

## Prešovský kraj - Characteristic of the region

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### Location, area, geographical conditions

Prešovský kraj is located in the northeast of the Slovak Republic. With its area of 8 972.8 km<sup>2</sup>, it occupies 18.3% of the country. It is the second largest region within Slovakia, the first was Banskobystrický kraj. The long northern border is also the state border with the Republic of Poland. It borders Ukraine in the east, Košický kraj in the south, Banskobystrický kraj in the southwest and Žilinský kraj in the west.

The northernmost point of the region is located in the cadastral area of Becherov, the southernmost in Sečovská Polianka, the westernmost in Vysoké Tatry and the easternmost point, which is also the easternmost point of Slovakia, is located in Nová Sedlica. Gerlachovský štít (2 655 m above sea level) is the highest point of the region as well as Slovakia. The lowest point is the outflow of Topľa river from the region in the cadastral area of Sečovská Polianka (104 m above sea level). The relative altitude difference is 2 551 m. Due to the different altitude of highlands and lowlands, the region is divided into three climatic areas – cold, moderately warm and warm.

The relief of the region is significantly rugged. The largest areas of the region are occupied by the mountains Spišská Magura, Podtatranská brázda, Spišsko-šarišské medzihorie, Levočské vrchy, Bachureň, Šarišská vrchovina, Pieniny, Ľubovnianska vrchovina, Čergov, Busov, Ondavská a Laborecká vrchovina, Beskydské predhorie and Bukovské vrchy. These mountains create Vonkajšie Západné Karpaty sub-province. The territory of Prešovský kraj also include mountains Vysoké Tatry, Podtatranská kotlina, Kozie chrby, Nízke Tatry, Hornádska kotlina and Branisko (mountains of Fatransko-tatranská oblast area) and also the mountains Slovenský raj and Čierna hora, which are included in mountain range Slovenské rudohorie. Košická kotlina basin, Slánske vrchy hills and Vihorlatské vrchy hills still extend by their northern parts to Prešovský kraj.

The upper sections of the main rivers Hornád, Torysa, Topľa, Ondava, Laborec and Poprad are located on the territory of Prešovský kraj. The rivers Poprad and Dunajec form a part of the border with Poland. The basin of the Poprad river includes a very important territory of Vysoké Tatry mountains. Eleven watercourses from this area provide drinking water supply. The reservoirs Starina and especially Veľká Domaša hydrologically and qualitatively affect the streams on which they lie.

The region has rich reserves of minerals. The most important of them are reserves of rock salt, limestone, building stone, brick raw materials, zeolite and manganese ore.

There are 5 national parks - Tatranský národný park, Pieninský národný park, Národný park Nízke Tatry, Národný park Slovenský raj a Národný park Poloniny, 2 protected landscape areas

– Vihorlatský prales, Východné Karpaty, 54 national nature reserves, 78 nature reserves, 5 national natural monuments, 34 natural monuments, 7 protected areas and 10 special protection areas.

Administratively, the region is divided in accordance with the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No 221/1996 Coll. to 13 districts: Bardejov, Humenné, Kežmarok, Levoča, Medzilaborce, Poprad, Prešov, Sabinov, Snina, Stará Ľubovňa, Stropkov, Svidník and Vranov nad Topľou. The largest district is Poprad district (1 104.6 km<sup>2</sup>) and the smallest Stropkov district (388.9 km<sup>2</sup>). There are 665 municipalities in the region, 23 of them have the status of a town. Prešovský kraj has the lowest proportion of urban population within the regions (46.4%). The most populated is Prešov – the centre of the region. It is also the third largest town in Slovakia. Population higher than 50 thousand also has Poprad. Almost 17% of the regional population lives in these two cities.

## Demographic background

With a population of 826 244 as at December 31, 2019, Prešovský kraj is the most populated within Slovakia. Its share was 15.1% on the Slovak population. Population density was equal to 92 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> and reached the second lowest value after Banskobystrický kraj. That was almost a fifth lower than the average population density in the Slovak Republic. The highest density of population was in Prešov district (188 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>), the lowest in Medzilaborce district (28 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>).

In 2019, 9 893 children were born and 6 984 people died. For a long period, the region has had the highest number of births and the highest natural increase, but the region has been losing due to migration. The total increase per 1000 inhabitants in 2019 barely reached a value of 1.5. Since 2015, the share of post-productive population has been growing by 0.5 % per year but the proportion of the pre-productive has stagnated. Despite the stagnation, the share of the children (0 –14 years of age) was the highest (18%) in comparison with other Slovak regions. Population of Prešovský kraj was the youngest within Slovakia despite mild growth of the mean age (38.9 years in 2019).

In 2019, 4 944 marriages were concluded and 1 094 marriages were divorced. After a five-year period of modest growth, number of marriages declined slightly in 2018 and 2019. The number of divorces has stagnated over the last four years.

## Economic and social specifics

Due to the lack of job opportunities, the inhabitants of Prešovský kraj often go to work in other regions or abroad. In 2019, the economically active population accounted for 48.7% and the economic activity rate reached 59.3%. The employment rate has been rising slightly for a long time to 63.8% in 2019. The unemployment rate has been sharply declining to 10.1% in 2019, but was still the highest compared to other regions. The average nominal monthly earnings reached EUR 1 024 and was the lowest within Slovakia.

