

# **How to be successful in tourism**

**Created as the part of transnational cooperation project  
“Tourism and LEADER knowledge exchange between Croatia  
and Slovak Republic”**

**between  
MAS Chopok juh and LAG Baranja**

**Data gathering paper on all relevant areas related to rural tourism  
development in Baranja region**

## **Introduction**

This paper was created as the part of transnational cooperation project “Tourism and LEADER knowledge exchange between Croatia and Slovak Republic” between MAS Chopok juh and LAG Baranja. Since the main aim of the project is exchange of knowledge and LAG Baranja operates in region with success in developing rural tourism, its task is to develop this paper which compiles most of the available data from various sources on topic of tourism development.

## **Methodology**

The main methodology of this data compilation is finding and presenting currently available data, information, practical examples and knowledge gathered which illustrate how Baranja region is successful in attracting new tourists and tourism development.

The emphasis of the paper is the identification of the best practice examples, while also taking into account characteristics of the process, features and key factors which support or hinder tourism development activities. The paper should answer the question: “How to be successful in tourism?”. It will feature “big” state level initiated development projects and bottom-up community initiated projects appropriate for LEADER principles.

This paper is continuation and progression of previous, more narrowed and focused project documents, which should expand knowledge base and give new ideas to our project partner (Mas Chopok juh) to develop their tourism further.

Main methods used in this paper:

1. Research of data availability related to the topic
2. Gathering of data in printed and electronic form
3. Contacting all the relevant stakeholders and gathering data directivity in person
4. Focus group with relevant local stakeholders to decide on best suitable format and presentation
5. Compilation and processing of data

## **The Baranja region**

There are three main theories from where the name “Baranja” comes from and they really show that “nomen est omen”.

The name of the region comes from the Slavic word 'bara', which means 'marsh', 'bog', thus the name of Baranya means 'marshland'. Even today large parts of the region are swamps, such as the natural reservation Kopački Rit in its southeast.

Another theory states that the name of the region comes from the Hungarian word 'bárány', which means 'lamb' since sheep were dominant animal species for farming.

Third theory states that name comes from combination of Hungarian words “bor” and “anya” which means “Mother of Wine”

## **Overview of main data**

Baranya or Baranja (Hungarian: Baranya; Croatian: Baranja; Serbian: Барања, Baranja, pronounced [bǎraɲa]; German: Branau) is a geographical region between the Danube and the Drava rivers. Its territory is divided between Hungary and Croatia. In Hungary, the region is included into Baranya county, while in Croatia, it is included into Osijek-Baranja county.

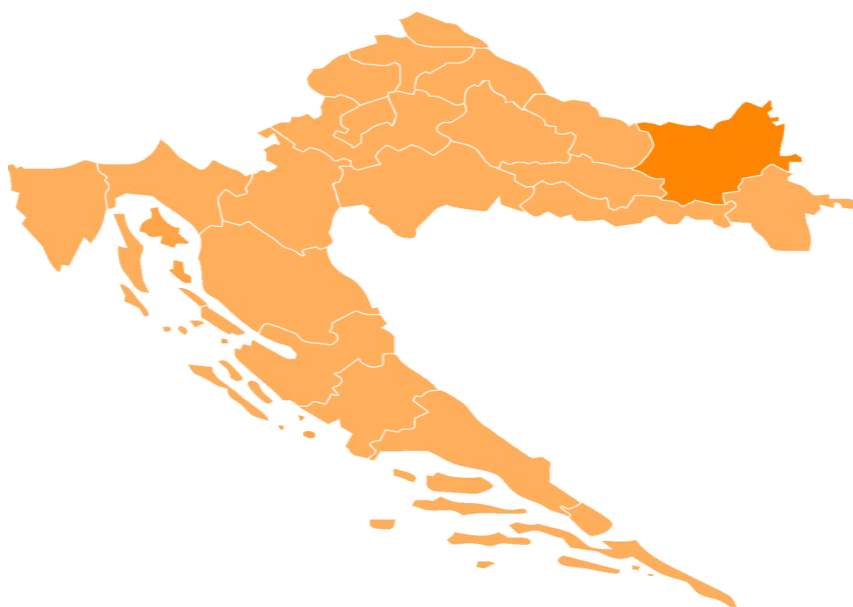


Barany County in Hungary



- map of Baranya / Baranja region -

Map of Hungarian region of Baranya and Croatian Baranja.



Croatian region of Baranja is a micro-region in eastern continental Croatia and part of Osječko-baranjska County.



In the pictures above there are maps which show location of Osječko-baranjska County (on the top left) and location of Baranja region (on bottom right coloured green).

Main geographical characteristics important for this study are:

- area of: 1.147 km<sup>2</sup>, number of inhabitants: 42.633 (census of 2001, number is in constant decline)
  - Croats = 23,693 (55.57%)
  - Serbs = 8,592 (20.15%)
  - Hungarians = 7,114 (16.69%)
- borders with Hungary and Serbia
- surrounded by Drava and Danube rivers
- important nature park “Kopački rit” is located in Municipality of Bilje, featuring special zoological reserve, protected marshes and is one of the main tourism attractions
- majority agricultural and rural area
- inland location, far away from main Croatian tourist destinations on the coast

Region was strongly affected by war and economic transition process which caused very high unemployment even in the wider County.

One of the main hindering characteristics of Baranja region tourism promotion is lack of the private funds due to low economic activity in the region.

## **History**

During the history, the region of Baranya was part of the Roman Empire, the Hunnic Empire, the Kingdom of the Ostrogoths, the Kingdom of the Lombards, the Avar Kingdom, the Frankish Empire, the Balaton Principality, the Bulgarian Empire, the Kingdom of Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy, the Austrian Empire and the Austria-Hungary. Since 1918/1921, the region was divided between Hungary and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later known as Yugoslavia).

The region of Baranya was settled by the Slavs in the 6th century, and in the 9th century, it was part of the Slavic Balaton Principality. Hungarians arrived to the area in the 9th century, and Baranya county arose as one of the first comitatus of the Kingdom of Hungary, in the 11th century. This county included not only present-day region of Baranya, but also one part of present-day Slavonia, on the southern side of the river Drava.

In the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire captured Baranya, and included it into the sanjak of Mohács, an Ottoman administrative unit, with the seat in the town of Mohács. In the end of the 17th century, Baranya was captured by the Habsburg Monarchy, and was included into restored Baranya County within the Habsburg Kingdom of Hungary. Croats moved from Bosnia into Slavonia and Baranja en masse after the Ottoman retreat, and this population is today known as the Šokci.

