



**Sustainable Transport and Tourism  
along the Danube**  
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**STATUS QUO ANALYSIS / STATE OF THE ART  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
BUDAPEST AND PEST COUNTY**



July 2013

Nyugat-Pannon Terület- és Településfejlesztési Közhasznú  
Nonprofit Kft.



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## Executive Summary

### 0. Introduction

County Pest and the country's capital Budapest (as an independent public administration unit) is situated in the central, northern part of Hungary, thus formulating the Central Hungarian Region. Budapest is operating as an island or enclave inside County Pest. Budapest, and County Pest are the centres of the country not only geographically but also with its economic power, which is demonstrated by the fact that more than the 10% of the GDP is produced by the county, and it is more than the half of the national GDP created by the county and the capital together.<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible to evaluate the county and Budapest from eco-touristic point of view since they are related to each other so fundamentally. Practically speaking the country can be regarded as the agglomeration area of the capital, because it is a much more urbanised area than the other parts of the country – taking the averages into consideration, - and also there are close links in the economy as well.

The Dunakanyar Kiemelt Üdülőkörzet / Spotlight Holiday Area of the Bend of the Danube (DKÜ) has been defined as a touristic hotspot that has similar features with the Fertő-Neusiedler See area in County Győr-Moson-Sopron, since the cross-border national parks (in this case the Duna-Ipoly National Park and the Danube) and the coastal location are accentuated elements regarding both areas. 62 settlements in County Pest belong to the area of the DKÜ.<sup>2</sup> The Szentendre Micro-region has the highest touristic value on the area of the DKÜ, as it has the most spent nights in hotels in County Pest. It has favourable location as it is situated close to the capital and it is along the water route of the Danube, as well as the bicycle roads. It has quite rich cultural inheritance elements (Szentendre, Visegrád), practically speaking it supplies the first line background to the tourism of the capital, and thus it is the main touristic destination for the tourists visiting the capital. Budapest is going to be evaluated as the highly important puffer zone of the DKÜ, and County Pest is going to be evaluated as the puffer zone.

### 1. Status Quo Analysis

#### Transportation

The evaluated area has a central position regarding transport-geography as in Hungary the transport systems are centralised with Budapest in their centres. The most important task of the county may be the bridge role between sections in both the European and the Hungarian regional area.

If we look at the public road system of Hungary the centralised feature is immediately visible: all the highways meet in Budapest. Thus it is difficult to locate one main transport axle from the point of view of the accessibility of the area. The highway No. M0 is part of the Helsinki corridors No. IV and V taking their transit traffic load as well, thus the mixing of the transit traffic as well as the daily commuter load causes a heavy load.<sup>3</sup> That is why we have defined the highway No. M0 as the 'A' transport axle. This ring road is situated in the south of the capital, and its northern part is under planning.

<sup>1</sup> The concept of County Pest megyei, general evaluation, page 32.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dunakanyar.hu/index.php?page=regio&sub=Data>, together with Budapest, however in our evaluation the statistic data of the DKÜ (population, number of visitors, etc.) have been calculated without Budapest

<sup>3</sup> The concept of County Pest, general evaluation, page 87.

To define the 'B' transport axle is also a difficult task. The central features also characterise the rail roads, moreover due to the intensive connections between the capital and the agglomeration the rail routes in the suburbs are also very important. Regarding air traffic, the Liszt Ferenc International Airport is the biggest airport in Hungary. The annual number of its passengers reached 8.9 million in 2011.<sup>4</sup> Thus according to their national importance these railway lines as well as the Liszt Ferenc International Airport as a traffic interchange are defined as the 'B' interchange.

