

Nitriansky kraj - Characteristic of the region

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Location, area, geographical conditions

Nitriansky kraj with area of 6 343.8 km² occupies 12.9% of the territory of Slovak Republic. It is located in the south-western part of the Slovak Republic, bordering the Republic of Hungary in the south, Banskobystrický kraj in the east, Trenčiansky kraj in the north and Trnavský kraj in the west. There is the southernmost point of the Slovak Republic in the region, in Patince municipality in Komárno district (47 °43'52"N).

The relief of the region has mostly a flat and lowland character interrupted by hills. Almost the entire region is located on the Podunajská pahorkatina hills and Podunajská rovina plain, which are the units of Podunajská nížina lowland. Tríbeč mountain stretch through the north of its area, the northeast is bordered by the foothills of the Štiavnické vrchy mountain and partly by Pohronský Inovec mountain. The highest place in the region is Panská Javorina hill with a height of 943.4 m above sea level. The lowest point is the bank of the Danube river at the outflow of the region near the state border with Hungary (101.5 m above sea level). Quality agricultural land forms a substantial part of the south and southeast of the region. The region is one of the warmest areas and the most productive agricultural centres in Slovakia. Especially its southern areas are rich in water resources. Several rivers flow through the region: Váh – the longest Slovak river, Danube, Nitra, Hron, Ipeľ and Žitava. The rivers Danube and Ipeľ form the natural state border with Hungary.

Nitriansky kraj is rich in raw material deposits such a gravel, building stone and brick raw material.

Its territory is covered by the protected landscape areas Dunajské luhy floodplains (Komárno district), Štiavnické vrchy mountains (Levice district) and Ponitrie area (districts Nitra, Topoľčany, and Zlaté Moravce). Of the other small protected areas, there are 11 national nature reserves, 37 nature reserves, 19 natural monuments, 57 protected areas and 9 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. is divided into 7 districts: Komárno, Levice, Nitra, Nové Zámky, Šaľa, Topoľčany and Zlaté Moravce. The smallest district of the region is Šaľa (355.9 km²) and the largest is Levice district (1 551.1 km²), which is also the largest district in the Slovak Republic.

There are 354 municipalities in Nitriansky kraj, of which 16 municipalities have a status of the

town. Nitriansky kraj, together with Prešovský kraj, has the lowest proportion of urban population within the regions (44.9%). Dominant town is the centre of the region – Nitra, in which 77 thous. inhabitants lived at the end of 2022. Towns with population higher than 30 thousands are Nové Zámky, Komárno and Levice.

Demographic background

The population of Nitriansky kraj as at December 31, 2023, accounted 668,301 inhabitants, which corresponds 12.3% of the total population of Slovakia. The population density per 1 km² was 106 inhabitants. The most densely populated district was Nitra district where 189 inhabitants per 1 km² lived, the most sparsely populated was Levice district with a density of 70 inhabitants per 1 km².

It was possible to observe a slowdown in population reproduction in Nitriansky kraj. Since 1996, there has been a natural decline in the population every year. The number of deaths in 2023 exceeded the number of live births by up to 2,388 persons, and the region also lost 7 inhabitants due to migration.

The process of population aging continued. In the last ten years, the share of seniors grew faster than the share of children under 14 years of age, in 2023 it reached 20.1% and was by 6.2 p.p. higher than the share of children in the population. The productive population accounted for nearly two thirds in 2023, while its share is decreasing in the long term. The average age of the region's residents in 2022 was 43 years.

In 2023, 3,136 couples got married and 1,051 marriages got divorced. Compared to 2022, the number of marriages decreased by 9% and the number of divorces by more than 11%. Although the number of marriages in 2023 exceeded the values of the pandemic years 2020 and 2021, they significantly lagged behind the pre-pandemic period. There were also fewer divorces compared to the period before the pandemic, as well as compared to the first pandemic year of 2020.

Economic and social specifics

The share of the economically active population was 52.1% in 2022. The economic activity rate reached 60.8%, the employment rate in age 20 – 64 was at level 77.5% and the unemployment rate was equal 4.3%. The average monthly earnings were by 9.5% lower than the national average and reached the level of EUR 1,359.