In 1918, the entire region was captured by Serbian troops and was administered by the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later known as Yugoslavia). For a short time (in 1918-1919), Baranya was part of Banat, Bačka and Baranja region, which was governed by the People's Administration from Novi Sad. By the Treaty of Trianon (part of the Versailles peace) in 1920, the Baranya region was formally divided between Hungary and the Yugoslavia, but de facto remained under the administration of the latter until 1921. On August 14, 1921, the Serb-Hungarian Baranya-Baja Republic was proclaimed. It included northern parts of Baranya and Bačka regions, which were assigned to Hungary by the treaty. On August 21–25, 1921, the Republic was abolished and its territory was included into Hungary, as was previously decided by the Treaty of Trianon. The northern part of Baranya in Hungary was included into Baranya county.

The southern (Yugoslav) part of the region was part of Novi Sad county between 1918 and 1922, part of Bačka Oblast between 1922 and 1929, and in 1929 it was included into the Danube Banovina, a province of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In 1941, the Yugoslav Baranya was occupied by Hungary, but it was returned to Yugoslavia in 1944. In 1944-1945, Yugoslav Baranya was part of

the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, while in 1945 it was assigned to the People's Republic of Croatia.

During the War in Croatia in 1991 it came under control of the SAO Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srem, which became part of the Republic of Serbian Krajina. After the war ended (in 1995), it was peacefully integrated into Croatia in 1998, by the Erdut Agreement. According to the agreement, it was administered by the administration of the United Nations from 1996 to 1998, when it was returned to full sovereignty of Croatia. Today, it is part of that republic's Osijek-Baranja county.

## **Towns and municipalities of Baranja**

Baranja region is dominantly rural with one small town (Beli Manastir) and many small villages.

### **Town of Beli Manastir**



Beli Manastir is administrative, economic and cultural centre of Baranja region.

The municipality of Beli Manastir is composed of 4 settlements:

Beli Manastir, population 8,034

Branjin Vrh, population 982

Šećerana, population 536



Šumarina, population 481

The town has a population of 8,671 (2001), while total municipality population is 10,986. Ethnic composition of Beli Manastir municipality by 2001 census was:

Croats = 6,085 (55.39%)

Serbs = 2,920 (26.58%)

Hungarians = 933 (8.49%)

Roma = 153 (1.39%)

Germans = 122 (1.11%)

History of Beli Manastir:

In the 9th century, this area was part of the Slavic Principality of Lower Pannonia and Slavic monastery was situated here. Monastery was founded during the visit of Cyril and Methodius, who spread Christianity among Slavs. After Methodius died, his students were expelled and the monastery was razed.

After the arrival of the Hungarians in the 10th century, this area was included into the newly founded Hungarian state and the settlement was built at this locality. The town was first mentioned in 1212 under name Pél. During Hungarian administration, another monastery was built here (in the 13th century), but it was destroyed by the Mongols in 1241. It was later rebuilt, but was again destroyed during the Ottoman conquest in the 16th century. Between 11th and 16th century, the area administratively belonged to the Baranya county.

In the 16th-17th century, area was part of the Ottoman Empire and administratively belonged to the Sanjak of Mohaç. Since the end of the 17th century, area was part of the Habsburg Monarchy and administratively belonged to the Baranya county, which was part of the Habsburg Kingdom of Hungary.

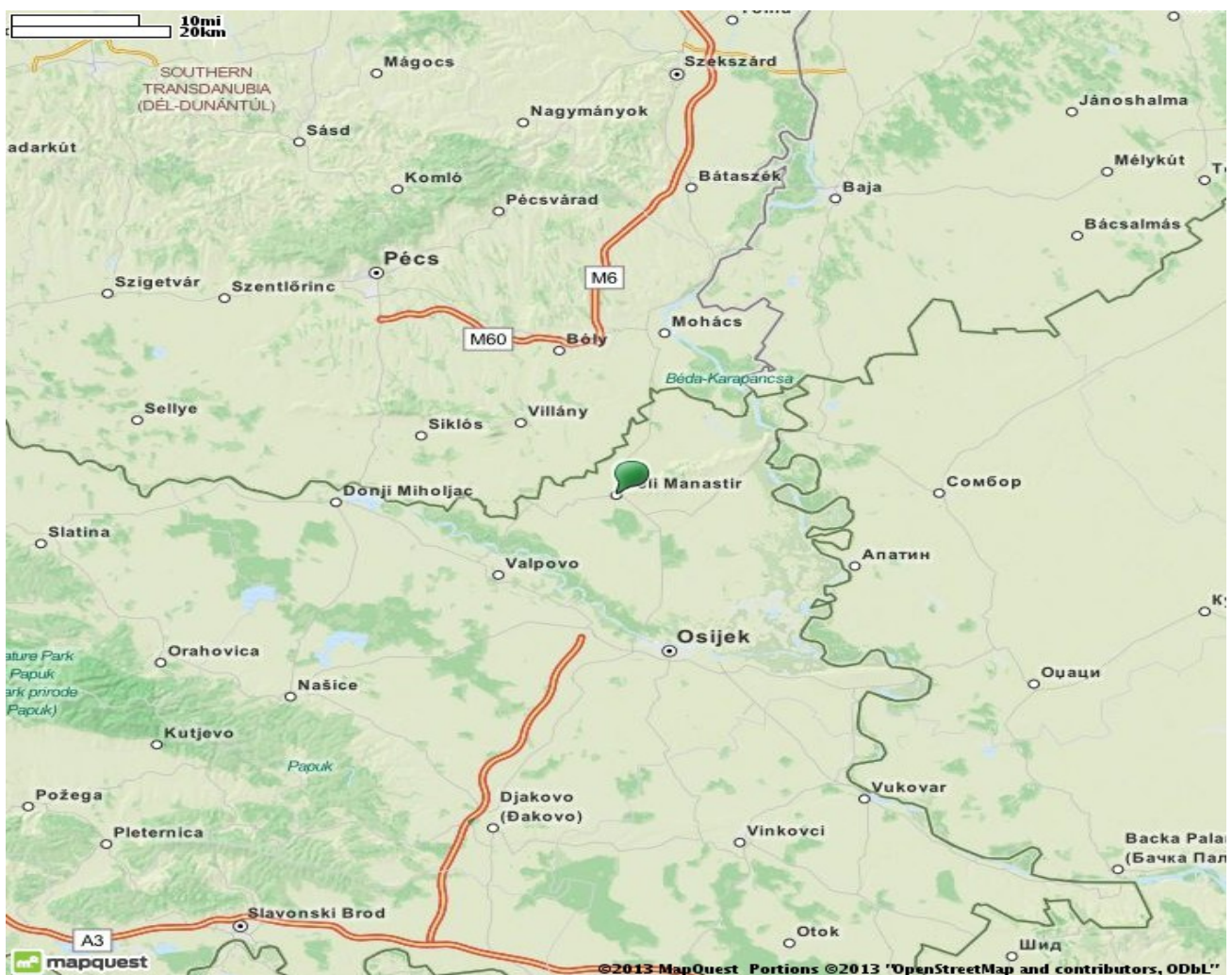
Since 1918, the town was part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later renamed to Yugoslavia). From 1918 to 1922, it was part of the Novi Sad county, from 1922 to 1929 part of the Bačka Oblast, and from 1929 to 1941 part of the Danube Banovina. From 1941 to 1944, it was occupied by Hungary and was administratively included into Baranya county. It was returned to Yugoslav control in 1944 and was administratively part of Vojvodina until 1945, when it was transferred to the People's Republic of Croatia.

