

DATOURWAY

The national analysis
of the territorial tourism strategy

Slovak Republic



Position of the DATORWAY area

The project area is situated in the west part of the Slovak Republic. From an administrative point of view it is divided into 3 units - Bratislava, Trnava and Nitra region.

The Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic issued the document Regionalisation of Tourism in the Slovak Republic in 2005. This concept, identifying 21 tourist regions on the territory of the state, allocates the area along the Danube to two regions:

1. Bratislava – territory of the capital Bratislava, surroundings of Town Stupava and Districts Pezinok and Senec
2. Danube – Districts Dunajská Streda, Komárno, territory of the administrative department Štúrovo (south-east part of District Nové Zámky) and 2 municipalities in District Senec, situated very near to the Danube (Hamuliakovo, Kalinkovo)

The Bratislava Region belongs to the category of international importance. Its sub-regions with developed tourism are the Small Carpathians sub-region (viniculture), Bratislava and Senec. The strip along the right bank of the Danube is considered to be important from the long-term perspective.

The region is, thanks to Bratislava, the most popular Slovak destination for foreign tourism. As far as the number of overnight stays is concerned, the Bratislava region is the second best behind the Tatra region, the reason being that the Bratislava region is mainly visited for a short period of time.

In the near future, the Bratislava region will at least hold on to or slightly strengthen its position. Despite the absolute increase in the performance of this region, in a long term perspective its share on the performance of the Slovak Republic will fall, as a result of the gradually more significant promotion of other Slovak regions on foreign markets.



The region has all the prerequisites to offer competitive services in the individual areas of business and sightseeing tourism, in both cases in combination with attractive additional activities. Bratislava and the surroundings as Bratislava's background create conditions for achieving this aim, whereby its function and importance will gradually grow.

The Danube Region is listed in the category of national importance. Its sub-regions with developed tourism are Malý Žitný ostrov (Small Rye Island) with the water dam Gabčíkovo and linkage to Szigetköz in Hungary, also Dunajská Streda, Veľký Meder,



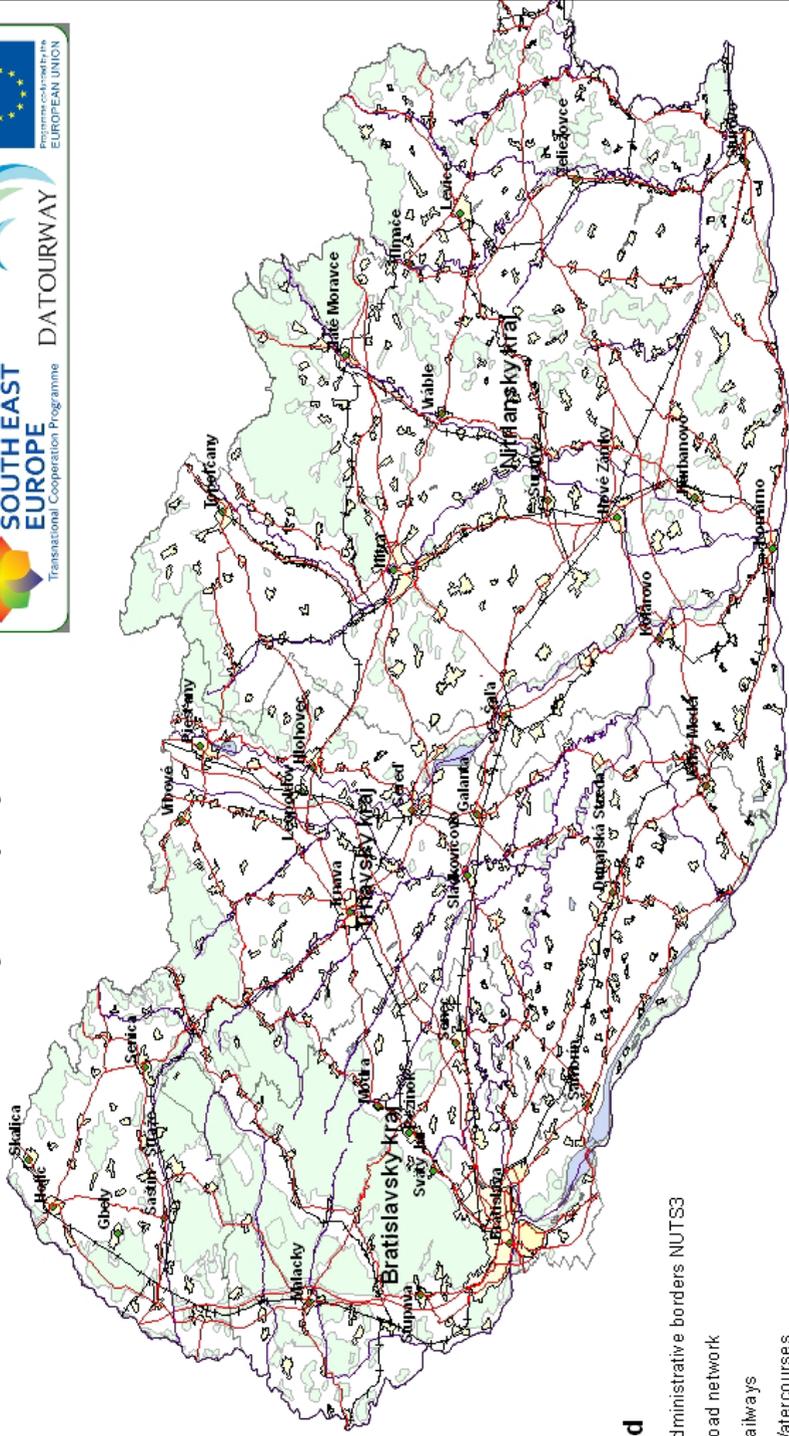
Komárno, Štúrovo with linkage to Esztergom.

