

Bratislavský kraj - Characteristic of the region

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Location, area, geographical conditions

Bratislavský kraj, with an area of 2,052.7 km², is the smallest region in Slovakia, accounting for 4.2% of the country's total area. It is located in the southwestern part of Slovakia, where it shares borders with the Republic of Austria and the Republic of Hungary. To the north, east, and southeast, it borders Trnavský kraj. The westernmost point of Slovakia, located in the municipality of Záhorská Ves in the Malacky District, lies on the western border with Austria. The highest point in the region is Vysoká hill (759.1 m above sea level) in the Malé Karpaty mountain range, while the lowest point is the bottom of the excavation pit near Pezinské tehelne (Pezinok Brickworks) on the territory of the town Pezinok (113.9 m above sea level).

The region's western part is made up of the Záhorská nížina, while the Malé Karpaty mountain range stretches from the southwest to the northeast. The eastern and southeastern parts are part of the Podunajská nížina lowland. The region's climate is classified as moderately warm, in the southern part contacts warmer zone. The water system belongs to the river Dunaj (Danube) basin, the second largest river in Europe, which flows through the region for about 37 km and forms part of the natural border with Austria and Hungary.

The lowlands are a source of construction materials. The most extensive resources are gravel and sand deposits, which are mined in the districts Senec and Malacky. Clay for brick production is available in the districts Bratislava IV (Devínska Nová Ves), Senec, and Pezinok. The Malé Karpaty mountain provide high-quality wood used for fuel and various industrial purposes, as well as also contains deposits of several mineral resources. In the Malacky district, there are several natural gas deposits.

The region contains three protected landscape areas: Malé Karpaty, Záhorie and Dunajské Luhy, as well as 8 national nature reserves, 24 nature reserves, 24 protected areas, 7 natural monuments, 1 national natural monument, 1 protected landscape feature, and 5 protected bird areas.

According to the territorial-administrative division according to the National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No. 221/1996, Bratislavský kraj is divided into 8 districts: Bratislava I, Bratislava II, Bratislava III, Bratislava IV, Bratislava V, Malacky, Pezinok, and Senec. Districts Bratislava I to Bratislava V make up the territory of the capital city of Slovakia, Bratislava. District Bratislava I, with an area of 9.6 km² (only 0.5% of the total area of the region), is the smallest district in the region and in the entire country. The largest district is Malacky, which covers 46.3% of the region's area.

The regional and settlement structure of Bratislavský kraj consists of 73 municipalities, one of which has the status of the capital city of Slovakia (Bratislava), and 6 of which have the status of a town (Malacky, Stupava, Svätý Jur, Pezinok, Modra, Senec). Bratislava, the largest city in Slovakia, is the administrative, economic, political, educational, and cultural center of both the country and the region. It consists of 17 municipal parts, each with its own local government.

According to National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No. 180/2013, local state administration authorities are the district offices in Bratislava, Malacky, Pezinok, and Senec. Self-governing authorities include the Office of the Bratislava Self-Governing Region and the municipal, local, and town offices. In the territory of the capital city, self-government functions are carried out by the City Hall of the Capital of Slovakia, Bratislava.

Demographic background

As of December 31, 2023, the population of Bratislava Region was 732,757, accounting for 13.5% of Slovakia's total population. The population density was the highest in Slovakia, with 356 inhabitants per square kilometer. The highest population density was in District Bratislava I, where 4,917 inhabitants lived per square kilometer, while the lowest density was in the Malacky District, with 84 inhabitants per square kilometer. The demographic situation, including the natural and migration movements of the population, was significantly influenced by the capital city, which accounted for 65.2% of the region's population.

In 2023, 6,523 children were born, and 6,344 people deceased. The natural population increase was low, at only 179 inhabitants. Migration increased the population by 4,208 people. The mean age of residents reached 42 years. The proportion of children in the population was 16.9%, which was 1.5 percentage points lower than the proportion of seniors (18.4%). Over the past decade, the proportion of the children younger than 15 increased by 1.7 percentage points, but the proportion of the seniors grew at twice, by 3.4 percentage points. The inhabitants aged 15 to 64 represented 64.6% of the population, which was the lowest among all Slovak regions.

In 2023, 3,684 couples got married, this meant a decrease of 12% compared to the previous year. The number of marriages was the third-lowest since 2015, with fewer marriages only occurring in the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021. Courts dissolved 1,372 marriages. The number of divorces increased by more than a quarter, but it was still lower than before the pandemic.

