

## Trenčiansky kraj - Characteristic of the region

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### Location, area, geographical conditions

Trenčiansky kraj, with an area of 4 501.8 km<sup>2</sup> and with the share of 9.2% on the Slovak Republic territory, is one of the smaller regions. It is located in the northwest of Slovakia. The western part of the region is formed by the state border with the Czech Republic. The south of the region borders with the regions Trnavský kraj and Nitriansky kraj, the east with Banskobystrický kraj and the north with Žilinský kraj.

The territory of the region extends over the areas of Vonkajšie flyšové Karpaty, Fatransko–tatranská oblasť area, Podunajská nížina lowland and Vtáčnik mountain as a part of Slovenské Stredohorie mountain range. From the Vonkajšie Západné Karpaty area the mountains Biele Karpaty and Javorníky as well as Myjavská pahorkatina hills and Považské podolie valley extend here. 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 are part of the region. Podunajská pahorkatina hills as a component of Podunajská nížina lowland are also on the territory of Trenčiansky kraj. The highest point of the region is Vtáčnik hill with the height 1,345.7 m above sea level in Vtáčnik mountain range. The lowest point is the bank of the Biskupický kanál (canal) at the outflow from the region in the territory of the municipality of Horná Streda (158.5 m above sea level).

The surface of the area is significantly rugged. The mountains are separated by valleys and basins. River flows are accompanied by strips of plains. Považské podolie, Podunajská pahorkatina, and Hornonitrianska kotlina belong to the warm climatic zone. Other areas of the region with increasing altitude moved from moderately warm to cold climate zone. Váh river flows through the western part of the region, its right side tributaries are rivers Biela Voda, Vlára, and Drietomica. The eastern part of the region is drained by Nitra river, and its tributaries Bebrava, Nitrica and Handlovka. The largest water dam is built on Vah river, near Nosice.

Mineral wealth is characterized by great diversity of raw material species. In the Horná Nitra area, there are deposits of brown coal and lignite in Handlová and Nováky. There are deposits of bauxite near Mojtín and Strážovské vrchy hill. Near the Zlatníky municipality are found small amounts of magnetite. From mineral resources are important building materials such as dolomites, limestone, building stone, calcareous clay, cement raw material, gravel, brick clay and ornamental stone. The deposit of cement raw materials in Horné Slnie is significant.

There is an extensive network of protected areas in the region. There are 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 bird protection areas.

According to the territorial-administrative arrangement in accordance with the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 221/1996 Coll. region consists of 9 districts Bánovce nad Bebravou, Ilava, Myjava, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, Partizánske, Považská Bystrica, Prievidza, Púchov, and Trenčín. The largest district Prievidza occupies more than a fifth of the region. The smallest district, with the share 6.7%, is Partizánske.

The region consists of 276 municipalities, 18 of them have the town status. More than half of regional population (53.7%) lives in the towns. The most inhabitants occupied the centre of the region – Trenčín (54 thous. inhabitants), which is not as dominant as the other centres of the regions. Other larger cities are Prievidza (44 thous. inhabitants) and Považská Bystrica (38 thous. inhabitants).

## Demographic background

According to the number of inhabitants, Trenčiansky kraj was one of the smaller regions within Slovakia. The population of the region as at December, 31 2023 reached value 658,102. This represented 10.5% of the Slovak population. The population density per 1 km<sup>2</sup> was 126 inhabitants. The flatter areas in the northwest and southeast (Považské podolie valley, Hornonitrianska kotlina basin, Nitrianska niva flood plain and Bánovská pahorkatina hills) were densely populated. The mountains located mainly along the perimeter of the region (mountains: Biele Karpaty, Javorníky, Strážovské vrchy, Trábeč, Vtáčnik, and Považský Inovec) are significantly sparsely populated. From view of districts, the most populated was Trenčín district (168 inhabitants per 1 km<sup>2</sup>), the most sparsely populated was district Bánovce nad Bebravou (76 inhabitants per 1 km<sup>2</sup>).

The demographic development has been influenced by the economic and social changes in society. It is characterized by a slowdown in the process of population reproduction. In 2023, 4,104 children were liveborn in the region and 6,253 inhabitants died. The total population of the region decreased by 2,573 people, due to a high natural decrease of population (2,149 persons) but also negative migration balance (424 persons).

Regional population was ageing. Although the child (pre-productive) component of the population has grown slightly during the last ten years by 0.9 p.p., the share of the population over 65 years has grown by 5,1 p.p. The average age of population reached 44 years in 2023.