The area in the focus of the study has central features regarding transport geography, thus it is true about the railway system as well. The length of the railway lines in County Pest is 576 kms, from which only 2 kms are not used. It has high importance for both County Pest and Budapest that the rail transport is supplied by 11 railway and 4 HÉV lines. Except the Esztergom line (line No. 2) and Lajosmizse line (line No. 142) all the lines are electric. There are however, huge problems with the integration of the suburban and the city rail lines. Regarding the county the Hegyeshalom (line No. 1.), Székesfehérvár (line No. 30.), Cegléd (line No. 100.) lines are the busiest, 140-180 trains work daily in both directions. The railway line between Vác and Budapest has high importance as well (line No. 70.), which plays an important role in the availability of the Dunakanyar Kiemelt Üdülőkörzet / Spotlight Holiday Area of the Bend of the Danube. The length of the break between the journeys is about 15-20 minutes. The Esztergom line is at the edge of its capacity since both the public transport of the suburban and the city lines and the cargo transport are completed on the same old rails, however with the help of a recently won European Union project subsidy (total approximately 56 billion HUF) the railway line will be renewed.<sup>5</sup> As a part of the investment four new stations will be built, and what the most important is, that encouraging the suburban transport P+R parking spaces and bicycle racks will be also built.

The Volánbusz Plc. has 500 coaches daily in the direction of about a hundred cities of the country, thus creating the connection to the centres of the counties as well as the cities with regional importance and the touristic centres. There are coaches in the direction of Győr, Jászberény, Eger and Kecskemét every hour, or even more frequently. About 5500 bus lines supply the transport in County Pest, connecting about 170 settlements and the capital as well as the centres of the regions. On the suburban lines (e.g. Érd, Diósd, Fót) the frequency of the buses are 5, 10 or 20 minutes, thus supplying the commuters with the necessary service. The company plays an important role on those areas that are a bit farther from the centre, since in most cases they are only available by buses (practically speaking these coaches are the only public transport means on these areas).<sup>6</sup> The agglomeration destinations of the BKV buses have been a great advantage for the people in Budapest, as well as the commuters. These coaches go in the directions of e.g. Törökbálint, Budakeszi, Budaörs, Gyál and Diósd, thus the coordinated fares make life easier for those using these services.<sup>7</sup>

The sequences of the Eurovelo 6 bicycle road crossing the county, play an important role in the bicycle road system of the focus area (DKÜ), and the whole County Pest. The route itself runs along the River Danube in Hungary, and in the county it reaches several touristic attractions. One of the most popular bicycle routes is the bicycle road along the Danube. We can state about the bicycle traffic of Budapest that it is gaining more and more popularity in the city. The length of the bicycle roads in the city is 226 kms, which is far less than in other capital cities, moreover they do not formulate a continuous network.

Budapest is the most important and the most spectacular venue and port of the boating on the Danube. One of the most popular voyages is the regular ship between Vienna and Budapest along the wonderful landscape of

<sup>4</sup>The concept of County Pest, general evaluation, page 89.

<sup>5</sup>[http://hvg.hu/itthon/20121011\\_esztergomi\\_vasutvonal\\_felujitas](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20121011_esztergomi_vasutvonal_felujitas)

<sup>6</sup><http://www.volanbusz.hu/hu/tarsasagunkrol/cegismerteto>

<sup>7</sup>[http://www.bkv.hu/hu/kornyeki\\_szakaszhatarok\\_kornyeki\\_berletek\\_ervenyessegi\\_hatarai/a\\_kornyeki\\_helykozi\\_vonaljegyek\\_ervenyessegi\\_hatarai](http://www.bkv.hu/hu/kornyeki_szakaszhatarok_kornyeki_berletek_ervenyessegi_hatarai/a_kornyeki_helykozi_vonaljegyek_ervenyessegi_hatarai)

the Danube.<sup>8</sup> This route has a great importance regarding our focus area, the Dunakanyar Kiemelt Üdülőkörzet / Spotlight Holiday Area of the Bend of the Danube since the transit traffic of the international shipping transport is fulfilled here.

