



SZENTES

in Bloom²⁰¹⁸

PROFILE BOOK for Communities in Bloom international judges





Municipality of Szentes/Hungary

Population: 27.591
Total area: 353,25 km²
Municipal budget: 34.819.591.763,- Ft
Parks operating budget: 79.098.000,-Ft
Parks area: 55 hectares
Forest area: 55 hectares





I am inviting you, dear reader, to an imaginary and real walk. It is imaginary, as 200 years of enormous town-building effort comes into life on these pages and also real, because this renewed town has been tempting its citizens and visitors day by day, every season, day and night to admire the beautiful buildings, squares and discover more and more beauties.

Our ancestors, grandparents and parents had been shaping this historical town for many decades before they handed it to us. Not only stones were laid onto each other while they were building, but they also put their hearts and souls in the houses with every action. The marks of their era are in the walls and squares. In the light of the candles in the churches,

in the offices of the County Hall and Town Hall, in the clear water of the fountains in the main square, in the flavour of the Petőfi confectionery, in the plays of the theatre, on the bridges of Kurca river, under the trees of the parks and in the patters of the street cobblestones.

A settlement is made of bricks, but it is the people's community that makes it a town.

This town is our honourable heritage. The standard is high and we, the descendants, have to live up to the standard with humbleness, responsibility and preparedness.

More than one and a half decades ago, in the middle of the 90s, we started to restore this worn-out heritage. In our fast

changing world we had to find suitable functionality for the majority of the squares and buildings in respect of the spirit of its builders and at the same time the modern day citizens at the turn of the millennium can also think of them as their own.

Then, we made a lot of efforts to research history, make plans, raise money, build beautiful buildings, convince the skeptics and all of us were rejoiced when we had achieved something successfully.

Similarly to our ancestors, we have renovated our treasures and built a modern, liveable European town at the same time: the Reformed Church and the County Hall have been renovated, the House of Arts have been built to serve the

town's cultural needs, we have established an industrial park, the sewage system have been fully built up, every street is covered with asphalt, the network of social institutions has been fully developed and our schools have been modernized.

We used the obstacles in front of us to build roads and reach our goals both figuratively and literally.

I thank all of those who gave a little piece of themselves, similarly to our fathers, to protect our mutual heritage and that we have been able to be partners in the town restoration work for two and a half decades.

Please, dear reader let us start to explore the treasures of the town...





The heritage

The chronicler is in a difficult situation if he wants to take account of the plentiful treasures of Szentes, which were bequeathed by the ancestors to the third biggest settlement of Csongrád County with its population of 30 thousand people.

Since the heritage is enormous, we would merely like to introduce how we have managed to preserve faithfully the imposing buildings, public works of art and other values from the 19th century in the town centre. They have been preserved in such a way which also meets the exigencies of our and the future generations' time.

This album can also be interpreted as a reckoning: We have collected a non-exhaustive list of peculiar things which were saved during the years after the change of the social system in 1989. For example, the precious secular and spiritual buildings with towers and domes, the works of art and the Kurca River which runs through the town and where our ancestors settled down and in which even Lajos Kossuth had "a refreshing swim" at the time.

The recovery of these treasures is also a mark of honour to the memory of our great ancestors. Today we can only hope that we will have nothing to be ashamed of when the heritage from our father is given to our grandchildren.

Szentes is located in the southern part of the Great Hungarian Plain in the northern part of Csongrád County on the left bank of the river Tisza and on both sides of the river Kurca that is a canal from the river Körös. The total length of the Kurca in Szentes is 11 km. The total present area of the town stretches over 32,600 hectares, the number of inhabitants is 28 thousand. Szentes is the third largest settlement in Csongrád County.

The history of the goes back to pre-historic ages. The "Tisza-menti" (along the river Tisza) culture was developed in the 5th millennium BC. An artefact from this period is a statute of "a god with a sickle" excavated in a village named Szegvár in the Szentes region, which is exhibited in the local "József Koszta" Museum.

In the Middle Ages about 20-22 villages existed around the present area of Szentes that did not survive the Turkish occupation. One of these was a village named Ecser. Due to the abundance of archaeological finds as a result of arduous work performed by archaeologists, there are 625 archaeological sites in the administrative area of Szentes. Similarly to what happened in almost all the urban areas in the whole of Hungary in those days, the highest number of public buildings were constructed in the period following the Compromise Treaty concluded in 1867 between Austria and Hungary – as a result of which the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was established – during fifty years between the conclusion of this treaty and the outbreak of the Great War.



SPACE – FORM – FLORA

Placement of flower boxes and flower bins in a small town in the Great Hungarian Plain.

Respect of the squares is our core aspect with the decoration of squares. We design vessels that adapt to the size, form and style of the surrounding buildings and to the works of art exhibited in such squares.

We respect the water needs of the plants planted in these vessels. the size of their roots, the form of their foliage, how they tolerate cold weather and, at the same time, we also take into consideration the appearance of street furniture, benches, waste bins and bicycle racks.





