

Trenčiansky kraj - Characteristic of the region

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Location, area, geographical conditions

Trenčiansky kraj, with an area of 4,501.8 km² and a share of 9.2% of the total area of Slovakia, is one of the smaller regions. It is located in the north-western part of Slovakia. The western part of the region forms the state border with the Czech Republic, to the south it borders Trnavský kraj and Nitriansky kraj, to the east Banskobystrický kraj, and to the north Žilinský kraj.

The region's territory extends over the areas of Vonkajšie flyšové Karpaty mountain (Outer Flysch Carpathians), Fatransko–tatranská oblasť area, Podunajská nížina lowland and Vtáčnik mountain as a part of Slovenské Stredohorie mountain range also including into it. From the Vonkajšie Západné Karpaty area the mountains Biele Karpaty and Javorníky as well as Myjavská pahorkatina hills and Považské podolie valley reach into the region. From the Fatransko-tatranská oblasť area the mountains Malé Karpaty, Považský Inovec, Strážovské vrchy, Súľovské skaly, Žiar and Trábeč as well as Hornonitrianska kotlina basin extend into the region. Podunajská pahorkatina hills as a component of Podunajská nížina lowland are part of the region. The highest point is Vtáčnik mountain (1,345.7 meters above sea level) in the Vtáčnik mountain range. The lowest point is the bank of the Biskupický kanál canal near its exit from the region in the municipality of Horná Streda (158.5 meters above sea level).

The terrain is highly varied, with mountains separating valleys and basins. Riverbeds are accompanied by strips of plains. The Považské podolie valley, Podunajská pahorkatina hills, and Hornonitrianska kotlina basin belong to the warm climate zone. The rest of the area transitions into a moderately warm and cool climate zone with increasing altitude. The western part of the region is crossed by the Váh river, which receives tributaries such as Biela Voda, Vlára, and Drietomica from the right. The eastern part of the region is drained by the Nitra river, into which the Bebrava, Nitrica, and Handlovka rivers flow. The largest water reservoir is located on the Váh river near municipality Nosice.

The region is rich in mineral resources, with a wide variety of raw materials. In the Horná Nitra area, there are brown coal and lignite deposits near towns Handlová and Nováky. Around Mojtiín municipality and Strážovské vrchy hill, there are bauxite deposits, and near the Zlatníky municipality, small quantities of magnetite can be found. Non-metallic raw materials include construction materials such as dolomites, limestone, building stone, calcareous shale, cement raw materials, gravel, clay for brick-making, and decorative stone. A significant cement raw material deposit is found in Horné Slnie municipality.

The region has an extensive network of protected areas. It includes six protected landscape

areas: Ponitrie, Strážovské vrchy, Biele Karpaty, Malé Karpaty, Kysuce and Záhorie, 11 national nature reserves, 48 nature reserves, 7 protected areas, 75 natural monuments, 3 national natural monuments – Čachtická jaskyňa and Prepoštská jaskyňa caves and Lánce - limestone terrace and 5 protected bird areas.

According to the administrative division under Act No. 221/1996 of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, the region is divided into 9 districts: Bánovce nad Bebravou, Ilava, Myjava, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, Partizánske, Považská Bystrica, Prievidza, Púchov, and Trenčín. The largest district by area is Prievidza, covering more than a fifth of the region. The smallest district is Partizánske, with a share of 6.7%.

The region consists of 276 municipalities, of which 18 have town status. Towns concentrate 53.6% of the population. The largest population is in the regional capital Trenčín (54 thous. inhabitants), which, however, is not noticeably dominant compared to other regional capitals. Other larger towns include Prievidza (43 thous. inhabitants) and Považská Bystrica (37 thous. inhabitants).

Demographic background

In terms of population, the Trenčiansky kraj is one of the smaller regions in Slovakia. As of December 31, 2023, the population of the region was 568,102, which represents 10.5% of the Slovak population. The population density reached 126 inhabitants per square kilometer. The more densely populated areas are the flatter regions in the north-west and south-east (Považské Podolie valley, Hornonitrianska kotlina basin, Nitrianska niva flood plain and Bánovská pahorkatina hills), while the mountains around the edge of the region (mountains: Biele Karpaty, Javorníky, Strážovské vrchy, Trábeč, Vtáčnik, and Považský Inovec) are much less densely populated. By district, the most densely populated is the Trenčín district (168 inhabitants per km²), while the least densely populated is Bánovce nad Bebravou district (76 inhabitants per km²).

The demographic development was influenced by changes in economic and social conditions, characterized by a slowing reproduction rate. In 2023, 4,104 children were born, while 6,253 people died. The population of the region decreased by 2,573 people, due to a high natural population decline (2,149 people) and a negative migration balance (424 people).

