

Košický kraj - Characteristic of the region

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Location, area, geographical conditions

Košický kraj with an area of 6 754.3 km² is located in the southeast of the Slovak Republic and occupies 13.8% of its territory. It is the second largest region in terms of population, the fourth largest in terms of area within Slovakia. It borders the Republic of Hungary in the south, Ukraine in the east, Prešovský kraj in the north and Banskobystrický kraj in the west.

The highest point of the region is 1 476 m high Stolica hill in mountain range Slovenské rudohorie, the lowest is the place at the outflow of the river Bodrog from the Slovak Republic with altitude 94 m above sea level. Watercourses belong to the type of lowland, highland and mid-mountain rivers. The largest river is Bodrog, which together with its confluences, rivers Ondava and Latorica, drains the easternmost part of the region. Two basins Hornádska kotlina and Košická kotlina are drained by Hornád river with its tributaries. The western part of region is drained by Slaná river and the south-eastern area by Tisa river. The water reservoirs Zemplínska šírava, Bukovec, Ružín, Palcmanská Maša and Dobšiná are economic and recreational important. Forests cover two-fifths of the surface, in the most forested district of Slovakia – Gelnica districts up to three quarters. They are located mainly in the mountains and foothills in the northern and southwestern part of the region. In the southeast of the territory are floodplain forests, the eastern and southern part consists of lowlands and hills. The area belongs to the northern temperate zone with average annual temperatures at selected meteorological stations around 10 °C. The northern parts are colder, but the southeast in some areas reaches the temperatures of inland subtropics.

There are ore, non-ore and energy raw materials in the region. The iron and silver ores are important in the districts Rožňava and Spišská Nová Ves from the ore raw materials. Magnesite deposits in the vicinity of Košice, rock salt in Michalovce district, talc, gypsum in Rožňava district and Spišská Nová Ves district are significant. There are various types of building stone, brick clay, limestone, kaolin, gravel and others in the region. The energy sources are crude oil and natural gas in districts Michalovce and Trebišov. Significant geothermal springs are located in Košická kotlina basin in the Ďurkov locality and in the foothills of mountain Vihorlat. Košická kotlina basin is one of the most promising areas in terms of the use of geothermal energy. At a depth of 3 000 m, water with a temperature of 150 degrees Celsius is assumed.

There are 2 national parks in Košický kraj – Národný park Slovenský raj and Národný park Slovenský kras, 2 protected landscape areas – Latorica and Vihorlatský prales, 31 national nature reserves, 43 nature reserves, 23 national natural monuments, 25 natural monuments, 11 protected areas and 10 special protection areas. The ice cave near Dobšiná and the geyser in Herľany are a natural unique feature of European importance. The caves Ochtinská aragonitová jaskyňa, Domica, Jasovská a Gombasecká jaskyňa are also unique.

In the past, four historical regions – Spiš, Gemer, Abov and Zemplín were at the actual territory of Košický kraj. To this days, each of them maintains its own traditions, habits, customs and

folklore.

According to the territorial-administrative arrangement in accordance with the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 221/1996 Coll. Košický kraj is divided into 11 districts: Gelnica, Košice I, Košice II, Košice III, Košice IV, Košice-okolie, Michalovce, Rožňava, Sobrance, Spišská Nová Ves and Trebišov. The smallest district with an area of 16.8 km² is Košice III district and the largest with an area of 1 534.6 km² is Košice-okolie district.

There are 440 municipalities in the region, of which 17 obtained the status of a town. The proportion of urban population is 54.5%. The administrative, economic, political, educational and cultural center of the region is Košice. It is the second largest city in Slovakia. It consists of 22 city areas with their own local government. At the end of 2019, the population of this city account 238 593 inhabitants, which represented almost 30% of regional population.

Demographic background

At the end of 2019, there lived 801 460 inhabitants in Košický kraj. Its share on the Slovak population was 14.7%. The region was the second largest in Slovakia, after Prešovský kraj from population point of view. It belonged to the regions with high population density, 119 inhabitants lived at 1 km². The highest density of population had four districts creating Košice, sparsely populated are districts Sobrance, Rožňava and Gelnica.

Košický kraj was one of the five regions of Slovakia, where in 2019 a total increase in population was recorded (1.3 inhabitants per thousand inhabitants). 8 821 children were live born and 7 437 people died. The natural increase was 1.7 births per 1000 inhabitants and was the third highest in Slovakia.

The population of the region was relatively younger than the Slovak average. The average age of the population in 2019 was 39.8 years. The aging index reached 89.2. The population in the pre-productive age (0 –14 years) accounted for 17.2%, in the productive (15 – 64 years) 67.5% and in the post-productive age (65 years and older) 15.3%. In the period from 2015 to 2019, the child component of the population stagnated, but the share of the post-productive population has been growing approximately by 0.5% per year.

The upward trend in number of marriages over the last five years reversed in 2019, and the number of marriages fell slightly to 3 932 marriages. 1 221 marriages were divorced. The number of divorces also went down after three years of stagnation.