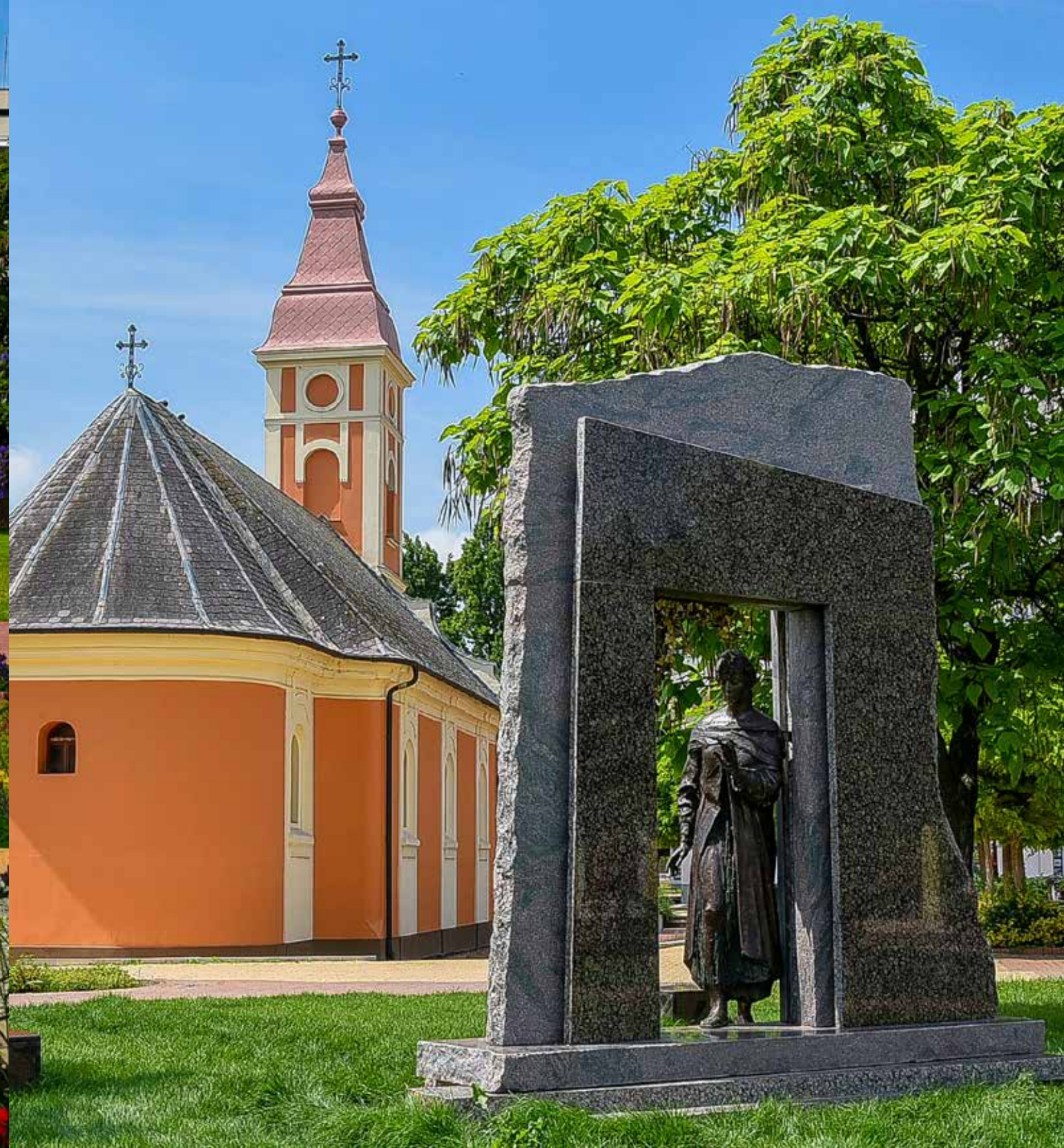
SZENTES in Bloom

The main street of Szentes is the Kossuth street. Arriving from Csongrád, we reach the bridge on Kurca. The main street is rounded by squares with grassy fields with intense green surfaces, sculptures and rest areas. The community space at the right bank bridgehead was named after József Dobovszky. The monument of the First World War is in the center of the geometric park of Erzsébet Square. The Szöllősy Géza tér behind it connects the city's primary schools and high schools. Kossuth Square is the main square of the city, the city's first well, the venue for city events. Saint Nicholas

Square homes the oldest church in Szentes. There are local curiosities on the Rózsa Gábor square, the old photographer museum and the flower - sun-clock. Luther Square is the square of the Lutheran Church.

The picture on the top shows the drawing of Kossuth Square and the roundabout in front of Petőfi Hotel Building. 15 years ago, the landscape designer was selected for the planning of the main square on a design contest. The main road was renovated 10 years ago, the bicycle trail took place, the pedestrian surfaces increased, street furniture was put out. Here you will find the city's largest building with 100 flats, on the ground floor with shops and restaurants. The green area next to St. Nicholas Church has recently placed a monument to the revolution in the country in 1956.