Economic and social specifics

In 2023, economically active residents, meaning those employed and unemployed aged 15 and above, made up more than 55% of the population. The economic activity rate, representing the proportion of economically active individuals to the total population over 15 years of age, was 67.4%. The employment rate, defined as the proportion of working people aged 20 to 64 to the total population in that age group, reached 85.8%, and the unemployment rate, the share of unemployed among the economically active population, decreased to 2.3%. The average

nominal monthly wage reached 2,066 EUR, which was 438 EUR higher than the national average.

In Bratislavský kraj, 94.9 thous. legal entities operated, of which 87 thous. were enterprises and 67.9 thous. were natural persons, of which 62.7 thous. were self-employed persons. In the region, especially in Bratislava, the majority of businesses were in professional, scientific, technical activities as well as in administrative, support service activities and also in wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles as of December 31, 2023, more than half of all enterprises and nearly half of self-employed persons were active in these sectors.

Bratislavský kraj has long been the most economically productive region in Slovakia. In 2023, its gross domestic product (GDP) reached 33,492 million EUR at current prices. Regional GDP accounted for 27.2% of the national GDP, and regional GDP recalculated per capita amounted to 45,187 EUR at current prices, which is twice the national average.

In terms of gross added value in 2023, the most significant contributions came from the sector of trade, transport, accommodation, and food services (20.7%), industry (17.3%), and public administration, defence, and compulsory social security (15.7%).

Agriculture accounts for less than half of the total land area in the region, but the region has a significant tradition in grape production, particularly on the eastern side of the Malé Karpaty mountain. After the Nitriansky kraj, it is the second largest producer of grapes in Slovakia. The favourable climate conditions also support the cultivation of wheat, corn, potatoes, and sugar beets. Livestock farming, especially pig farming in the Pezinok district and cattle farming in the Malacky district, is relatively successful.

Key industries in the region include the chemical and automotive industries, mechanical as well as electrical engineering, and the food industry. In 2023, the turnover of industrial enterprises amounted to 51.7 billion EUR., the most of it came from enterprises seating in the capital. The industrial sector employed more than 86 thous. persons, the most of all regions.

Construction also plays a strong role in the region's economy, as reflected in the highest volume of construction production compared to others regions. Construction production carried out by own employees reached nearly 2.3 billion EUR, while construction production by contracts exceeded 5.3 billion EUR. Bratislavský kraj has long been the leader in housing construction among Slovak regions. In 2023, 5,644 new dwelling were completed, with the highest number (1,282) built in the Senec district.

The tertiary sector, especially commerce, services, banking, and insurance, also makes a significant contribution to the region's economy.

Bratislava Region has an important position in international transit due to its transportation network, with all types of transport represented. The region's most specific feature is water transport along the Danube River. Bratislavský kraj has the shortest road network (852 km in 2023) but the longest motorway network (136 km). In 2023, nearly 636 thous. motor vehicles were registered in the region, with more than three-quarters being passenger cars.

In 2023, education in the region was provided by 331 kindergartens, 177 primary schools, 46 grammar schools, 54 secondary vocational schools, and 4 conservatories. In the capital city, 13 universities were operating in the 2023/2024 academic year, including Comenius University, Slovak Technical University, University of Economics, Academy of Performing Arts, Academy of Fine Arts and Design, University of Economics and Management, University of management in Bratislava, St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Labour, Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts, Pan European University, Slovak Medical University, Academy of the Police Forces. The Faculty of Theology of the University of Trnava is located in Bratislavský kraj too. The most of students within the region were enrolled at the Comenius University, at the Slovak Technical University and at the University of Economics.

Healthcare on regional and national levels in 2023 was provided by 1,965 healthcare facilities, including 26 hospitals, 1,523 outpatient health care units, and 9 institutes for treatment. The largest University Hospital, highly specialized hospitals, specialized medical institutions, specialized and rehabilitation facilities with national coverage are concentrated mainly in Bratislava.

In 2023, the region had 64 theatres, including small and independent ones, 20 permanent cinemas with 68 screening rooms, 3 galleries, 53 museums, and 145 functional libraries. The Slovak National Theatre, with its three scenes – drama, opera, and ballet, is internationally renowned. The music scene in Bratislava is diverse, ranging from the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra to various music festivals, concerts, and clubs.

The region's most important tourist sites include the fortifications in Devín and Bratislava from the Great Moravian period, the Červený Kameň Castle, and various palaces and religious monuments. In 2023, Bratislava Region was the most visited region in Slovakia, attracting more than 1.3 million domestic and international visitors. Accommodation for guests provided by 398 facilities.