



Sustainable Transport and Tourism along the Danube www.transdanube.eu

WP3: TRANSPORT & TOURISM SYSTEM ANALYSIS STATUS-QUO / STATE OF THE ART, SLOVAKIA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**BRATISLAVA
REGION**

Action 3.2.

Responsible partner:

PP3 - Bratislava Self-Governing Region

Author:

VVMZ s.r.o, Bratislava

Title:

Regional State of the Art Analysis of sustainable mobility and tourism in the Danube region

14/06/2013



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EU financed project Transdanube objective is to identify solutions for mobility management through sustainable accessibility between cities and regions along the Danube and with participating regions to identify environmentally friendly modes of transport. One of the objectives of the project is to facilitate sustainable tourism in the Danube region by means of stimulating environmental friendly mobility systems such as boats, trains, busses, and bicycles.

This study presents the current status of sustainable transport and mobility in relation to the tourism attractions in the Danube region in the Slovak Republic. The geographical area within the distance of 50 km from the Danube River has been analysed. This area covers the whole NUTS III Bratislava Self-governing Region, part of the Trnava Self-governing Region (the districts of Dunajská Streda, Galanta, and Trnava), and part of the Nitra Self-governing Region (the districts of Komárno, Nove Zámky, Šaľa, and Levice). To better understand the current situation and conditions of sustainable transport and tourism in Slovakia, it is necessary to know the legislative background. Tourism is considered as one of the accelerators of economic development in countries rich in natural, cultural or social potential. Without an adequate support at the national level, however, tourism and sustainable transport cannot properly evolve. Legislative actions may provide a framework of the support, but on the other hand, they can also turn out to be significant barriers in the economical areas mentioned. While analysing the areas of transport and tourism, it's also important to get known with the institutional framework. The inclusion of transport and tourism into different ministries, agencies, departments and sections is a sign of importance of these areas. The Department of Tourism itself was undertaken by several ministries during the recent years (The Ministry of Economy, The Ministry of Culture, The Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications), which did not really have a positive impact on the institutionalization. Every move to a different ministry brings up the need to change the agenda and thereby a loss of necessary information regarding specific competence of particular institutions operating in the field of tourism. The Transport sector is covered by the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development and its sections as the Section of Roads and Road Transport, Section of Rail Transport and Rails and the Section of Civil Aviation and Water Transport. The tourism belongs as well to one of the sections of this Ministry. Besides this some tasks in tourism are provided by higher territorial units, municipalities, Slovak Tourist Board (STB), the Country Association of Tourism (CAT) and Regional Association of Tourism (RAT).

In general, a fundamental prerequisite for effective and efficient management focused on the area of sustainable transportation and tourism in the region is the existence of any tools and the formulation of policies and actions through which the will help to achieve this goal. They are mainly a framework and strategy documents and plans which define the baseline of development of these areas. In the next chapter, attention is paid to those documents, focusing on objectives, instruments and action plans for the development of these areas.

The second part of the analysis concerns the documents focusing on the objectives, instruments and action plans for the development of these areas. These are mainly documents at the transnational level as Europe 2020, Centrope Strategy 2013 + Centrope Action Plan, The Danube Region Strategy. At national level are these particularly the programs of economic and social development of the region SR, action plans and strategy for the development of tourism regions and at regional level the documents relate directly the individual regional sites.

Sustainable transport and tourism as accelerators of regional development are very important in many regions. These include interesting sites of the region, but also the institutional and legislative background. There are

many current strategic documents, however only a few focus on the topic of sustainable transport in relation to the tourism. Usually there is only a reference to the next period with a recommendation of a higher priority for these topics. Completed or on-going projects, creating good conditions for the development of sustainable transport and tourism in the programming period 2007 - 2013 are usually regarded as pilot projects. The new programming period will hopefully bring progress and development within these thematic units. There are more variants of financing of projects within the field of sustainable mobility and tourism. There are more basic sources of financing: regional government sources, returnable foreign source, non – recourse foreign sources and private sector sources. Another possibility, that has not been used or contemplated, is cooperation with church organizations that own lot of tourist destinations and have sufficient financial resources for necessary investments.

The fourth section concerns the analysis of transport and mobility in the region with a special focus on sustainable transport system. The development of transportation within the region was strongly connected to European transportation progress. The traffic and transport network changed the geographical orientation over the time. While in the 19th and early 20th century the transport system was oriented to Vienna and Budapest (due to the fact that the Danube region was part of the Austria-Hungary Empire), after the World War I began the orientation towards Prague. After the World War II this was highlighted by new borders, enforced by Soviet Union, particularly in the direction to Austria. In the year 1990 the railway of Bratislava - Vienna began its service again and after Slovakia joined the European Union, this region became a part of the European transport system. Two multimodal corridors cross the Danube region. At the present Slovakia is part of the Schengen area. As the most important transfer terminal the Bratislava city is considered. Other transfer terminals connect the rail and bus transportation with local public transport. These are located in Trnava, Malacky, Dunajská Streda, Galanta, Komárno, Nové Zámky, Šala and Levice.