Kossuth Square

The urban image of the main square, Kossuth Lajos tér in our town was finalised in 2000. Originally there was a market in this square with an artesian well.

An automatic irrigation system functions in the church garden. The Omega symbolises the beginning and the end, which is a symbol that has the same meaning to everybody regardless of their political views and religious belief. The Home for Elderly Citizens was also created within the frame of the project. Last year the garden of the Home was awarded first prize in the contest entitled „More diverse flower gardens in Szentes.”



The Classicist Reformed Church on the north side of the Kossuth Square is one of the largest churches of the Great Plain. It was built in the beginning of the XIX. century. In addition It hosts not just sacred events, it also hosts concerts and exhibitions. The street named after Bálint Kiss starting from the Reformed Church was rebuilt in the old way, using old-style coverings used in the city, planting trees typical of the countryside.





HERITAGE PROTECTION

As part of the refurbishing of the town centre and with EU funds allocations in a value of 3 and a half million Euro the following facilities were renovated: the bridge at Csongrádi út, the building of the regional court house, the two lower floors of the building at 5 Kossuth street, the facades of the first building in Ady Endre street, and several green areas were also developed. Bicycle traffic became safer following the re-construction of sections of Ady Endre street and Petőfi street perpendicular to the main street, where wider pavements and catering terraces can also be constructed.

In Szentes there are several architectural memorials, the maintenance of which is nationally regulated. These facilities are as follows: the church ruins at Ecseri, The Saint Nicholas Orthodox church, the Saint Anna Roman Catholic Church, the Holy Trinity statue, the Port inn, the “Péter-Pál” residence, the Stork house, the building of the one-time restaurant in the park, the County Hall, the Petőfi Hotel and inn, the Zsoldos brick factory, the Calvinist church at Felsőpart and the Maize barn.

In order to present and promote our existing heritage, guided tours were organised to the pump site during a national event called “Örökségnapok” (Heritage Days). Similar guided tours were organised to the Jewish cemetery and the funeral home, too.





Water in and around Szentes, water protection

The Kurca – similarly to rivers – is in state ownership. The Municipality and the Local Water Management Office perform activities relating to the protection of water quality in full co-operation.

- The sewage treatment plant in the town of Szentes was modernised, so fewer polluting materials reach the river Tisza.
- More and more households connect to the sewage system, the ratio is over 90%. The number of cesspits is insignificant.
- We have no knowledge of illegal cesspit emptying and sewage disposal. An illegally operating sewage disposal depot has been eliminated.
- Within the frame of a programme called "Inland inundation drainage" our goal is to maintain the status of the main precipitation water catchment canal (Nagyvölgy-csatorna) and that of the catchment ditches. In the absence of this inland inundation can cause serious problems.
- In the course of reconstructing catchment ditches in town, we eliminate illegal sewage connections to prevent sewage water from reaching the Kurca.

- The landscape trauma has been treated by re-cultivating the area of the waste depot in Rákóczi street, where a water habitat has also been created.

Our waters

As a result of global warming, the quantity of fresh water decreases. Fresh water will be the highest value item on our planet.

In Szentes the surface waterways are comprised of the rivers Tisza, Körös and Kurca, the Termál lake and a magnitude of gravel ponds as well as canal systems.

Our main task is to protect surface and ground water both in quality and quantity.

The main goal is water retention and to protect the natural environment (ecological corridors) developed and remained along waterways.



Kurca Water Protection Programme main elements:

- bioremediation treatment,
- oxygenation,
- water transfer from the river Körös.

The quality of water in the Kurca was categorised as polluted and badly polluted before treatment was started.

The series of bioremediation treatment started with the Kurca in 2007 is capable of preventing excessive proliferation of water plants in a natural way as a result of which

- balance of diluted oxygen improves,
- sediment decomposition decreases,
- odour improves
- fish reproduction improves.