During the Croatian War of Independence (1991–1995), Beli Manastir was incorporated along with

some other towns into the unrecognized breakaway Republic of Serbian Krajina. It was returned to Croatian control after the war, following the short period of UN administration (1996–1998).

The town has had very diverse ethnic composition since its earliest times. The population of the town through the history included Croats, Serbs, Magyars, Germans and Roma.

Tourism in Beli Manastir is underdeveloped since it serves as administrative centre and has small industry, but the town government is strongly committed to tourism development. Main project include development of Šećeransko Lake (described in more details later in the document), developing cultural events and becoming the tourists transit hub since it is located on main roads. Baranja's biggest and only modern hotel with various facilities is also located here, so Beli Manastir serves as one of the gates to Baranja.



## Municipality of Bilje

Bilje is a village and municipality on the outskirts of nature park Kopački Rit in the region of Baranja, Osijek-Baranja County, Croatia, situated 8 km northeast of Osijek.

Its name is derived from the Slavic word "bilje" ("herb" in English). In German the village is known as Belje, in Hungarian as Bellye, and in Serbian Cyrillic as Биље.

The municipality of Bilje include following settlements and population (2011 census):

Bilje - 3,613

Kopačevo - 559

Kozjak - 60

Lug - 764

Podunavlje - 1

Tikveš - 10

Vardarac - 630

Zlatna Greda - 5

There are 5,642 inhabitants in the municipality (2011 census), including:

62.87% Croats

29.62% Hungarians

3.83% Serbs

1.05% Germans

0.71% Roma

Chief occupations among the population are farming, livestock breeding and food processing (a mill). The manor with the park represents the major tourist attraction; the park is protected as a horticultural monument.

The neighbouring village of Mece is the centre of one of the oldest industrial-agricultural cooperative farms in Europe Belje.

Kopački Rit, situated at the confluence of the Drava and the Danube, the unique preserved wetland area in this part of Europe is not far from center. The area surrounding Kopački Rit offers rich

hunting grounds for high game (deer in particular) and equally opulent fishing grounds.

Tourism is much more developed in Bilje municipality due to proximity of Kopački Rit (and other interesting features) and the municipality has its own tourism board: TZ Bilje.



Fishing on Bilje Lake attracts lot of people and big international fishing competitions are held there.





## Municipality of Čeminac



The settlement is situated on the arterial road leading from Osijek, through Beli Manastir to Hungarian border. Čeminac is the district seat located in the central part of Baranja and it comprises the following settlements: Kozarac, Grabovac, Novi Čeminac and workers' settlement Mitrovac.

In over 1,100 households, there are more than 3,500 thousand inhabitants living in this area.

It is a certain curiosity that inhabitants of Čeminac used to be successful chess players even in broader regional context.



## Municipality of Darda



Darda is about ten kilometres away from Osijek. It was first mentioned during the Roman Empire, under the name of Tarda. Due to its location in the vicinity of former Mursa (Osijek), it was on the way to many tradesmen coming from the territory of today's Russia, Central and Northern Europe.

In the centre of today's Darda is the castle which belonged to the old Hungarian Esterhazy family, which had a small church of St. John the Baptist, next to the castle.

During the summer, three small lakes situated almost within the place become the focus of tourist attention. The central lake is named Đola and it offers a well-kept bath and recreation centre.

Because of its specific night-time catering offer, throughout the year Darda attracts young people who come to local pubs both from Osijek and Beli Manastir.

The municipality of Darda includes following settlements:

Darda (population 5,394)

Mece

Švajcarnica

Uglješ

## Demographics:

Largest ethnic groups in the municipality are (census 2001):

Croats (51.87%)

Serbs (28.43%)

Hungarians (8.23%)

Roma (2.97%)

Romanians (1.69%)



## Municipality of Draž



Draž is a pearl of Northeast Baranja. From the east, the district is bordered by the Danube, from the north by Hungarian border, while from the south it is enclosed by vineyards sloping from the Baranja Mountain.

In Baranja, Draž is known as a sophisticated weekend destination. Throughout its hillocks, beautiful weekend houses are scattered, with spacious yards and terraces offering beautiful views. The place is not overcrowded.

The inhabitants are mostly engaged in agriculture, cattle breeding and land cultivation, and they have been lately more oriented towards agricultural processing industry and continental tourism, in other words hunting and fishing.

The municipality of Draž includes the following settlements:

Draž (pop. 505)

Batina (pop. 879)

Duboševica (pop. 554)

Gajić (pop. 294)

Podolje (pop. 140)

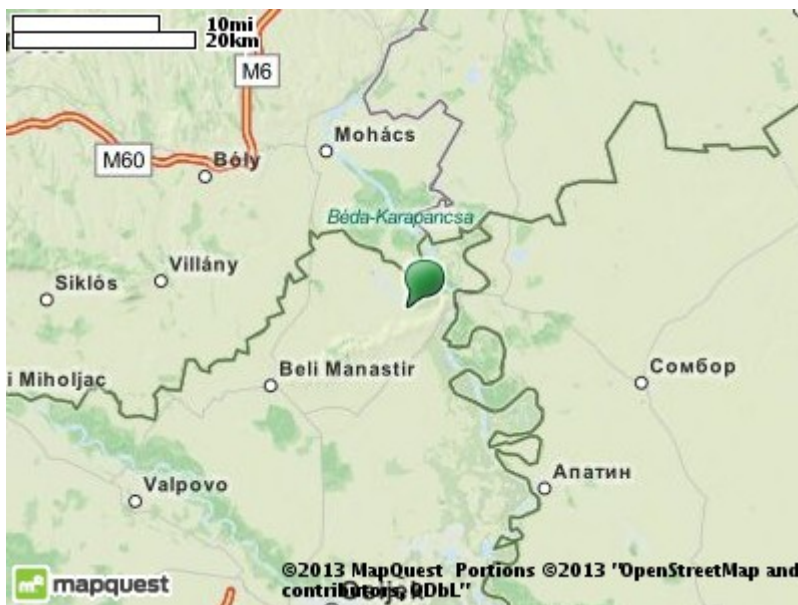
Topolje (pop. 395)



There are preserved examples of traditional rural architecture and *in situ* museum of traditional life.