In the same year, 2,652 couples were married and 856 marriages were divorced. Year-on-year the number of marriages decreased by 11.3% and was the second lowest since 2014. The number of divorces decreased by 7.4% year-on-year, being the lowest in the last ten years.

## Economic and social specifics

Trenčiansky kraj has an industrial-agricultural character with high demands on the availability of labour force. The economically active population accounted for 51.3 % in 2022. The rate of economic activity was equal 60.1%, the employment rate in age 20 – 64 years 78.2% and the unemployment rate 3.5% and it was the second lowest in comparison with other Slovak regions. The level of the average nominal monthly earnings was by 7.2% lower than the average for Slovakia and reached EUR 1,393.

Within regional business statistics at the end of 2022, there were registered 20.7 thous. enterprises and 40.6 thous. natural persons, of which self-employed persons created 93.6%. The enterprises focused their activities primarily in the sector of wholesale, retail trade, and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles. A large part of them also operated in the sectors of manufacturing and professional, scientific and technical activities. Self-employed persons run their business mainly in the construction, than in industrial production and also in wholesale, retail trade, and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles.

The volume of regional GDP represented the value of EUR 10,020 mill. and accounted for 9.1% of national GDP in 2022. The regional GDP recalculated per capita reached EUR 17,378 at current prices and was by 13% lower than the national average. The largest share on regional gross value added belonged to industry (29%). The proportion of the public administration and defence, compulsory social security, human health and social activities was 22.3%, the share of trade, transport, accommodation and food service were 20%.

Agricultural land occupies two-fifths of the total area. In terms of agricultural production, there are different growing conditions in the region. In the lower and warmer parts of the region, barley, sugar-beet and wheat are particularly cultivated. Potatoes are growing in higher altitudes. Meadows and pastures are used for cattle breeding. The breeding of cattle, pigs, poultry and sheep is the most extensive in Prievidza district.

There is appreciable diversity in the industry. This sector is represented by mechanical and electrical engineering, mining, textile and clothing industry as well as industrial production of glass, leather and food. The turnover of industrial enterprises reached EUR 15 bill. and the sector employed nearly 86.2 thous. persons in 2022. This corresponds to the second highest employment in the branch of industry within other regions.

Construction production carried out by own employees amounted EUR 543 mill. and contractually agreed construction production reached EUR 562 mill. in 2022. Trenčiansky kraj ranked between regions with weak prosperity in construction sector. There were 2,113 new dwellings built, more than half of them were located in districts Trenčín and Nové Mesto nad Váhom.

From the transport point of view, the road and railway routes leading to Považie are important. The main railway line Bratislava – Žilina – Košice runs through the territory. A motorway bypass as a part of the D1 motorway passing through the entire Považie area, was built around Trenčín. Road and rail connections to the Czech Republic are also important. The regional road network

consists of 1,884 km of roads, of which motorways and expressways make up 5.2% in 2022. There were registered 371 thous. motor vehicles at district traffic inspectorates. Nearly 72% of them were passenger cars.

The network of school facilities, which consisted of 302 kindergartens, 194 basic schools, 17 grammar schools and 36 secondary vocational schools, provided education in 2022. The University of A. Dubček in Trenčín and the DTI University in Dubnica nad Váhom represented regional higher education.

Health care provided 1,342 health care facilities, which also included 10 hospitals, 1,050 outpatient health care facilities and 3 institutes for treatment in 2022. Thanks to the rich occurrence of mineral and thermal springs, the region offers the spa treatment in Trenčianske Teplice (musculoskeletal and nervous diseases), Nimnica (cardiovascular, gynaecological, respiratory and digestive diseases) and Bojnice (gynaecological and urinary diseases).

For visitors and readers 2 galleries, 20 museums and 177 libraries were available in 2022. Theatrical and audio-visual performances were offered by 5 theatres including small and independent and 16 permanent cinemas. There are many historical monuments interesting for tourist, as the castle in Trenčín (with an inscription on the castle rock, dates from 179 AD and documents the northernmost occurrence of Romans in Europe), castle in Bojnice as well as the ruins of the castles in municipalities Topoľčianky, Uhrovec, Beckov, Čachtice, and Tematín. ZOO in Bojnice, the burial-mound of M. R. Štefánik on Bradlo hill and Ľudovít Štúr's birthplace in Uhrovec. Natural beauties like Súľovské skaly rocks and Manínska tiesňava gorge are attractive too. The number of visitors was one of the lower within Slovakia, 322 accommodation facilities provided their services to 292 thous. visitors in 2022.