24



SZENTES IN BLOOM

25



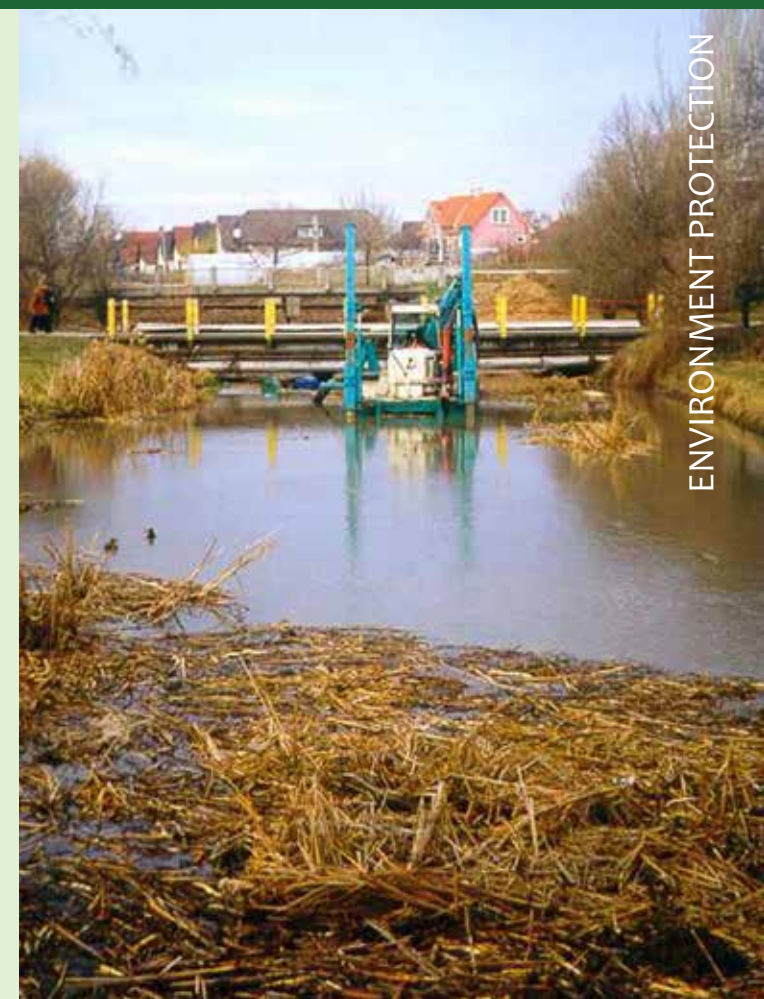
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

The Kurca brook as „the main street in Szentes” divides the town into two parts.

The town lies at the lowest elevation in Csongrád County therefore the Kurca brook mainly functions as a canal that drains water from inland inundations. Apart from this, it is also used for irrigation and is a venue for local and visiting anglers. It is a decisive element in determining the general image of our town.

Unfortunately it is not a natural waterway. Prior to the regulation of rivers in this area it connected the river Tisza with the river Körös. During the course of the river regulation works it was disconnected from both live waterways, so it became a canal. This river is 37 km long. Wildlife in the Kurca comes from the river Körös and is transferred to the river Tisza.

This wild waterway has diverse wildlife with numerous protected and especially protected species among them the mud-minnow, varieties of the loach family and the ruff.



ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION



These species are protected by the national anglers' regime.

Due to its dual function it is also suitable for water retention (irrigation). This function is very useful during summer draughts since there is permanent water supply from the river Körös with the help of a differential pressure (DP) pumps. This also has a favourable effect on the oxygen supply of the water in the canal.

In order to economise on the use of potable water, the 7.5 hectare park and the promenades along the waterway are irrigated by the water from the Kurca canal.

Some time ago the two banks of the Kurca brook were neglected areas with impassable plants. The development of the walkways along the Kurca started more than 25 years ago and the protection of the banks

Rivers Tisza, Hármas-Körös and Kurca provide a very unique natural landscape at Szentes.

Town crossing River Kurca gives shelters for many plant and animal species.

Szentes and its surroundings is rich in natural values. More over aqueous habitats along the rivers, many lawn parts, woods can be found snagged into agricultural fields.

2nd biggest thermal lake in Europe situated at Szentes. Its a resting place for migrating birds. Nests have of the following protected birds species, like brown hawk, big heron, avocet and more..

The natural surroundings of this lake proves that thermal water has not any environment polluting effect. This part of

land received a bird protection area mark called "NATURA 2000".

Ex lege protected areas:

Cumanian mounds, alkali ponds

33 cumanian mounds are registered in the administrative area of Szentes.

The loess plant associations that remained on the cumanian mounds represent extremely high natural value.

Protected areas of national importance:

Meadows near Cserebökény

Zsup-island at Labodár

Areas under local protection:

Magyartés-Zalota Nature Conservation Area

Széchenyi Park

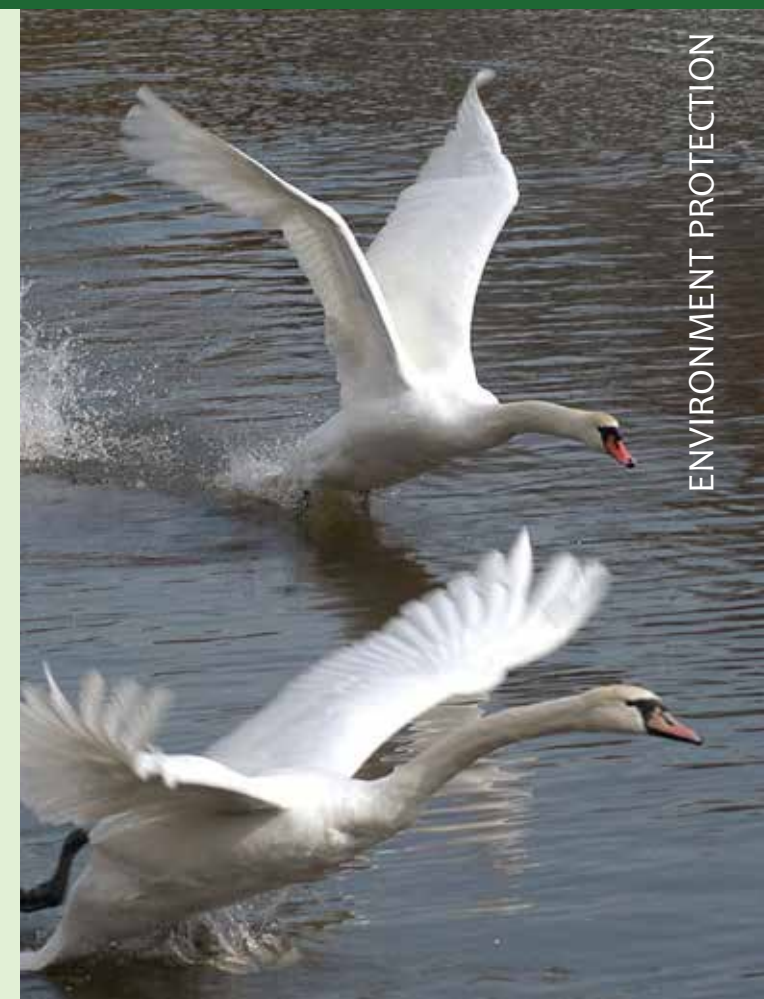
Natura 2000 areas

Natural areas worth protecting:

Lapistó-Fertő

Sulymos pond

Termál pond





Szentes is a city of waters. The watercourse on the city is an exceptional feature of the city. From the north to the south the Kurca flows slowly from the river Körös and joins the river Tisza. On one hand it solves the drainage of inland waterways and on the other hand it provides watering on land. In recent years the city has made great efforts to improve the quality of water. Fountains serve not only the sight but also increase the oxygen content of the water. There is no need to keep it from flooding, channel water levels are regulated by locks. Both sides of the Kurca have a well-groomed and maintained greenery, with promenades, bicycle paths and benches that are popular among residents. Crossing is provided by many bridges. The oldest permanent stone bridge is the brick-built Csongrádi road bridge, which was built in 1884. Thanks to a multiplicity of slicing, today you can conveniently ride through a car, bicycle or walking. In the last rebuilding, a delightful solution reminded of the original design.





WATER MANAGEMENT

Aiming at moderating use, economic water management concerning surface and ground as well as potable water is conducted within the frame of general catchment area management, which also essentially focusses on the protection of water quality.

In our town this primarily means the management of rivers and lakes, inland inundations, ground water as well as precipitation water according to the definition described above.

The Kurca brook, the main local catchment waterway was regulated in Szentes in the year of 1999. Between 2007 and 2011 a water drainage system was constructed for inland inundations and precipitation water in the whole town centre area and in the most threatened part of our town in the Nagyhegy are in Szentes.

As of 2010 within the frame of successive public labour programmes the local drainage ditch system and the Nagy-völgy canal, the secondary catchment canal have gradually been cleaned and arranged.

One of the fundamental aspects of the whole series of activities was that only the water, which could not be retained in partial catchment areas without causing damages and could not be utilised, was drained from these areas.

Two factors provided particular conditions for us to do so.







1. One of these factors was that the precipitation drainage ditch system in Szentes developed from the network of historical drainage ditches dug in front of local residential houses. A significant part of this ditch system has a dual function even today. It serves as a drainage system, but also as a water storage and irrigation system, and the town management has always tried and is still trying to wilfully preserve this dual function.

The result of this is that closed drainage pipes were laid only on locations where this was inevitable. On the other hand, where it was necessary to cover the earthen ditches, the coverage was not completely closed. A hard pavement was constructed at the bottom of the ditches, and in some areas partial ditch walls were also constructed as seemed necessary.

As a result of heated discussions out of the total length of 197.9 km of the inland inundation and precipitation water drainage system in Szentes 116.4 km is still comprised of natural ditches with an earthen bed and slope covered with grass that serves catchment and leakage purposes. These ditches manage to drain and dehydrate the extraordinary rain water that falls in draughty periods so effectively that hardly any water reaches the Kurca brook and the Nagyvölgy canal.

2. The “mirhó system” (a catchment ditch system), the total length of which is 14.3 km, provides an excellent opportunity to retain inland inundation water and

precipitation water. The ditches in this system are located on public ground at the back of residential sites, which were created to serve as water storage and draining ditches.

These ditches have been preserved throughout the town in their total length in these functions even during the period when the inland inundation and precipitation draining system was regulated.

As required by EU standards, arsenic is almost completely has been removed from the local drinking water in our town. A result of this is that the overhead cost of producing drinking water has significantly increased. It is therefore of utmost importance that the locals make hard efforts to decrease the amount of drinking water they use for irrigation.

The central Government is conducting an intense administrative campaign and provides funds for the professional management, regulation and control of irrigation by promoting the installation of drilled and Norton water pumps for the use of ground water for irrigation.