The ferries are important means of the transport in the DKÜ area, as they release the dividing role of the Danube. Ferry shuttles, pontoon-bridges can be found between for example Szob and Pilismarót, Visegrád and Nagymaros, Vác and Tahitótfalu and Szentendre and Szigetmonostor.<sup>9</sup>

Personal information points are available for the passengers arriving at the area almost at each bigger station (railway or bus stations). I would like to underline the work of the so called Budapestinfo Point, which is the variant of the Tourinform point in the capital, which has a significant role not only in touristic meaning, but also from public transport aspect as well, because it is the number one issuer and distributor of the Budapest Card. The owner of the Budapest Card can have several discounts and all the BKV public transport vehicles can be used free of charge. Due to the increasing popularity of the bicycle usage there are several biker websites offering route planners, route planner availability, and the bicycle map of Budapest is also available.<sup>10</sup>

### **Tourism**

According to the division by touristic areas the focus area of our study, the Dunakanyar Kiemelt Üdülőkörzet / Spotlight Holiday Area of the Bend of the Danube belongs to the Budapest and its vicinity (Budapest, and the northern part of County Pest) Touristic region. Due to the lack of the suitable organisation neither a standard brand nor complex touristic products have been created in the DKÜ and its surrounding areas.

It is quite difficult to study and evaluate the tourism of County Pest separately, eliminating the appeal of Budapest, since the number one target point of the county is the capital. The other areas of the county have different touristic appeal, and they are known by the tourists in different depths, however they cannot be regarded as separate touristic destinations.

Based on the statistic data we can see (KSH, 2011) the number of visitors of County Pest and Budapest shows an increasing tendency, and it is characteristic mainly to County Pest. We have to add however, that the number of the spent nights has a slightly falling tendency on the area of the DKÜ. It has been the main destination area of the tourism outside Budapest; however the baths on the southern part of the county are becoming more and more popular among the tourists. Dunakanyar Kiemelt Üdülőkörzet / Spotlight Holiday Area of the Bend of the Danube has the 40% of the number of the visitors (KSH, 2011), and the 46% of the number of spent nights in the hotels ok (KSH, 2011). Thus we can state that regarding tourism the Dunakanyar Kiemelt Üdülőkörzet / Spotlight Holiday Area of the Bend of the Danube areas of County Pest play a significant role in the tourism of the area.

<b>Area</b>	<b>The number of the visitors (2011)</b>	<b>The number of the spent nights in the hotels (2007)</b>	<b>The number of the spent nights in the hotels (2011)</b>	<b>The rate of the changes in the number of the spent nights in the hotels (%)</b>
Budapest	2 813 139	6 233 093	6 598 989	+5%
County Pest	390 260	600 043	735 795	+22%
The area of the DKÜ	157 992	356 320	339 170	-5%

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.mahartpassnave.hu/webset32.cgi?MAHART@@HU@@38@@602118017>

<sup>9</sup> <http://internet.kozut.hu/utinform/Lapok/kompok.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.kmsz.hu/sites/default/files/bicbp\\_2009.pdf](http://www.kmsz.hu/sites/default/files/bicbp_2009.pdf)

A Dunakanyar Kiemelt Üdülőkörzet / Spotlight Holiday Area of the Bend of the Danube can rely on its own varying local energies, thus its touristic offers are quite colourful:

- The natural treasures of Duna-Ipoly National Park, its unique biosphere has national importance.
- The bend of the Danube, which is the ‘most beautiful part of the Danube’.
- Cultural, intellectual, historical heritage: the most important cultural events appeal tourists from several parts of the country, thus it is important to mention the Cultural Weeks of the bend of the Danube and the Palace Games in Visegrád.
- Water sport opportunities on the Danube, and the relaxation linked to the water, even just for one day has a significant appeal.
- Health tourism based on spa baths: baths with high temperature spa water can be found in Göd, Szentendre and Vác.
- Hiking, active tourism: the Duna-Ipoly National Park, and the Börzsöny and the Pilis supply the tourists and their families with wonderful place for hiking. During these hikes the tourists can enjoy the services of the trains with narrow rails, which can be found at several points of the area of the bend of the Danube, and everybody is welcomed on the several cultural programmes even in the spring and the autumn.
- Bicycle tourism: it is enough to think of the bicycle road Eurovelo 6, a significant number of biking tourists arrive at the focus area from different countries. It is also important to add, that the number of biker tourists arriving at the bend of the Danube from Budapest is also increasing continuously, the biker tourism is getting more and more popularity as a way of relaxation.
- Rural or agro-tourism, weekend tourism: the weekend tourism is gaining popularity among the citizens of the capital.