The population of Trenčiansky kraj is aging. In 2023, children made up only 14.2% of the population, increasing slightly by 0.9 percentage points over the past decade. Meanwhile, the proportion of the population aged over 65 reached 20.5%, the highest among all Slovak regions. Over the past decade, this proportion increased by 5.1 percentage points. The mean age of the population in 2023 was 44 years.

In 2023, 2,652 couples got married, and 856 marriages were divorced. The number of marriages decreased by 11.3% compared to the previous year, marking the second-lowest value since 2014. The number of divorces also decreased by 7.4% year-on-year, the lowest in the past decade.

Economic and social specifics

Trenčiansky kraj has an industrial-agricultural character, placing high demands on the availability of labour. In 2023, economically active residents (employed and unemployed over 15 years old) made up more than 51% of the population. The economic activity rate (i.e., the proportion of economically active relative to the population aged 15 and over) was 59.7%. The employment rate (the proportion of employed aged 20 to 64 relative to the total population in the same age group) reached 78.4%, and the unemployment rate (the proportion of unemployed among the economically active) was 3.2%. The average monthly wage was 1,509 EUR, which was 119 EUR below the national average.

Regarding business activity, as of the end of 2023, there were operating 20.6 thous. enterprises and 40.5 thous. natural persons, of which self-employed person making up 93.7%. Most enterprises focused on wholesale, retail, and the repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, as well as in industrial production or scientific and technical activities. Self-employed persons were mainly involved in construction, followed by industrial production and wholesale, retail, and vehicle repair.

The regional gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023 amounted to 11,049 million EUR, making up 9% of the national total. The GDP per capita was 19,297 EUR at current prices, which was 14.3% lower than the national average. The sectors contributing most to the regional gross value added were industry (32.2%), public administration, defence, and compulsory social security (21.9%), and trade, including vehicle repairs, transport, storage, as well as accommodation including food services (20%).

Agricultural land accounts for two-fifths of the region's area. Due to varying conditions, the region has different agricultural production characteristics. In the warmer, lower parts of the region, the plant production includes barley, sugar beets, and wheat. In higher elevations, potatoes are mainly grown. As altitude increases, meadows and pastures appear, followed by cattle farming. The largest livestock including cattle, pigs, poultry, and sheep, are located in the Prievidza district.

The industry in the region is diverse, with representation in machinery, electrical engineering, mining, textiles, and clothing, as well as glass, leather, and food industries. In 2023, industrial enterprises generated turnover in value of 15.7 billion EUR and employed nearly 84 thous. persons.

Construction production carried out by own employees in 2023 reached 527 mill. EUR, and according to supplier contracts, it was 664 million EUR. Positioning of Trenčiansky kraj belongs to the weaker-performing regions in this sector. There were completed 1,866 new dwellings in 2023, with more than a quarter in the Trenčín district.

From a transport perspective, important road and railways run through the region, including the main railway line connecting Bratislava, Žilina, and Košice. The city of Trenčín is connected to the D1 motorway, which runs through the entire Považie area. There are also significant road

and rail connections to the Czech Republic. As of 2023, the region's road network was 1,883 km long, with motorways and expressways making up 5.2% of this.

Education in the region was provided by a wide network of educational institutions, including 303 kindergartens, 192 primary schools, 17 grammar schools, and 36 secondary vocational schools. University education was represented by the Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín, with faculties in Trenčín and Púchov, as well as the DTI University in Dubnica nad Váhom.

Healthcare in the region in 2023 was provided by 1,326 healthcare facilities, including 10 hospitals, 1,031 outpatient health care units and 4 institutes for treatment. The region, with its rich mineral and thermal waters, offers spa treatments in Trenčianske Teplice (for musculoskeletal and nervous system treatments), Nimnica (for cardiovascular, respiratory, and digestive system treatments, as well as gynecological treatments), and Bojnice (for gynecological and urinary treatments).

In 2023, cultural activities for residents and visitors of the region were provided by 2 galleries and 12 museums. Literature enthusiasts had access to 184 active libraries. Theatres and cinemas offered performances at 4 theatres, including small and independent ones, and 14 permanent cinemas with 19 screening rooms. The region's many historical monuments, such as Trenčín Castle (with an inscription on the castle rock dating from 179 AD, documenting the northernmost Roman presence in Europe), attract tourists, as well as the ruins of Topoľčany, Uhrovec, Beckov, Čachtice, and Tematín castles. Other significant tourist destinations include Bojnice castle, the Bojnice Zoo, the M. R. Štefánik Memorial on Bradlo hill, and the birthplaces of Ľudovít Štúr and Alexander Dubček in Uhrovec. Natural attractions like the Súľovské skaly rocks and the Manínska tiesňava gorge also draw tourists. The region had a lower tourism rate within Slovakia, with 340 thous. visitors staying in 316 accommodation facilities in 2023.