Regarding irrigation, as opposed to irrigation by inundation, we propose that the locals apply furrow and drip irrigation, which we also prefer when we irrigate plants in public urban areas.

Regarding the fact that Szentes is a town of waterways, and also that the ground water level is permanently high, furthermore, that we have significant reserve capacities in potable water supply, we do not expect that we shall have to introduce restrictive measures on water consumption.





Petőfi Hotel - Protected treasures

With the partial renovation of the Petőfi Hotel a more than 20 year-old dream of the locals will come true.

This is a moment full of joy however I should like to mention two even more joyful moments. One is when the doors open, and the locals can take into possession the first renovated parts of the building, and the other one is when the scaffolding is removed from the façade and the street front of the building is revealed in a form which could never be seen by anyone alive in Szentes today. The building was painted this hue of yellow as we, locals know it before 1914, and those, who could see the original decorations, should be minimum 109 years old. This conference is not about

this building only (it indeed is for us, locals), but also about the great artistic style and feeling of life that swept all over Europe at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and left its footprints on a vast amount of works of art. A branch of the Secession in Hungary developed, of which we are all very proud. In this special Hungarian branch of the Secession modern contemporary European style and Hungarian traditions were mingled. This is probably the reason why this style is so heart-warming for many Hungarians, and this is why we are so happy when a building or a work of art representing this style is renewed.