The business activities of the population are influenced by the conditions and opportunities in the given region. At the end of 2019, there were 27.5 thousand legal persons operating in the region, 22.8 thous. of them were profit-oriented enterprises. Almost a third of enterprises did business in industry, 14.3% in construction and 11.1% in professional, scientific and technical activities. In Prešovský kraj, 55.2 thous. natural persons operated, 94.4% of them run business on the base of the tradesmen act. More than a third of self-employed persons focused their activities on construction, almost 20% on industry and more than 14% on trade.

Prešovský kraj is one of the less efficient regions of Slovakia in the evaluation of its economic position. The regional gross domestic product amounted to EUR 8 563 mill. at current prices in 2018. The volume of GDP generated in the region represents on Slovak GDP the share of 9.5%. Regional GDP recalculated per capita reached EUR 10 389 at current prices. This represents 63.1% of national GDP per capita.

In 2018, the sector of industry accounted for the largest share, almost 23%, of regional gross value added. Wholesale and retail trade, transportation, accommodation and food service activities accounted for 18.4% and public administration, compulsory social security, health and social activities for 15.5%.

Agricultural land occupies 41.7% of the total area. Almost two-fifths of it is arable land, on which mainly cereals, fodder, oilseeds and potatoes are grown. The region is known for the largest production of potatoes. Cattle breeding predominates in animal production. It manages the largest areas of forest land together with Žilinský kraj and Banskobystrický kraj.

The industry in the region is diverse without a significant focus on some manufacturing sectors. The manufacture of metals, wood, food, electrical and machinery equipment, chemicals, textile and clothes are importantly presented. Industry is concentrated mainly in district towns. The most important enterprises of the region include: Tatravagónka in Poprad, Lear Corporation Seating Slovakia in Prešov, Pivovary TOPVAR, a.s., MECOM GROUP in Humenné, MILK-AGRO in Prešov, Nexis Fibers in Humenné, Bukóza Export-Import in Vranov nad Topľou, Chemosvit Folie in Svit, Bukocel in Hencovce and others. Turnover of industrial enterprises seating in Prešovský kraj reached EUR 5.5 bill. in 2019.

In 2019 regional construction organizations carried out construction production by own employees for value EUR 596.8 mill., contractually agreed construction production achieved EUR 555.8 mill. There were 1 784 new flats built, more than a third of them in Prešov district and almost a fifth in Poprad district.

The Prešovský kraj has an important position on the north – south but also east – west lines of international transport. The important main Slovak northern road corridor connecting towns Bratislava – Žilina – Poprad – Prešov – Košice passes through it, in the direction north – south the eastern international corridor Poland – Stará Ľubovňa – Prešov and Poland – Svidník – Prešov, which continues along a common route to Košice and Hungary. International railway lines, resp. railway lines of national importance pass through town Žilina – Košice – Medzilaborce and Plaveč – Prešov – Košice. There is an international airport in Poprad. The airport serves mainly for area of Vysoké Tatry, other parts of the region have air connections

from the international airport in Košice. Public bus transport is provided by widely branched lines. For individual motorists, there is a dense network of roads of various categories with a length of 3 182 km equipped by services and petrol stations. More than a fifth of Slovak motorways are located in Prešovský kraj. In 2019, there were registered 387 108 motor vehicles in the region, 73.4% of them were passenger cars.

Education is represented by a wide network of school facilities. There were 539 kindergartens, 397 primary schools, 38 grammar schools and 68 secondary vocational schools in 2019. The University in Prešov and College of International Business ISM Slovakia have the seat in the centre of the region.

In 2019, health care was provided in 1 873 health care facilities, which also included 18 hospitals, 1 428 out-patient care units and 5 institutes for treatment. The network of health care facilities is complemented by natural curative spas for treatment of respiratory diseases in Vysoké Tatry, for treatment of the digestive system in Bardejov, for treatment of circulatory systems in Vyšné Ružbachy and for treatment of skin diseases in Červený Kláštor. In addition to the sources of medicinal mineral waters used in spas, the territory of Prešovský kraj is also rich in natural sources of mineral table waters Ľubovnianska, Sulínka, Salvator, Baldovská, Cigeľka and others.

There were available 5 scenes in permanent operations, 5 galleries, including branches and 30 museums for cultural events visitors in 2019. Readers had at their disposal 256 libraries.

The region is proud of many cultural and historical monuments, where the towns of Levoča, Prešov, Bardejov, Poprad and Kežmarok deserve special attention. The administrative, economic, cultural and social centre of the region is Prešov, where are also the seats of important ecclesiastical institutions of the Greek Catholic, Orthodox and Evangelical Church.

The natural beauty of the region and convenient climatic conditions have created favourable conditions for the development of tourism. Almost a fifth of Slovak accommodation facilities are concentrated here. Services of these facilities were used by approximately 1 108 thous. visitors in 2019. The Vysoké Tatry mountains and the districts Bardejov, Kežmarok, Prešov and Stará Ľubovňa are the most visited within the region.