The analyses focus on train service, bus service, public transport, cycling transport and ship transport. The regional public transport in cross-border regions is in relation to the available information considering few exceptions not very attractive. The lack of direct connections, low frequencies and long transfer times lead to the fact that the public transport today cannot compete with the private individual automobile transport. One of the duties of public transport is to transfer visitors and tourists to the determined destinations. Therefore the next part of analysis is focused on development of tourism in the analyzed districts and the current status of the tourism sector with focus on tourism attractions. In the part of development of tourism in the analysed districts, the focus has been on the statistical data which is needed to provide an overview of the situation in the tourism sector. This is information about the total number of accommodated visitors, the visitor structure by country of origin, the total number of overnight stays and the purpose of their journey. It is also important for creating tourism products to have information about daily visitors, but these are not officially registered so far in Slovakia. This might be changed after launching the results of the satellite account of tourism, which specifies the methodology, how these numbers of daily visitors should be registered. Based on the analysis of the data it is clear that the trend of all monitored parameters is ascending. Attractions processed within in the analysis are divided by forms of tourism. These are the five main structural forms: Visit / Recreation at the water with water sports, Visit / recreation at the thermal water, Cultural and historical sites, Town tourism – Museums and Galleries and other attractions and events. For each attraction there is a brief description given with the possibility to obtain additional information through an information system. This part includes also the information on the accessibility of places in terms of sustainable transport and time perspective. The tourism in the analysed area is mainly focused on visits and recreation stays at (thermal) water and sports facilities, focused at the Danube banks and its meanders. The meanders are surrounded by floodplain forests with unique flora and fauna, a protected landscape area Dunajské Luhý. Another interesting attraction is the water mills on the Small Danube. The wealth of thermal springs prompted the construction of thermal pools with international clientele. The largest pools are visited by more than half a million visitors yearly. The Regions are due to their

location focused mainly on summer sports - rafting, swimming, yachting, scuba diving, as well as skating, running, cycling etc. Other recreational activities are sports, associated with the dam on the river Danube.

Approximately 40 km route from Bratislava through Šamorín to the Gabčíkovo provides very good conditions for cyclists. The routes are situated on both sides of the Danube River. In selected parts (Kalinkovo, Hamuliakovo, Šamorín, Kyselica) there are some snack bars and pubs serving fish specialties and frozen drinks. Suitable terrain conditions and socio-economic situation supports untraditional types of activities such as golf, car racing and racing tracks. The area has due to rich history since Roman times to the present a lot of scattered cultural and historical sites and monuments. In relation to data, acquired in the field of transport and accessibility of these attractions it can be observed that attractions have a good accessibility using the public transport. In relation of the time spent in the public transport these are accessible in approx. 30 min without the transfers. Availability of other attractions, which are located at greater distance from the starting points, is more complicated. In most cases there is a need of transfers and combined forms of transport (train, bus). In terms of time are these places reachable by direct connection by 60 min. and by combined transport by over 60 min. The main competitor for public transport is the individual transport. In case of longer transport times the individual transport often replaces the public transport. Without the efforts and activities of key stakeholders at the national and regional level in the development of sustainable transport the tourism stagnates.

The Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Tourism Agency act at the national level. ŽSR, Železničná spoločnosť a.s. and Železničná spoločnosť Cargo a.s are under the Ministry of Transport. Their activities in tourism development are closely related to their roles and responsibilities arising from the institutional framework of these areas. Success factor of this product is the agreement and synergy between the two private companies that were able to align their pricing policies and offer customers a comprehensive package of services at an affordable price.

The analysis of the present situation led to conclusion that the further development of sustainable transport and tourism is possible. The regional offer provides very good conditions for the development of non-mass and "friendly" forms of tourism as hiking, biking, horse riding, hunting or fishing. With the assistance of public associations, local action groups and individual citizens of the region it is possible to create suitable conditions for the mentioned forms. The opportunities come however with the risks. Lack of interest in cooperating entities, the impact of the economic crisis in relation to reduced budgets of municipalities and organizations, or increased environmental pressure can bring negative impact on the overall development of the area. In the end of the study it can be concluded that the topic of sustainable mobility and tourism in Slovakia is still not being resolved at satisfactory level. However, there are new pilot projects focused on the topic and key stakeholders begin to pay attention, which brings a positive precondition for the development of the topic in the future. Cooperation of the private and the public sector can lead to preparation of attractive tourist offers using the elements of the transport mobility, which will lead to increase of competitiveness in comparison to individual private transport.