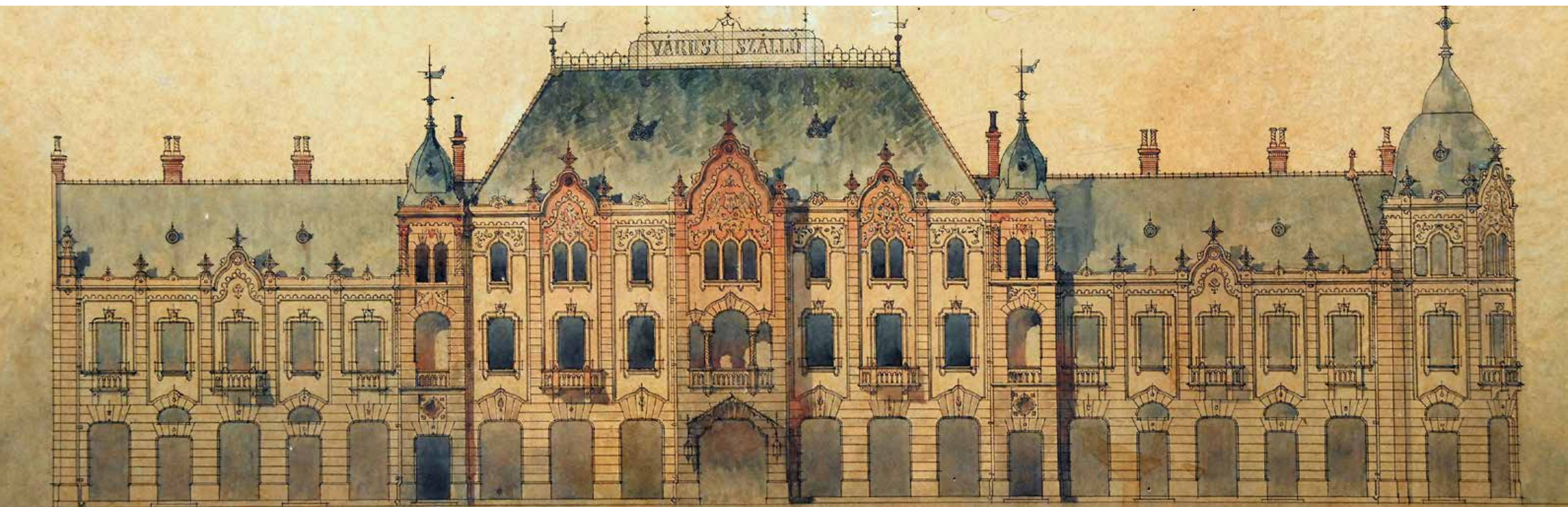


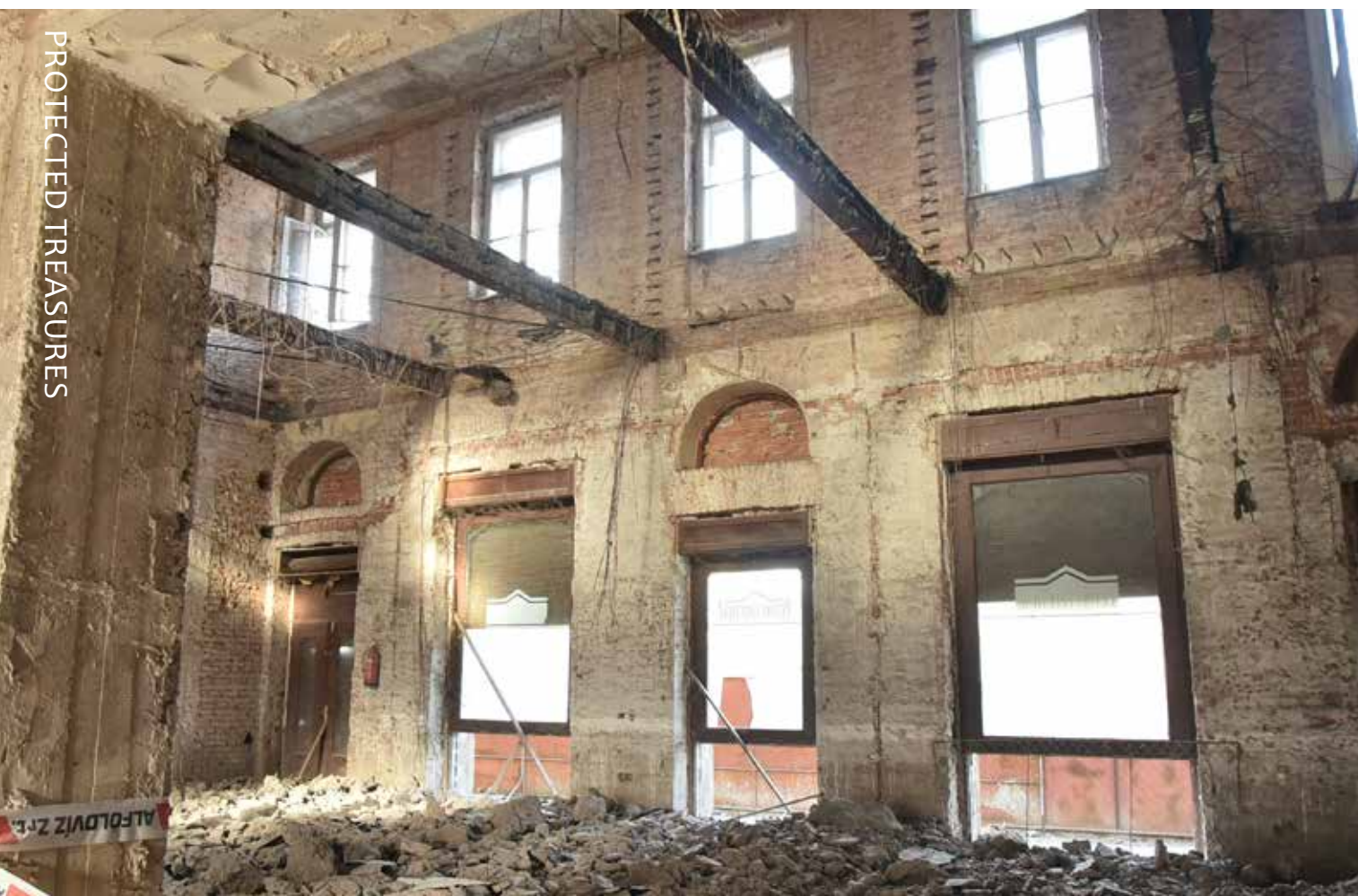
It is a special pleasure to me that we have the opportunity to welcome Mr. Tamás Székely, Marcell Komor's grandson, who is with us here, and who represents the historical continuity of this building, and I hope he feels that his grandfather's building has been renewed worthy of his memory to the common joy of the inhabitants of Szentes.

I wish that all the participants of this conference acquire lots of information during the discussions today so that we can carry on with this work since our application for grants to renew the theatre wing and the main entrance is in a preparation phase. For financial reasons we have decided to renovate the building in several phases in order that we can gradually conclude the whole renovation process. Not only the locals have high expectations concerning the renovation of the building, but it also poses a challenge for the professionals. We have to continue this process so that we preserve all the values of the Petőfi Hotel, one of the gems of the Hungarian Secession, and, at the same time, we also satisfy the needs of people in the 21st century. It is a real challenge to everyone who participates in this beautiful endeavour.

I express my special thanks to the EEA Fund for financing the first phase and the countries supporting the fund, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.









City Library of Szentes - Protected treasures

At the end of the main street of Szentes is the Synagogue that was restored in 1998 and it is the home of the Town Library. It was built in Romantic style based on the plans of Ignác Knábe, and after 40 years of neglect it became one of the most beautiful buildings of the town. The palace of culture - many people say. The former single-spaced, monumental building has now 5 storeys with different reading rooms, exhibition places, conference room etc. Downstairs there is a furnished memorial room for the visitors and members of the Jewish denomination which serves as a place of commemoration.

The garden is surrounded by the elements of the original wrought iron fence of the former synagogue. The unique bronze sculpture of the neat park is the Woman Reading; young and old are happy to sit on the bench beside her.



SZENTES ÖNKORMÁNYZATÁNAK
VÁROSI KÖNYVTÁRA

TERNEY LÁSZLÓ (1947-1998) VÁROSI FŐMÉRNÖK
TERVEI ALAPJÁN KIVITELEZTE
A SZEGEDI MURÉNA KFT. 1998. ÉVBEN.