The municipality is located on Danube with new river port in construction and borders on Serbia and Hungary. Therefore it is important gateway to Baranja for future river cruisers.



## Municipality of Jagodnjak



A settlement in the western part of Baranja, district seat (Bolman, Novi Bolman and Majške Međe), 25 kilometres north-west of Osijek. Jagodnjak is also called by its folk names of Kačvala or Kačvola, and it is situated in the middle of spacious and fertile land.

Parts of the present settlement are hamlets which mostly no longer exist: Bajmok, Bikaš, Brešće, Brod, Brod-Pustara, Čemin, Deonice, Grablje, Karaš, Mali Jagodnjak, Milina, Pjeskovi, Projina Međa, Rit, Staro Selo, Šakarine, Trbićeva Ada and Zornice.

Jagodnjak name is derived from the Slavic word "jagoda" ("strawberry" in English). In other languages, the village in German is known as Katschfeld and in Hungarian as Kácsfalu, and is written as Јагодњаk in Serbian Cyrillic.

There are 2,537 inhabitants in the municipality (2001 census), including:

Serbs (64.72%)

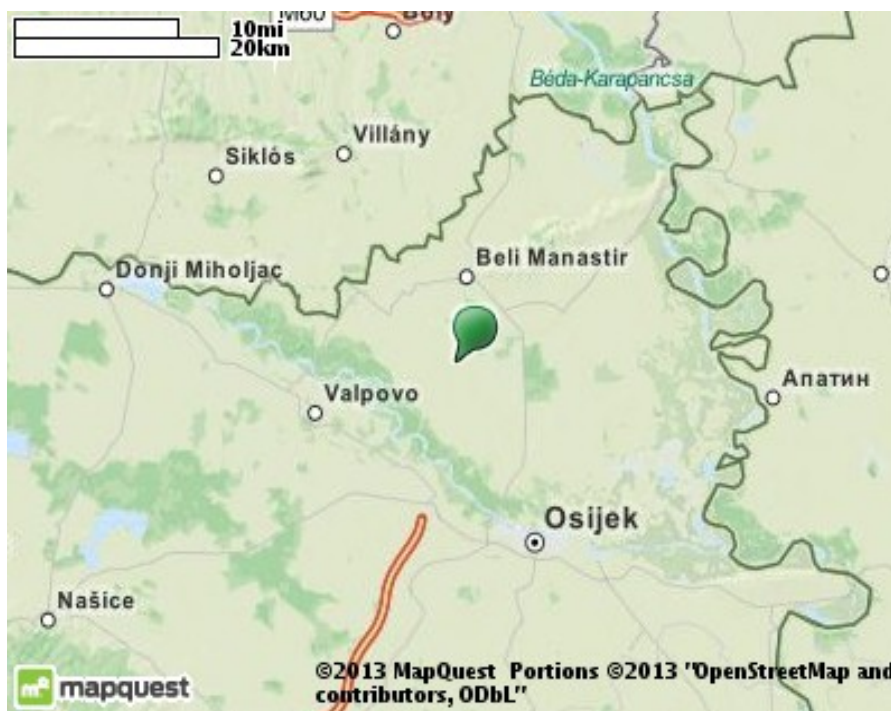
Croats (26.65%)

Hungarians (2.88%)

Roma (1.18%)

Before World War II there was a substantial Danube Swabian minority here but they were all expelled by the Communist regime of Josip Broz Tito after 1945.

Municipality has a plan to develop outdoor recreational area “Gmajna” for tourists and local population. It is attractive for fishermen and has small outdoor facilities for children. It is planned that the artificial lake will be expanded and that there will be a man made island on it.





## Municipality of Kneževi Vinogradi



The name of the village derived from Croatian words "knez" ("prince" in English) and "vinograd" ("vineyard" in English), hence the meaning of the name is "the prince's vineyards".

In other languages, the village in German is known as Weingärten or Weingärten i.d.Braunau, in Hungarian as Herczegszöllös and in Serbian as Kneževi Vinogradi (Кнежеви Виногради).

Kneževi Vinogradi are the centre of the Baranja viticulture. The village has interesting sacral heritage as well as several preserved buildings from the 19th century, the most distinguished among them being the classicist building from 1815, the present-day archives.

Outdoor swimming pools with accompanying facilities offer a variety of sports and recreational opportunities throughout the year. The nearby surroundings offer fine hunting and fishing grounds. Wines as well as the Baranja cuisine can be tasted in a number of the wine cellars.

According to the 2001 census, there are 5,186 inhabitants in the municipality, including:

Hungarians (40.9%)

Croats (34.34%)

Serbs (18.43%)

Germans (1.95%)

others (including Roma, Albanians, Macedonians, Slovenians, etc.)

The municipality of Kneževi Vinogradi include following settlements:

Kneževi Vinogradi

Jasenovac

Kamenac

Karanac

Kotlina

Mirkovac

Sokolovac

Suza

Zmajevac



Brandy makers association has their tasting and production centre in Kneževi Vinogradi aimed at tourists.





## Municipality of Petlovac



A settlement situated in the triangle among the Drava River, the Danube River and Hungarian border. The district of Petlovac is a part of broader lowland, fertile part of Baranja.

Throughout the history, the village first (during the Hungarian rule) bore the name of Sent Ištvan (Saint Joseph), later to be renamed by German settlers into Flower Village – Blumendorf.

The old village yards bear witness to the floral history even to the present day. There, the inhabitants still nurture entire parks with labyrinths of cultivated flora and bright coloured flowers. Lively, proudly and grandly. The Petlovac style. Its name derived from the Croatian word "petao" (which means "rooster" in English).

Municipality of Petlovac has 2,405 inhabitants (2011 census), including:

73.22% Croats

13.72% Hungarians

5.07% Serbs

4.53% Roma



## Municipality of Popovac



The Municipality of Popovac (Branjina and Kneževo) is inhabited by almost 2,500 people, living in more than 900 households. The settlements are scattered throughout the fertile area between state border with Hungary and the Baranja Mountain, whose northern slopes on clear days offer a view on Hungarian side of Baranja.

Popovac has a strong fishing lobby (Karašnica) and every September they organize a Fišijada (Slavonian fish stew cooking competition) which is specific due to the fact that it is women who compete in preparing the best fish stew.

The inhabitants willingly participate in carnival programmes and organize a memorial football tournament on annual basis.

Its name derived from the Slavic word "pop" ("priest" in English). In Hungarian, the village is known as Baranyabán.