The region is popular mainly among less solvent clients as a cheap holiday destination. As far as foreign tourists are concerned, only holiday makers from

the Czech Republic with a tight holiday budget and guests from neighbouring Hungary - often due to their ethnic links - come to visit this region. The low share of the bed capacity of the Slovak Republic and its low utilisation are put down to having only one short season. The region has all the prerequisites for improving its position on the market. The area along the Danube (and its immediate surroundings), where international tourism has been developing in recent years, should be used for this purpose. The second possibility is presented by thermal water sources. However, it is necessary to build facilities that, in terms of the quality of their services, equal the standards of neighbouring Hungary.

In such a case it will be possible to attract a more solvent client base compared to that held at present. The summer season will be from a long-term point of view dominant for this region.

Datourway - the project area



Legend

- Administrative borders NUTS3
- Road network
- Railways
- Watercourses
- Cities
- Settlements
- Lakes
- Forests

0 5 10 20 Kilometers

Created by RRA Šamorín, 2010

Geographical characteristics

The Danube enters the territory of Slovakia through the Devín Gate (rkm 1880.20), which is also the entrance into the Carpathian Basin. The Carpathian Mountains are in this area represented by the Small Carpathian Mountains. The river broke through the Devín Gate during the younger Pleistocene and since then created an alluvial fan on the surface of which the Danubian Plain is situated. In some places wetlands and a system of peat-bogs were created. Prior to the regulatory interventions, the area was dominated by extensive river-arm system and wetlands. Even after the regulation of its natural flow the Danube remained a determining natural factor; together with its 128 km long arm Small Danube between Bratislava and Komárno created Žitný ostrov (Rye Island), the largest river island in Europe (100 km long, area 132 612 ha). Residues of the original river system can be found very close to the Danube between Šamorín and Gabčíkovo. A new phenomenon is Dam Gabčíkovo with a water surface of 2 518 ha. East of Komárno, between Iža and Kamenica nad Hronom the Danubian Uplands are situated, which are divided into Čenkov River Plain (belt directly at the Danube), Hron Uplands, Hron river Plain, Ipeľ Upland and Ipeľ River Plain. River Plains are typical alluvial belts; at the Danube formed from gravel derived mainly from the Alps, in the case of the affluent from materials from the near Carpathian Mountains. The uplands are dominated by Pleistocene loess and Pliocene lake sediments. East of Kamenica nad Hronom the Burda Mountains are situated; with the area of 7.5 x 3.5 km being the smallest geographic unit in Slovakia. The Danube leaves the territory of Slovakia through the Visegrad Gate (rkm 1708.20). Most of the survived elements of the original natural environment are included in the system of NATURA 2000 –18 special protection areas and 117 special areas of conservation.