At the end of 2022, almost 32.9 thous. legal persons operated in Nitriansky kraj, of which enterprises created 87.1%, and 50.2 thous. natural persons, of which 93.3% run business on the base of tradesmen act. The enterprises carried out their activities mainly in the sectors of trade, professional, scientific and technical activities and industry, while self-employed persons in construction as well as in industry and trade.

The regional gross domestic product at current prices reached EUR 11,242 mill. in 2022. This corresponds 10.3% of national GDP. The regional GDP per capita reached EUR 16,589 at current prices and was by 17% lower than the Slovak average.

According to economic activities, industry accounted for the highest share on the regional gross value added in 2022 (32.5%). Trade, transport, accommodation and food service activities accounted for 18.4% and public administration and defence, compulsory social security, human health and social activities for 12.8%.

Nitriansky kraj is the most productive agricultural region in Slovakia. It manages the largest area of agricultural land of all regions within the Slovak Republic (464 thousand hectares). It is one of the most important producers of agricultural crops such as wheat, barley, grain maize, peas, sugar beet, rape, sunflower and grapes in Slovakia. Livestock production focuses on poultry and pigs breeding.

The composition of the industry is varied, the centre of the region – Nitra is dominant. Very important enterprise is the Jaguar Land Rover – automobile manufacturer. The core branches in the region are the automotive, electrical, machinery, food, chemical and rubber industry. An important chemical factory Duslo, a. s. is placed in Šaľa town. There are produced nitrogenous fertilizers and rubber chemicals. All industrial enterprises reached turnover of EUR 10.8 bill. and employed 65.4 thous. persons in 2022

In terms of construction production, Nitriansky kraj is one of the weaker regions. Regional construction organizations by own employees carried out construction production in the value of EUR 635.2 mill. Contractually agreed construction production reached EUR 762.3 mill. Dwelling construction in the region increased its pace compared to the previous five years. There were completed 2,459 apartments in 2021. Almost half of them was built in Nitra district.

Nitriansky kraj has a large network of regional and international roads. The length of the roads was 2 593 km, only 66 km of them were motorways. There were registered 483 thous. motor vehicles in 2022. The share of the passenger cars was nearly 70%. The international railway also passes through the region. There is an important river port on the Dunaj (Danube) river in Komárno, which is connected to the European river network Rhine–Main–Danube. The important pipelines pass through the territory of Nitriansky kraj. The most important gas pipelines are Transit and Interstate and the oil pipelines are Družba and Adria.

A dense network of school facilities provided education in 430 kindergartens, 290 basic schools, 22 grammar schools, 57 secondary vocational schools in 2022. There are two universities – Slovak University of Agriculture, University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra and J. Selye University in Komárno.

The health treatment was provided especially in 11 hospitals, 1,256 outpatient care facilities and 5 institutes for treatment in 2021. There were together 1,589 health facilities.

The development of regional culture started at the period of early settlement of the ancient Slavs. It continued in Pribinove Nitrianske kniežatstvo principality and during period of Veľká Morava (Great Moravia) through the middle ages until the modern age. Nitra has a long tradition

as a regional cultural centre. It was the most important centre of Slavic education, culture and the Christian life. Nitra is a town with the oldest written mention (826) within Slovakia.

There operate 8 theatres including small and independent, 3 galleries, including branches, 18 museums and 214 libraries at the territory of the region in 2022. Divadlo Andreja Bagara theatre, Ponitrianske múzeum museum and Nitrianska galéria gallery deserve attention.

The most important cultural and historical monuments in the region are the castles: Levický hrad, hrad Gýmeš, Nitriansky hrad, Oponický hrad, Topoľčiansky hrad, hrad Hrušov and Čierny hrad. Regional historical settlement structures are present in Nitra – town monument reservation and down town, in Brhlovce – complex of rock dwellings (Levice district) and monuments zones in towns Šahy, Komárno, Topoľčany, Zlaté Moravce and in Bátovce municipality (Levice district). Arborétum Mlyňany and the National Stud Farm in Topoľčianky are also frequently visited places. The region has many thermal springs in towns and municipalities Podhájská, Patince, Komárno, Poľný Kesov and Štúrovo. Thermal swimming pools and aqua parks built in them are frequently visited. Nitriansky kraj was visited by 240.4 thous. visitors accommodated in 382 accommodation facilities in 2022.