As of 2001, ethnic groups in the municipality are:

69.02% Croats

20.85% Serbs

4.29% Hungarians

1.69% Slovenians

Popovac is situated between border with Hungary in the north-west, municipality of Draž in the north-east, municipality of Kneževi Vinogradi in the south-east, and municipality of Beli Manastir in the south-west.

The municipality of Popovac includes the following settlements:

Popovac (pop. 971)

Branjina (pop. 313)

Kneževo (pop. 810)

History:

The oldest known name of this place was "Antianae", which dating from the time of the Romans. In the 6th century, this area was settled by Slavs, who founded a village named "Ban".





## Geographical position of Baranja related to tourism

Looking at a larger picture, region of Baranja has ideal position: major capital cities: Zagreb, Budapest, Sarajevo and Belgrade are less than 3 hours car drive on very good roads.

The County's territory is criss-crossed with 1,702.94 km of roads and 269 km of railways. The rivers Danube and Drava connect this region to the network of European rivers. There is a river harbour under construction in Batina for future river cruisers.

Having two airports (Osijek and Klisa) in the vicinity of Osijek, the County is also linked with the Croatian airports network. However, both airports are under utilised and need more development oriented strategy.

Osijek (and Baranja) will also be a point through which the European traffic corridor V/c (Trans-European Motorway Budapest-Osijek-Sarajevo-Ploče) will pass, connecting Europe's North and South (the Adriatic Sea) and the construction of which is already under way.



The transport connections in the area are generally good, especially regarding road transport. Two large motorway sections include a motorway on Paneuropean corridor X (Zagreb – Belgrade) and partially a motorway on the corridor Vc connecting Budapest in Hungary with the Croatian port Ploče on Adriatic sea through Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Corridor X (all in Vukovar-Srijem county) is completely built from Italy to Croatia and further to Belgrade, so the whole Croatian Danube area has a direct motorway connection to the rest of Europe.

There is also a connection from the junction Sredanci on corridor X to Osijek as the main town in the area, only the connection is missing from Osijek to Croatian-Hungarian border. The part of the corridor Vc section through Hungary is already built, but not the section through Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Other roads are also generally in good condition and all the settlements have modern roads connecting them to the road network.

There are many border crossings with the neighbouring countries Hungary, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- two international border crossings to Hungary near Donji Miholjac (with the bridge over Drava river) and near Beli Manastir
- seven international border crossings to Serbia: three with the bridges over Danube river near Batina, Erdut and Ilok and four more in Srijem area near Ilok (two border crossings), Tovarnik and the most important Lipovac on the corridor X motorway
- two international border crossings to Bosnia and Herzegovina near Tūpanja and Gunja (with the bridges over Sava river)

This global location advantage is not utilised since there is no organised marketing effort to draw tourist from this major locations. Baranja is ideal destination for weekend vacation to get away from busy stressful urban areas and escape to nature for relaxation and enjoyment. There is definitive opportunity for major growth in this segment.

Main regional competitor are attractive and well developed tourist destinations in Hungary such as lake Balaton.

There are some major differences between the Hungarian and the Croatian parts of the region. Most significantly, the Hungarian side, incorporating parts of Lake Balaton, is in fact one of Hungary's major tourism destinations, attracting six times as many overnights as the Croatian side which, in tourism terms, is presently an underdeveloped region playing only a minor role in the country's

tourism industry. Typical for a water resources based holiday region, the demand in the Hungarian part is highly seasonal (June, July and August account for 52% of overnights). The length of stay (standing above 3,5 nights) is above the national average and, although the domestic market is dominant (two-thirds of the overnights), there is a substantial share of foreign guests.

In Croatia, on the other hand, the demand is evenly spread through the year, the length of stay (standing at 2,4 nights) is shorter than the national average and the area is heavily dependent on domestic visitors – they generate three quarters (74%) of the overnights demand in commercial accommodation. The domestic market includes substantial numbers of one-day visitors. By far the main motive for travel to the area is VFR (visiting friends and relatives), in Hungary followed by beach holidays, wellness, nature trips and city breaks, while in Croatia additional motives include short breaks in towns, nature trips and visits to events and festivals.

Perceptions and images, whether in fact true or not, have a proven high correlation with the consumers' likelihood to buy a product. The perceptions of the area are positive. These are images are in Hungary of Lake Balaton, the culturally renowned city of Pécs, widely recognised as the European Capital of Culture in the year 2010, the unspoiled natural river habitats, the vast plains and the positive connotations of the hearty, hospitable and traditional rural landscapes. It is fair to say, however, that apart from the 'beacons' such as Lake Balaton and Pécs, the images of the area and especially its rural and natural characteristics get vaguer as the distance between the area and the potential consumers increases.

Looking at the level of Croatia, Baranja is on the far inland east and far away from coastal tourism hotspots. There is some marketing effort being made from Tourism Boards to present Croatian inland to sea going tourists but there is also room for improvement. Tourism operators in Baranja try to "catch" tourists travelling through Baranja with some success and some future projects will be aimed at this sector.

Already organised efforts are made to make inland Croatia more attractive and to prolong tourism season to entire year and not only two main summer months.

Croatian accession to EU will ease border crossing for tourists from our main target areas.



As seen on picture above, Baranja and eastern Croatia are far away from main counties with extensive tourist influx.

When you zoom in at local level, Town of Osijek (and Hungarian towns such as Pecs) as a large urban centre with more than 100000 inhabitants is situated on Baranja border. It has enough people and potential tourists to provide enough business for entire current Baranja tourist sector. However due to economic downturn those people are left with no money for leisure activities.

## **Geographical, natural, cultural and architectural heritage**

Heritage, nature and culture are the most important tourism development assets. Baranja region is very rich with heritage of all kinds but it lacks funding, strategic and unified approach to their tourism utilisation in order to get synergy effect.

### **Kopački Rit**



Kopački rit Nature Park is situated in the northeastern part of the Republic of Croatia, i.e. on the wider geographical area of eastern Croatia. Geographically speaking, Kopački rit is the flat part of Baranja, belonging to Osječko-baranja County, mainly lowland situated between the Drava and Danube rivers and the state border with the Republic of Hungary. It stretches from the northern part

of the Drava where the mouth of the Drava flows into the Danube and upstream on the left and right banks of the Danube towards the former Kazuk port. The state border towards the Republic of Serbia designated the Nature Park's eastern border.

Kopački rit is a floodplain that developed due to the activities of two large rivers, the Danube and the Drava. Significant flood areas exist in the northern, southern and western surrounding parts of the Nature park that stretch from Batina up north, to Bijelo Brdo down south and Donji Miholjac towards west. Geographically speaking, Kopački rit covers the area between the 45° 32' - 45° 47' northern geographical latitude and 18° 45' - 18° 59' eastern geographical longitude. The altitudes of Baranja do not exceed 250 m, and the Nature Park is at the lowest altitude starting from only 78 m above sea level (the bottom of Kopačko Lake) to 86 m above sea level.