Tourism does not play in the economy of the project site a great importance. At some locations or in microregions it, however, has an important position (spa towns, thermal swimming pools) with great economic benefits for the local residents. In sectors, for which there is an increased interest from the side of domestic and foreign clientele (rural and active tourism) in the last period there has been certain advancement, however offer is still not sufficiently large and qualitative. Despite this state, practically everywhere give a great importance to this segment, which is evidence that the development of tourism is an integrated part of strategic development plans from local all along with regional level. As well as mutual progress in the development of tourism is one of the most common topics in cross boarder economic cooperation, on the project site mainly between the Slovak and Hungarian respectively Austrian regions. Within this cooperation the abolition of infrastructural obstacles is planned, development of common products and common marketing. In the regional centres (on the level of NUTS IV) usually there operate tourist information offices, however compared to foreign practice there is no national or regional system for their common promotional and marketing and so their possibilities are massively limited. From the aspect of the tourism the landscape is arranged into 5 regions. From these in the area near the Danube only 2 are to be found: region of Bratislava and Podunajsko.

Bratislava: the capital of Slovakia, and at the same time it is one of the most significant spots of the tourism in Slovakia, which offers, apart from sights of interests and programs, mainly capacity of congress tourism.

District of Senec: by the Danube dam Hrušov (Hydro-electric plan Gabčíkovo) is developed an active tourism: cyclo and aquatic tourism, winsurfing. Recreational complex Slnečné lakes in Senec

belong to water and congressional tourism from the aspect of the recreation, to centres with nationwide importance.

District Dunajská Streda: its potential is tied mainly to water. Surface waters - Danube, branch system of Danube, Little Danube and gravel deposits are important in the aspect of active tourism (water and cyclotourism), recreations and fishing, termal baths from the aspect of recreation. Rural tourism and agrotourism is also represented with its offers. Thanks to the establishment of new quality facilities wellness and congress tourism has developed recently. The potential of protecting natural values and ecotourism is only used in a small extent. Cultural tourism has possibilities mainly in the western part of the county (medieval sacral monuments). As a technical attraction, many visitors are attracted by the hydro-electric plant in Gabčíkovo.

Komárno Region: the biggest attraction in the region is the city Komárno with its broad fortification system and with its city centre. From the aspect of cultural tourism is very important as an only expansive Roman monument on the left bank of the Danube – military camp Leányvár in Iža, the largest Roman monument on the left bank of the Slovak section of the Danube. Bath and also wellness and congress tourism is represented by the complex in Patince. The potential of protected natural values and the ecotourism is only used in a small extent (Čičov branch).