County Hall – Protected treasures

Kossuth Square which is the main square of the town is situated on the other side of Elisabeth Square. Its colours are modest to allow the historic buildings of the centre dominate. The contemporary street-lamps, benches, the colourful plants, trees and flowerbeds and the three fountains lit at night give the square a harmonic view. The most beautiful public buildings of Szentés are situated around the former market place. The main building of the western part of Kossuth square is the commanding neo-renaissance building of the former County Hall, which is one of the town's most beautiful buildings. Above the main sill is the county's oval coat of arms can be seen with the sitting statues of Justice and Minerva the gods of law and crop on its two sides. The triangle of these statues forms a flagpole base composition similar to a tympanum. On the arches of the large windows

there are allegoric female figures symbolising different trades; from the left to the right agriculture, home-industry, shipping, hunting, trade and fishing. As a result of the cooperation the former County Hall of Csongrád County became the grand palace of science, culture, past and the challenging future. Today the building houses the Archives, the Koszta József Museum and a Conference and Cultural Centre for 500- members that satisfy all needs. There are balls, weddings held in the exclusive rooms, but it is also a place for conferences and meetings.









62







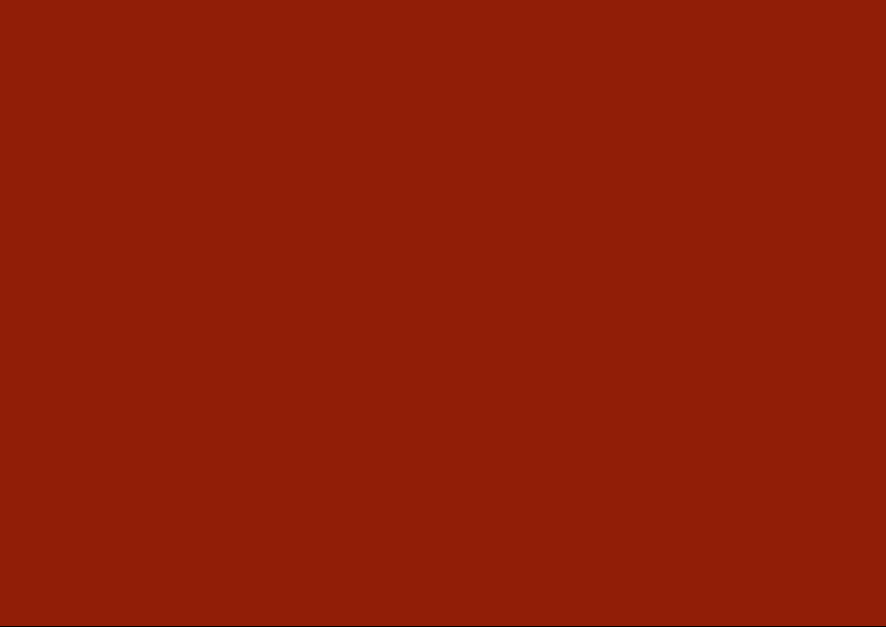
Calvinist Church – Protected treasures

The northern side of the Kossuth Square is dominated by the most significant monument building, the beautiful early neo-classic Calvinist Church. It has a 40 meter tower with a round balcony that was used for fire observation. The church is one of the biggest in Hungary; it has the longest nave in the Great Plain and inside decorated by the country's only original and still working Angster-organ. Besides religious events concerts and exhibitions are also held in the church. Due to its exceptional acoustics the church is home of classical and pop music concert venues. Before the turn of the millennium the historic building deteriorated for many years, until the complete renovation with the exemplary collaboration of the city and the church has begun. The project included not only the reconstruction of the church, but the creation of the Calvinist Home for the Elderly, the authentic restoration of Kiss Bálint street, the old part of the city centre behind the church with contemporary atmosphere of street lamps, basalt blocks and brick cladding.













Town hall – Protected treasures

The municipal offices functioned in several different buildings in inferior circumstances at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Several decisions were made on the construction of a town hall however a new town hall was built as late as in 1912. The facades of this building have been renovated. The Szentés Regional Office moved to the ground floor of a building in Erzsébet square in 2010 after this office space had carefully been renovated.









„Stork House” – Protected treasures

A few meters away from Kossuth Street at 4. Petőfi Street there is a house which the people of the town call „Stork House” because of the storks occupying the farthest chimney for many years. The house was built around 1840 and until 1952 the richest citizens of the town owned it. In 1968 it was declared as a protected building. In 2004 Szentes and one of its sister town Újszentes won a tender and from this money the house was restored to its original state. Its main task is to collect living handicraft traditions. We can look into the workshops of the certain crafts and with the help of experts we can try their tools and learn different techniques. Different exhibitions show the local handicraft's present and past for the visitors and the house is also centre of the documents of those crafts that are dying out.





SZENTES



Municipality of Szentes/Hungary
www.szentes.hu
Mayor: Mr Imre Szirbik
Contact: Ms Szántai Szilvia
CIB coorninator : +36 202035320