Bilje, Kopačevo, Vardarac, Lug, Grabovac, Kneževi Vinogradi, Suza, Zmajevac, Batina and Zlatna Greda settlements are all situated in the western and northern surrounding areas of the Nature Park on the margin of the former floodplain. Bilje has become a transitionally stronger urban settlement while the other settlements have remained rural.

Osijek is situated on the right riverbank of the Drava, southwest of the Nature Park as a macro regional center of eastern Croatia, while Podravlje is its suburban settlement on the left riverbank of the Drava. Nemetin, Sarvaš, Bijelo Brdo and Aljmaš settlements are on the south and southeastern side only 5,0 km air distance from the Nature Park.

Kopački rit has a typical relief structure because of the river's water activity and the floodwaters that flood the area. Rivers create banks and islands called “ade” and armbands called 'dunavac' or 'old Drava' in their live streams. On the other hand, the water in the floodplain deposits sediments in one place but deepens the ground in another, so the whole area obtains a specific undulate appearance. That is how ponds (depressions) and beams (higher grounds) were created and stretch hundreds of meters next to one another. Ponds and beams are narrow and long and have a specific curved appearance from the sky. The altitude difference between ponds and beams is 8 m. max. The ponds meet by the ends through a natural channel or so-called 'fok' and enter “Dunavac” or the Danube. The beams fill and empty the ponds. “Foks” were artificially deepened and the trenched canals took over the “foks” function.

This kind of pond and beam layout gives the area a unique appearance. The entire floodplain obtains a delta kind of look and is extremely exceptional because the Danube creates a so-called “inland delta” in its middle stream with the assistance of the Drava. A phenomenon like this is not notable for other European rivers in this form and therewith gives this area a global significance. If



ever, Kopački rit shall be enrolled on the World Natural Heritage List having this phenomenon, because many other larger and more significant rivers in the world do not have it.

Kopački rit was designated on the List of Ramsar areas in 1993. Protected areas on that List are protected under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as a waterfowl habitat. The Convention was signed in a city called Ramsar (Iran) in 1971, (so called Ramsar Convention). Croatia is a full member under this Convention from 1991. Almost 1700 areas in the world have been designated on the List of Ramsar areas until today covering more than 150 million hectares. Kopački rit is also on the list of Important Bird Areas (IBAs). This program was developed by Birdlife International (a global association for bird protection; their habitat; and global bio-diversity that focuses people to the sustainable usage of natural resources) so to determine, supervise and protect the global network areas that are important habitats for birds and for the bio-diversity in general. The partners in this association take full responsibility for the enforcement of the program on a national scale. More than 7500 areas in over 170 countries have been designated on the IBAs list from 2004.

Besides that, the Nature Park and Special Zoological Reserve were assigned as an area of international importance being part of the “Natura 2000 Networking Program”, so Kopački rit will be a significant candidate to join this network when Croatia accesses the European Union. An ecological network is a system of the most valuable areas for endangered species, habitats, ecological systems, and landscapes that are sufficiently close to each other and connected with corridors. This kind of system enables an interactive communication and species exchange. Parts of the Danube and Drava floodplains outside the Nature Park are also of international importance.

The Management Office of Kopački rit manages the Nature Park in order to protect, maintain, preserve and promote it on long-term for the benefit of the local population and for future generations. For this purpose, an annual protection, maintenance, preservation, promotion and utilization program for Kopački rit Nature Park is being elaborated in which the following activities are specified:

Protection, maintenance, and preservation

- Plan and management documents elaboration

- Management plan

- Scientific and expert researches, studies, and monitoring

- Implementation of the White-tailed eagle protection Action Plan (International program of

color ringing)

Surface water monitoring

Implementation of the aquatic and wetland protection Action Plan

Research on ichthyologic fauna

Continuation of the project "Monitoring of tectonic and hydro geological activities in Kopački rit Nature Park"

Monitoring of beavers

Winter computation of marsh birds

Monitoring of colonial bird species nesting and ringing

Monitoring of white and black stork nesting and ringing

Monitoring of marsh birds

Monitoring of red deer during the mating season

Monitoring of otters

Continuing works related to the integral database system development and networking with GIS system

#### Eco-system preservation programs

Wetland ecosystem protection programme in core zone

rogram for forest eco-system protection

Action Plan for the protection of forests in Tikveš Castle Complex

"Podunavlje" fishponds protection program implementation

Invasive species mapping and elimination program

Programs for autochthon breed preservation and endangered habitat restoration

Action Plan for the protection of the aquatic ecological system in the Kopački rit Nature Park Fundamental Zone

#### Reconstruction of cultural heritage and investment programs

Continuation of New Castle reconstruction in Tikveš

Procurement of new tour boat



Construction of "Old Elm" educational centre

Signalization of the Nature Park's entrance and continuation of "Old Elm" nature trail's construction

#### Maintenance

Maintenance of visitor trails, paths etc.

Maintenance of immovable property and utility infrastructure

Maintenance of movable property

Programs for collecting and eliminating wastes

#### Supervision

Supervision of users within the Nature Park

Supervision of angling areas

Supervision of canal networks and other water areas

Supervision of entrances, visitors' movements, and traffic

Supervision of construction works within the Nature Park

Fire protection

#### Promotion and usage

Visiting system improvement

Promotion of the Park

#### Institutional strengthening

Employees education

New employments

### What can tourist do in the nature park? (from park web page):



#### Rent a bike

From now on you can rent a bike in Kopački rit Nature Park. Spend your sunny days in the unforgettable environment and beauty of Kopački rit by cycling along the bike routes through the Park.

#### Bird watching program in Kopački rit Nature Park

Ptice Kopački rit is the most preserved wetland in Europe; therefore, its biological diversity is extremely vast. Kopački rit's other value is the continuous changing of the landscape as the seasons change and as the water inflows and outflows. The animals' movements depend on the water dynamics. Floods begin at the end of February or the beginning of March, and last to the middle of July or the beginning of August. The drought period lasts from August to next February and this is when the birds are in the fishponds or live streams. The largest number of species can be seen during spring and autumn migrations and then in summer. The number of species is less during winter, but still, you can watch tens of thousands of geese and ducks arriving from West Siberia. Therefore, we can proudly say that a large number of different bird species has been recorded in Kopački rit. Namely, 295 bird species were recorded until now, of which 144 species are permanent or temporary resident birds. The average number of species seen per month is listed in the table below.

