

# Foreword

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**R**iver Maros/Mureş is our common heritage, a strong natural and economic link between Hungary and Romania. The long term sustainability of its resources – the water itself, the great amount of sandy sediment transported, or the exceptionally important natural habitats of high biological and ecological values – is an elementary interest of the two countries.

However, the availability and quality of these resources is endangered by several factors. From these the short and long term effects of past and present human interventions and that of climate change have to be emphasized. Therefore, our research was primarily motivated by the investigation of the above key issues, which were addressed by initiating a uniform and complex transboundary research on the lowland section of the Maros/Mureş with the participation of the University of Szeged and the West University of Timișoara in the framework of the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013. The reader holds in his or her hand the summarized results of this one and a half year long project.

The investigation was primarily focusing on the Lipova–Szeged section of the Maros/Mureş. Partly because concerning its character and evolution it is a uniform and well separable unit, and partly because this section is investigated by several other cross-border projects (ESHSE-MCA, Eco-bridge, MARIVMICCOLL, MAROS-HABITAT, NATPARKSHURO).

Although we aimed to provide an as comprehensive insight to the processes related to the river as possible, being geographers and geomorphologists we were mainly concentrating on factors which mostly determine the evolution of the river channel itself. The monitoring of channel changes can be important not only for water resource planning, but also from the aspect of biological, hydrological, water quality and economic questions and problems. We assume that for laying the fundamentals of future cross-border co-operations and strategic regional planning it is exceptionally important to explore and map the changes characterising the river and the expectations formulated by local societies.

As during the project it was a central issue to introduce our activities to people living along the Maros/Mureş we were attempting to compose the studies published in this summary in a way that they are understandable and hopefully useful not only for the professional audience but also for those locals and decision makers who are interested

in or devoted for the river and would like to get an insight to its evolution. Consequently, the studies do not resemble exactly the classical language and structure of scientific publications. Nevertheless, we considered it important to introduce the professional details of the research and its methodology as well. Technical explanations were separated from the basic text by using smaller letter size and a single column layout. Additionally, at the end of each chapter, keeping in mind decision makers, we outlined the most important conclusions of the research. These sections can also be well distinguished from the main text.

The studies were prepared in Hungarian, Romanian and also in English. The English text is at the end of the volume with references to figures in the Hungarian-Romanian parallel version. As a consequence figure captions are trilingual.

Finally, we hope that the material introduced here will find the approval of both professionals and non-professionals. Furthermore we believe that the research activity initiated within the project will contribute to lay the fundamentals of a sustainable river management and to preserve and improve the resources of the Maros/Mureş in the long run.

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