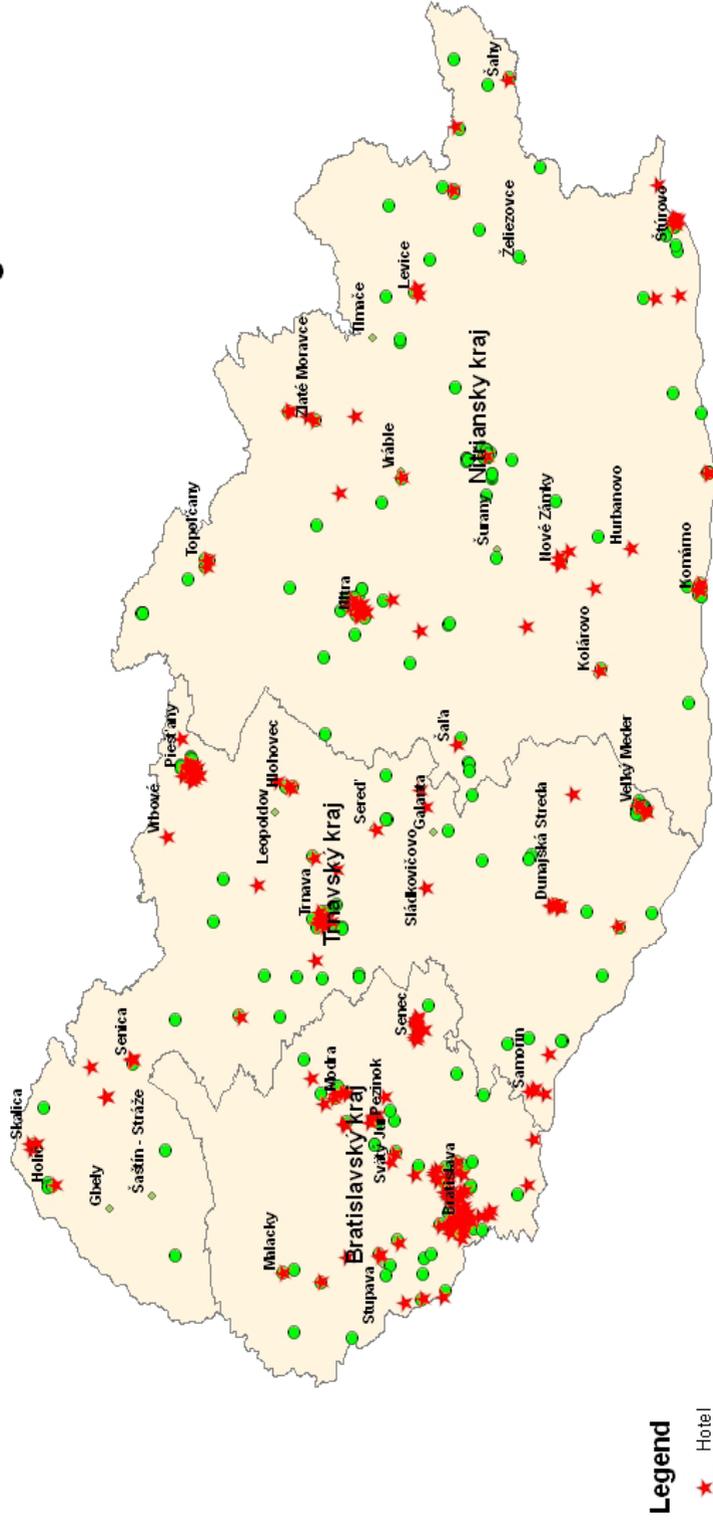
District Štúrovo: Dominant of the region is the thermal bath Vadaš in Štúrovo with nationwide importance, which offers also congress tourism. For active tourism is the significant mountain range Burda with some nature trails. Other segments of the active tourism in great measure is held back greatly by the necessary infrastructure. In the last few years the offer for rural tourism and agrotourism is expanding. The potential of protecting natural values and ecotourism is only used in a small extent. (Parisian marshes).

The structure of accommodation

The structure of accommodating facilities is influenced by the typical clientele of individual tourist destinations. In Bratislava and in important economic centers with an important rate of cultural, cognitive and congressional tourism prevails hotel capacities, complemented with guest houses and private accommodation. In the area of thermal spas there are guest houses as well, together with private accommodation and holiday houses. The current trend of rebuilding the thermal spas for a more demanding clientele (e.g. Veľký Meder, Štúrovo) accompanies the expansion of capacities in guest houses at the expense of traditional private accommodation and holiday houses. In the area occurs only a few campsites. This phenomenon was caused by the unfavorable legislative, which was changed not long ago and that is why it is possible to expect sharp growth of capacities.



