to satisfy the identified needs **HEAL NOW will implement a pilot, and thus an actual cross-border cooperation will be put in practice. A point-to-point teleconsultation mechanism, to be expanded into a bilateral network at a later stage, will be established between the Austrian Landeskrankenhaus Wiener Neustadt and the Hungarian hospital Soproni Gyógyközpont (Erzsébet Oktató Kórház és Rehabilitációs Intézet).** This rapid medical consultation mechanism of big-volume data access in pathology between the hospitals of Wiener Neustadt and Sopron cities will reduce turn-over time of clinical diagnosis and facilitate the early recognition of tumorous diseases. It will be to the direct benefit of end-users, the patients living in the border area, as the project is seeking to deliver immediately tangible results.

Cooperation schemes elaborated and the pilot of the project will serve as best practice for other EU cross border regions of similar potentials.

#### **Project partners:**

- **NÖ Landesgesundheitsagentur** (Health Agency of Lower Austria) - **lead partner**
- **Állami Egészségügyi Ellátó Központ (ÁEEK)** (National Health Service Centre NHSC) - **consortium partner**
- **Province of Burgenland - Nordburgenland -Department 6** (NUTS 2) Burgenland – **strategic (associate) partner**

## PILOT:

- **Landeskrinikum Wiener Neustadt under the NÖ Landesgesundheitsagentur (Health Agency of Lower Austria)** Corvinusring 3-5, 2700 Wiener Neustadt
- **Soproni Gyógyközpont (Erzsébet Oktató Kórház és Rehabilitációs Intézet)**  
9400 Sopron, Győri út 15.

Project implementation period:	2020.01.01 - 2022.09.30.
Total budget of HEAL NOW :	EUR 680 286,90
Total amount received by NHSC:	EUR 207. 286,90
Total of the Hungarian government co fund:	EUR 31 093,04

More information:

<https://www.interreg-athu.eu/en/>

Homepage of NHSC: [HEAL NOW](#)