MONTH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Nr. of species	53	57	73	71	82	64	58	64	51
70%	37	39	51	49	57	44	40	44	35

Research results proved that 70% of the species in a specific area could be seen during one roundtrip, which means that you can see between 35 and 63 bird species every day. The maximum number of species recorded in a one-day tour was 93.

During the floods, we can organize visits to the Special Zoological Reserve with a small boat, or a tour through the old forests within the drought period. We would also like to highlight some other valuable facts of Kopački rit that show the great ornithological value of this area: the largest white-tailed eagle nesting place in this part of Europe, the largest colony of cormorants and gray herons in Croatia. There are other interesting facts hiding in Kopački rit and just waiting for you to come and discover them.

After all this information, we are sure you will simply enjoy your stay in this wonderful area and that you will take home unforgettable memories and valuable experience. That is the reason why we have prepared this bird watching program for you.

Group size: max. 15

Duration: 6 hours

Time of visit: throughout the year, recommended period: April – June, August – October



## Boat Ride

**Brod** We invite you to visit Kopački rit and discover the Special Zoological Reserve with our boat. The boat waits for you at the “Veliki Sakadaš” pier and the adventure through the Reserve can begin. The professional guide is ready to flow with you through the magnificent world of the Danube floodplain. The boat takes you from Sakadaš Lake through “Čonakut” channel to Hordovanj, which separates Kopačko Lake from “Čonakut” channel. Kopačko Lake is the largest lake in the Special Zoological Reserve on which large colonies of different bird species (wild geese, ducks, cormorants, herons, egrets, terns, gulls and of course the white-tailed eagles as “rulers” of the Kopački rit forests) dwell in every season of the year. The beautiful scenery of birds is followed by their musical warble that rips the silence of the gentle landscape. As the boat arrives to Hordovanj, slowly approaching the largest colony of cormorants in Croatia, you will have the chance to see them sitting high up on the treetops and to enjoy this natural phenomenon.

## Walking on the nature trails

**Staze** The best way to begin your journey in Kopački rit is to walk along the nature trails. The first nature trail leads you from the Visitor’s center to Sakadaš Lake. Panels have been set up on the nature trail describing animals, plants and wetland habitats. The picturesque Kopačevo village stands behind the beautiful reeds, willow trees and aquatic plant communities. Telescopes have been set up on the dyke right in front of Sakadaš Lake where you can see colorful bird and plant species. The nature trail leads you on towards Podunavlje. From this perspective, you can see the spacious expanding floodplain.

## Tikveš Castle Complex tour

**Dvorac** The Tikveš Castle Complex consists of a forest, parks, and residential buildings: new castle with annex, old castle, chapel, and complementary building with a restaurant. If you book in advance, a professional guide will take you along the nature trail and render the historical development of Kopački rit. Panels were set up next to every building describing their characteristics.

## In Harmony with Nature

We invite you to come to Kopački rit and visit the Centre for sustainable agricultural production, managed by “Belje,” which is called “In Harmony with Nature.” Traveling from Sakadaš Lake towards Tikveš, make a short stop by Eblin canal where you will see a large herd of cattle on the



wet pastures. Most of the cattle are the Hereford sorts, which have a remarkable maternal instinct and can bear life in the open throughout the whole year.

We would especially like to emphasize the herd of Slavonian-Srijem bovines that are autochthon species in our region. These are one of the rare specimens in Croatia. You only have to walk over a wooden bridge and relax in the arbor covered with reed or in the coral and enjoy the sight of more than 500 specimens of cattle grazing in the open.

### Sport angling

Sport angling is permitted in some parts of Nature Park Kopački rit, mainly on channels, canals and the Danube River. The Kopački rit management office issues daily and annual permissions for sport angling in the Nature Park. Permissions are issued according to the location where you want to fish and the prices are as shown in the price list.



### History of the Nature Park

Kopački rit was first managed after the Belje manor had been founded and granted by Leopold I, the Hungarian-Croatian king in 1699. From then on, prince Eugene of Savoy managed the manor until 1784. Afterwards, it was under the lease of the Habsburg family up to 1918. From 1920 this

area was declared as the king's, Aleksandar Karađorđević's, reserve while from 1941-1944, under the Hungarian kingdom, it was managed by the Hungarian National Museum that founded a biological station called "Albertina." The "Jelen" hunting and forest economy managed Kopački rit after World War II up to 1959 and from 1967 the area became a Managed Natural Reserve. From 1997, Kopački rit Nature Park Management Office manages the Nature Park.

### Tikveš Castle Complex

Tikveš Castle Complex is located in the central picturesque and flat landscape of Baranja, as part of Kopački rit Nature Park with its romantic country-like architecture. The area consists of forests and parks in which the following residential facilities are situated: new castle with annex, old castle, a small sacral building (chapel), and complementary buildings with a restaurant. The history of Tikveš is connected with the management of natural resources in this area, proved by historical documents from 1697 when the emperor Leopold I granted the manor to prince Eugene of Savoy for his achieved merits. The Tikveš Castle Complex itself dates from the 19th century, and the Teschen parentage of the Habsburg family built it. During history, the castles used to be a residential hunting centre known throughout Europe and worldwide, but were exclusively reserved for the guests of the court and for the rulers.

The Complex became the property of the Serbo-Croat and Slovene Kingdom after the trans-national demarcation in Versailles, and later the property of the Yugoslavian Kingdom. In 1920, the Ministry of Finances declared the Complex a state hunting ground of Belje state property. From 1941-1944, prince Albrecht Habsburg managed the Complex. After World War II, the Complex was nationalized and used exclusively as a residential hunting centre. The former Yugoslavian president, Josip Broz Tito, used to hunt here often with his guests from abroad. However, the Complex was completely robbed and the infrastructure destroyed during the occupation of Baranja. From 1991, it is the property of the Republic of Croatia. Since 1999, the Government of the Republic of Croatia decided to assign the usage and management of the Complex to Kopački rit Nature Park Management Office. Tikveš Castle Complex is a protected monument according to the Settlement of the Conservation Department from the year 2000.

### New Castle

The New Castle is the central residential building of Tikveš Castle Complex, which was built in a romantic historicism style in the second half of the 19th century. Regarding the whole complex, the castle is situated in the centre as an independent building. The foundations were made of brickwork as well as the cap walls and transverse walls. All of the frontal facades were arranged with façade bricks that were additionally colored in red. The corners, door, and window transoms of the building are emphasized with plaster, replicating roughly carved stone. The castle consists of a basement, ground floor, first floor and an attic. A professional guide can take you through the whole complex and explain the history and purpose of each building in detail if you make reservations in advance. Visits can be arranged every day.

## Vegetation in the park

Iris Pallada known as Dalmatian Iris

Heath-remains were found just by Kopački rit at the cemetery in Bilje. Without a lot of effort, scientists recorded about 140 plant species here. Many of these plants are rare and grow only in a few places in Croatia; others grow only here.

