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SZÁMVEVŐSZÉK

## SUMMARY

### **of the Audit on the Utilisation of Funds Allocated for the Development of the Cycle Path Network (parallel audit with the SAI of Slovakia) (13006)**

The State Audit Office of Hungary concluded the audit on the utilisation of funds allocated for the development of the cycle path network.

#### **Objectives and scope of the audit**

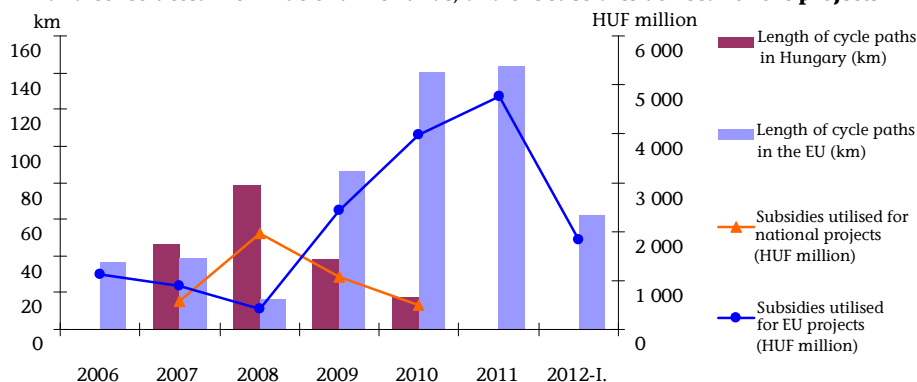
The objective of the audit was to evaluate whether the national and EU resources utilised for the development of cycle paths contributed to the implementation of objectives set in national environmental programmes, the promotion of environmentally sustainable transport modes, the establishment of the alternative urban transport, as well as whether the effective and efficient utilisation of resources available for this purpose was ensured in the different programmes. The audit covered the period between 2004 and the first half of 2012.

#### **Main findings**

As the National Assembly defined only the framework of goals for the bicycle infrastructure developments, no detailed action plan was prepared regarding the completion thereof. The implementation of the national bicycle core network was not considered as a priority. In 2011, the Government decided upon developments considered as priority state tasks, and it determined further tasks for the preparation of a concept, a schedule, as well as feasibility studies.

National and EU tenders serving the implementation of objectives were not harmonised, they supported manifold development concepts. Between 2004 and 2012, altogether HUF 46.3 billion of EU and national resources were available for the establishment of cycle paths. From this amount, until the first half of 2012 cycle paths of altogether 708.5 km were constructed utilising HUF 19.5 billion.

**Length of the cycle paths opened to traffic between 2006 and the first half of 2012 and constructed from national EU funds, and the subsidies utilised for the projects**



Developments promoted bicycle transport for commuting and touristic purposes and they encouraged the diffusion of environmentally sustainable and alternative urban transport modes.

As no target values were set, the effectiveness of the utilisation of national resources could not have been evaluated. Of the effectiveness indicators of EU developments, there was a favourable change only in the indicator of the average daily traffic, while the target value concerning the length of cycle paths was not achieved. Despite the disintegrated tendering system, the investments realised contributed to the achievement of objectives formulated in the different programmes and sectoral concepts. From EU funds, the construction of one kilometre of cycle path cost HUF 34.8 million on average. It exceeded the per-unit cost of cycle paths constructed from national resources by 12.6%, which was affected by the different technical content of the cycle paths constructed. The increase in the construction cost of cycle paths funded from EU resources resulted also from the fact that technical requirements for planning have been restricted since 2009. The average subsidy rates of EU projects of 87% exceeded by 9% the average funding of investments implemented from national resources, which contributed to the achievement of a higher technical level.

In the audited period, there were no effective legal provisions regulating the integrated recording of cycle paths. The existing records were not comprehensive. Thus, the impact of the implemented developments on the environment, transport and tourism could have been evaluated only partly.

The nine investments audited on-site served effectively the establishment of the infrastructure of environmentally sustainable means of transport and the alternative urban transport. In the central area of seven settlements, bicycle developments contributed to the establishment of the environmentally

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sustainable means of transport, while in Szeged they contributed to the establishment of the infrastructure of the alternative urban transport. The number of bicycle accidents happening on roads decreased in the outskirts, while in the sections involved in urban projects they increased.

The technical target values set in subsidy contracts were achieved. Altogether 87 km of cycle paths were constructed utilising HUF 2.2 billion, of which 42 km were constructed on flood embankments. The cycle paths with an asphalt road surface constructed on the left and right banks of Lake Tisza, on the flood embankment of River Tisza in village Mártély, as well as on that of the Danube in Szentendre improved the technical level of flood protection facilities. The projects were in harmony with the local and micro-regional objectives. The costs of five investments were higher than the national average costs of the construction of cycle paths built from EU funds and of a similar type, therefore, the utilisation of funds was only partly efficient. The costs directly relating to the construction of the surface of the audited cycle paths did not exceed the amount of HUF 36.5 million / km, stipulated among the criteria specified in the call for proposals.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the audit findings, we recommended the Minister of National Development to elaborate a complex and integrated bicycle transport development concept containing measurable objectives, as well as to complete the record system of cycle paths with indicators suitable for the evaluation of objectives. We formulated recommendations also for the proprietors of the audited projects to take the necessary measures for ensuring the long-term sustainability of cycle paths and the appropriate recording of cycle paths in compliance with legal provisions.