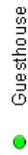
Datourway Accommodation - hotels and guesthouses



Legend



Hotel



Guesthouse



Administrative borders NUTS3



Cities

0 5 10 20 Kilometers



Strengths

- Advantageous geographical position
- Potential of tourism in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia
- Positive migration from other regions of Slovakia
- Increase of the human potential in rural areas, migration
- Extension of the suburban zone of Bratislava
- Strong economic activity in the capital and its surroundings
- To foreign tourists Bratislava is the most popular place in Slovakia
- The regions have developed their tourism development concepts
- The branch system is of big importance in Europe
- Protected areas along the Danube, including NATURA 2000
- Continuous reduction of the pollution of surface water
- Presence of the International Danube Cycling Route in the territory
- International tourist shipping on the Danube

Weaknesses

- Low percentage of university-educated people in S and E areas
- Mostly only short stays realised in Bratislava
- Tourism focuses only on the short summer season
- The Danube area is targeted by less solvent customers
- The administrative regions do not dispose of the structures to implement the tourism development concepts
- Due to the dispute about the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Water Dam

Opportunities

- Further improvement of the position of Bratislava in Central European
- The extension of the suburban zone of Bratislava on the territories of Hungary and Austria enables positive interaction between three neighbouring cultures
- Visitors will come to the Danube area also in the spring and autumn seasons and an offer for solvent customers will be created
- Cooperation within the destination managements of tourism regions, and international cooperation will increase the potential of tourism
- Through establishment of infrastructure, increase of tourist traffic - The expansion of the international network of cycle paths Eurovelo ensures an increase in the number of cyclists

Threats

- Thermal baths, as the main tourist attractions will not be able to face competition in other regions of Slovakia and in the neighbouring countries
- There will be no local interest in the preparation of the presentation of natural values
- Due to a lack of impulses (failing introducing recreational bills) the stagnation of domestic tourism will continue
- Lack of resources and apathy restrain a significant increase of offer in rural areas
- Unfinished regional cycling network will reduce the interest in the region

Conflict areas

tourism – environment

Disturbed environments characterize the so-called loaded areas. These are largely the result of the non-sensitive activities in the previous decades. Thanks to the new legislation the environmental burden of the economic and municipal sectors is not significantly increasing. This also applies to strategic planning in tourism, during which it is necessary to take into account the interests of environmental protection and, where possible, apply the principles of sustainability. There is a special situation in the suburban zone of Bratislava, where in terms of tourism development the strong economic and urban land use should be taken into account. The floodplain forest area from Bratislava under Komárno: civilization pressure on the construction of recreational cottages in the protected area, the impact of the Gabčíkovo Dam. Areas of thermal spas (Veľký Meder, Štúrovo, Podhájska): effects of massive traffic on the quality of life of residents and the environment.

tourism –human resources

Generally it can be stated that human resources in the project area, despite the noticeable regional differences are not a limiting factor for development concepts. The situation from an economic standpoint is worse. Business development possibilities are limited to a high extent by the fact that due to the period of socialism existing undercapitalisation of the Slovak population is still not resolved and development programs for small and medium enterprises also exist only in a very modest form. This situation constitutes an obstacle especially in the development of secondary services. Likewise, structures that would deal with marketing the area are also lacking. Areas affected by the lack of jobs (river valleys of Hron and Ipeľ) – work related migration or the feeling of hopelessness in the local population.

Evaluation of touristic potential

Project site (except Bratislava) does not belong to the most important regions of tourism in Slovakia. It is caused by the smaller natural potential and that the attractiveness of the site is closely bound to summer season, which considerably decreases its effectivity of its use of created capacities. There are efforts to lengthen the season – for example with reconstructing the swimming pools – to ensure the winter use. The current trend tends to improve the offer for the selected segments (rural, active, conferential tourism), which has succeeded only partly. Important reason is the non-completion of the necessary infrastructure and the fact that the state legislative and the supporting policy does not prefer these areas. Apart from this there are effective facilities missing which would support the marketing cooperation of actors in the tourism of individual destinations.



Prepared within the frame of DATOURWAY - Transnational Strategy for the Sustainable Territorial Development of the Danube Area with special regard to Tourism“ project.

The complete Slovak, Hungarian, Romanian, Serb, Croatian and Bulgarian national analyses are available on page www.datourway.eu