Economic and social specifics

Job opportunities in Košický kraj are concentrated mainly in centre of the region – Košice and its surroundings. More remote districts show a lack of them. In 2019, the share of the economically active population was 46.9%. The economic activity rate reached 56.7%, the employment rate 62.9% and the unemployment rate 7.9%. For a long period, the employment rate has grown and

the unemployment rate has declined. The average gross nominal monthly earnings reached EUR 1 168 and lagged behind the national average by 7.4%.

As of 31 December 2019, there were 64 958 legal units operating in the districts of the region, of which natural persons - entrepreneurs accounted for 34 882 (53,7%). The largest group was created by self-employed persons (31 583). Self-employed persons operated mainly in branches of wholesale and retail trade (22.3%), construction (20.8%) and industry (16.3%). Out of number 25 595 profit-oriented enterprises, trading partnerships predominated. Their business activities were concentrated mainly in wholesale and retail trade (23%), professional, scientific and technical activities (13.9%), industry (12.4%) and construction (10.5%).

In terms of the creation of the gross domestic product of Slovakia (11.9% share on national GDP in 2018) and the existing economic base, Košický kraj is one of the most important regions of the Slovak Republic. Regional gross domestic product amounted to EUR 10 677 mill. On average in 2018, the inhabitant of Košický kraj produced gross domestic product at current prices in the value of EUR 13 353, which represents 81.1% of GDP per capita in Slovakia.

Industry had the largest share of the regional gross value added in the region in 2018, up to 28.2%. Trade, transport, accommodation and food service activities accounted for 18.8% and public administration, compulsory social security, health care and social assistance 12.9%.

Agricultural land occupies 333 thous. ha, which is almost half of the regional area; more than three-fifths of it is arable land and one third is permanent grassland and meadow. Forests cover almost two-fifths of the surface. More than three quarters of arable land are in the districts Košice-okolie, Michalovce and Trebišov, where most of agricultural production is concentrated. The forests cover mainly the territory of the districts Rožňava, Košice-okolie and Gelnica. The rarity of Košický kraj is Tokaj locality, where a unique Tokaj wine is grown and produced.

The raw material base of the region is the area of the mountain Slovenské rudohorie, which in the ancient past conditioned the emergence of mining, metallurgy of non-ferrous metals and engineering. These sectors, with the dominant position of the modern metallurgical plant and chemical enterprises, represent an important component of the industry. The main economic branches are metallurgy, engineering, food production, electrical engineering, mining, production of construction materials, fuels and energy as well as construction and agriculture. Food production processing primary agricultural products is significant. Turnover of industrial entities seating in Košický kraj reached EUR 7.9 bill. in 2019. The decisive part of it was obtained by enterprises located in Košice.

Construction production carried out by own employees in the amount of EUR 690.9 mill. and contractually agreed construction production reaching EUR 902.9 mill. characterized the regional development of construction in 2019. The values of construction production were the third highest after the Bratislavský kraj and Žilinský kraj. There were built 1 543 new flats in the region. Dwelling construction was located mainly in the centre of the region and its surrounding. There were built three quarters of new flats.

In 2019, the total length of regional road network was 2 396 km and consist of 22 km motorways, 367 km I. class roads and 584 km II. class roads. Expressways and feeders were

15 km long. Exactly 391 130 of motor vehicles registered in Košický kraj drove on the roads, three quarters of them were passenger cars. International railway lines, resp. of railways of national importance are lines connecting towns Žilina-Košice-Medzilaborce and Plaveč - Prešov - Košice. The railway transshipment point in Čierna nad Tisou is important in terms of transport to and from Eastern Europe. An airport of international importance is located in Košice.

In 2019, education was provided in 455 kindergartens, 303 primary schools, 34 grammar schools and 61 secondary vocational schools. Tertiary education is concentrated in Košice, where are 4 universities (University of P. J. Šafárik, Technical University, University of Veterinary Medicine and a private University of Security Management).

Health care in Košický kraj was provided by 1 888 health care facilities, which included 17 hospitals, 1 463 outpatient health care units and 7 institutes for treatment in 2019. Spa treatment of respiratory diseases took place in the climatic spa Štós.

In year 2019, cultural performances and exhibitions were offered to visitors by 17 scenes in permanent operations, 30 museums and 3 galleries. Readers had 162 libraries available. The rich cultural and historical monuments include the St. Elizabeth Dome and the historical city center of Košice, the manor house in Betliar, the castle in Krásna Hôrka, the abbey of the Premonstratensian Order in Jasov, the gothic evangelical church in Štítnik and many other churches included into the Gemer branch of the Gothic Way. Spišský hrad castle, Spišské Podhradie, the church town Spišská Kapitula, the gothic church in Žehra and the wooden churches in Ruská Bystrá have been included among UNESCO monuments. Košice also has the largest zoological garden in Central Europe.

Tourism has very favourable conditions for development in the territory of the region. More than 456 thousand visitors were accommodated in 389 accommodation facilities in 2019. The most visited districts were Košice I, Spišská Nová Ves and Michalovce.