The touristic offer is even more colourful if we include the offers of Budapest, since the majority of the tourists visit the capital. If they have enough time to visit areas outside the capital, they go to the bend of the Danube and its surrounding areas. The introduction of all the offers of Budapest would be too big a task for this study, thus we mention only a few main areas: several high importance museums (Hungarian National Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, etc.), its cultural life is really splendid, there are several historic buildings, memorial places (the Castle of Buda, the Houses of Parliament). It is important to add that Budapest is a world heritage venue as well: Budapest – the banks of the Danube, the Castle district of Buda and the Andrassy Road (in cultural category, 1987 + 2002).<sup>11</sup> The Budapest card offers several discounts for the tourists visiting Budapest, not only the services of the BKV can be used free, but also several entry tickets can be bought with significant discount. The Budapest Info Points supply the tourists with the necessary information, which are the offices of the Tourinform in Budapest.

### **SWOT-analysis**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well developed relation infrastructure (the area is neighbouring 3 Helsinki corridors)</li> <li>• Well constructed internal – mainly radial – transport system</li> <li>• Favourable motor way availability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The different branches of transport do not create an integral network, the lack of cooperation</li> <li>• The quality of the railway services is not acceptable. The settlements do not use the</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup><http://www.vilagorokseg.hu/portal/helyszinek.php>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rate of the usage of the public transport is relatively higher than in Europe</li> <li>• The increasing number of the P+R parking spaces</li> <li>• The BKV coaches appear in the settlements of the agglomeration</li> <li>• The capital and the northern part of the county are available by bicycle.</li> <li>• The ships of the BKV have their shuttle journeys again.</li> <li>• It is an area with several beauties – a high number of historic and constructed heritages, historic centres of the cities.</li> <li>• The organisation of TDMs has started on several areas, a regional marketing organisation is operating on the area</li> <li>• A huge area of protected land with varying landscape, natural values</li> <li>• The areas expecting the status of World Heritage have got high values</li> <li>• The continuous increase of the number of the spent nights in the accommodations of the area Budapest (5%) and County Pest (22%)</li> <li>• The creation of the Budapest Card</li> <li>• The renewal and the development of the traditional means of transport (e.g. in the bend of the Danube: the development of the railway network with narrow rails, Budapest: transport by boats).</li> </ul>	<p>services of the railway companies to the full</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The bad quality of the low level roads linking the small settlements as well as the main roads</li> <li>• The inter-modality, the integrative features and the interchanges are under-developed</li> <li>• The cessation of the Budapest Transport Association.</li> <li>• The southern area of the county is under-developed regarding its bicycle tourism.</li> <li>• The lack of a bicycle road network, the small number of the services.</li> <li>• The guaranteed programmes are centred in Visegrád and Szentendre, there should be such programmes in the other areas of the county, as well.</li> <li>• Low level of the cooperation of the participants of the tourism</li> <li>• The lack of a complex, common touristic brand</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The European subsidies urge the developments of the rail traffic.</li> <li>• The number of the P+R parking spaces is increasing, thus the means of the public transport become preferred to the individual means of transport.</li> <li>• The harmonisation of the timetables, ticket systems in the whole county</li> <li>• The realisation of the S-Bahn concept</li> <li>• The realisation of the BuBi bicycle renting system.</li> <li>• Spa baths and thermal water, swimming pools in unique environment.</li> <li>• The increase of the demand for active recreation</li> <li>• The Danube as a high potential (touristic, water supply, transport).</li> <li>• The reasoning of the real demands, the consequent fulfilment, accepting responsibilities</li> <li>• The usage of the extraordinary transport-geographic opportunities with the help of the EU resources: the development of the railways, public roads and the water roads, the expansion of the international passenger transport on water and in air.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increase of the transit traffic the quality of life decreases, and deteriorates the system</li> <li>• The bad relations between the settlements make obstacles in the availability of the services</li> <li>• The environmental and transport conditions of the county are deteriorating</li> <li>• The Traffic Association is not founded</li> <li>• The necessary infrastructural developments have not been completed, which would have been needed to Tourism (e.g. in the transport area)</li> <li>• The number of the visitors has been decreasing due to the economic crises</li> </ul>