Dalmatian Iris (*Iris variegata*) belongs to those rare plant species.

White Water lily

The White Water lily (*Nymphaea alba*) is one of the most beautiful plants in Kopački rit. You can really enjoy this unique atmosphere when hectares of ponds are covered with these plants in blossom. It cannot be described, only experienced, and of course, recorded with a camera.

Otherwise, the white water lily has thick and rich roots that stags and hinds gladly dig up and eat during the winter.

Smooth Black Sedge (*Carex nigra*)

Smooth Black Sedge (*Carex nigra*) is a herbaceous perennial plant with underground creeping stems, which can grow up to 20 cm long.

This plant grows in larger or smaller groups in the form of smaller turfs, on mossy soils reactive to acid. The stem is sharp and triple-edged, with a hoarse top, it is noticeably vertical or slightly bent, 10-60 cm high but sometimes even 90 cm high. The leaves are vertical, 2-5 mm wide, they can bend during desiccation. The blossom is 3-13 cm long, the ear ends are male, two or three female

ears are situated under them. The Smooth Black Sedge is a geophyte according to life form and it blossoms in May and June.

#### Flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*)

Flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*) is a perennial plant which can grow to be from 60 to 150 cm high. The 1 cm wide leaves are placed on the ground and the pink flowers on top of the stalk blossom from May to August. The Flowering Rush is prevalent throughout Croatia in suitable shallow marsh habitats, ponds and stagnant or slow flowing waters with miry surfaces (adapts to marsh soils which lack oxygen).

This marsh plant is an endangered species according to the Red Book of the Republic of Croatia. By preserving the natural wetlands, we are protecting this species from extinction. The Flowering Rush grows in many places within Kopački rit.

#### Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)

This plant can grow to be 5 m high, it grows by shallow waters. A tall and hollow stalk grows from the roots above the surface, every year, and has sharp, long and flat leaves. The 20-25 cm long flower is placed on top of the stalk in the form of a thick ring of brown and red hairs which blossoms from July to September.

Reedbeds serve as a habitat for many marshbirds and offer shelter and protection for small fish in deeper waters. Dry reed stalks have a multifunctional role in the architecture of this area, and were most frequently used for covering roofs in traditional architecture.

#### Graceful Cattail (*Typha laxmannii*)

Is a light plant between 70 and 120 cm high. The leaves are usually open by the base, while the edges are ear-shaped. The flat part of the leaf is 2–7 mm wide. The flowers are usually surrounded with hair or scales arranged in two thick cylindrical blossoms, females are placed in the lower part and males in the upper part. The male and female parts of the blossom are separated 1–6 cm. The female blossom is 4–9 cm long, while the male blossom is 2–4 times longer. The blooming stalks are shorter than the leaves. This plant grows by water and in water, and also requires sandy soil.

The Graceful Cattail was first recorded in the year 2000, in the form of a small population existing only in Kopački rit. It is listed in the Red Book of the Republic of Croatia and belongs to critically



endangered species.

### Paleyellow Iris

Birds are not the only species that Kopački rit is famous for. Different plant species grow and blossom here, of which some are beautiful. The Paleyellow Iris is one of them. They can only be found in a few places in Central Europe and Croatia, namely just a few sods.

At the beginning of June, large areas, even a couple of hectares, in Kopački rit are often covered with beautiful blue flowers of this type called Siberian Iris (*Iris Sibirica*).

### Fish

#### Crucian Carp (*Carassius auratus gibelio*)

The Crucian Carp is one of the two subtypes of the gold characin or goldfish (*Carassius auratus*). The body is covered with scales that easily detach. The Crucian Carp has a set of gullet teeth at the end of the mouth. The approximate body length is up to 30 cm, the body volume can be up to 1 kg. Exceptional catches of Crucian Carp have been recorded, being 50 cm long and weighing 2 kg. The lifespan of the Crucian Carp is about 8 years (average-aged fish).

The most suitable life conditions for the Crucian Carp are lower and middle flows of larger rivers, warmer reservoirs, and fishponds with warm water. It can bear organically polluted water, high temperatures, and large concentrations of oxygen in the water. The Crucian Carp lives in shoals. Since it has easily adapted to our waters, this has enabled it to take control over other habitats. It is considered an invasive species, because it suppresses other indigenous fish species.

The Crucian Carp is an omnivore. It feeds on zoo benthos (animals from the bottom of the water), insects, detritus (sediment), seeds and plant parts.

Female triploid (mutants) populations prevail in our waters. They reproduce gyno-genetically (incomplete fertilization where the spermatozooids only activate ovaries to divide, but there is no mergence or unification between the nuclei of ovary and semen cells). The milt of other fish (carp, characin, tench, bream, roach and European chub) activates their laid eggs. Once again, triploid fertile females are created, not bastards. The Crucian Carp spawns in May and June at the temperature of 16 to 18 oC. The young fish develop in the first or second year of life. Females lay their eggs once or twice in the spawning season within an interval of 10 to 20 days. This type of fish is a phytophagous species (lays eggs on plants) and can occasionally be an indifferent species too (capable of laying eggs on any surface). Absolute female fertility varies from 10.000 to 100.000

eggs.

## Distribution

The Crucian Carp is used in trade as a consume fish in our areas, but at a low market price, compared to other species. This species is not bred in fish farming, but is brought to the market exclusively as a fish caught in the nature.

There is no legal protection of the Crucian Carp in the Republic of Croatia. It is an invasive species in our waters, which is why traditional fishing and sport angling catch quotas in Kopački rit do not restrict the amount of Crucian Carp catches.

## Pike (*Esox lucius*)

The pike's body is torpedo-shaped. The dorsal and anal fins are arranged characteristically in the back part of the body, close to the caudal fin. This kind of fin arrangement is important for the pike because it enables him to accelerate rapidly while attacking his prey. The pike has very sharp teeth arranged in several rows on the lower part of the jaw. The teeth on the upper jaw are smaller and are closely arranged. The pike also has teeth in the mouth and even on the bones of the gill arcs. All together, the pike has about 700 teeth. He also has large eyes and sharp sight. The body is covered with scales.

The body length can grow up to 150 cm, whilst the average body volume is about 24 kg. The biggest catch weighed 65 kg. The pike's lifespan is about 25 years (long-aged fish).

The pike lives in calm slow-flowing or stagnant waters rich in aquatic plants from where he prowls his prey. The pike gets his bearings with his sharp sight, and ambushes his prey as quick as lightning. He is most active in autumn, throughout the day, but in summer usually early in the morning and in the evening. Sometimes he even hunts in winter during sunny days. The pike belongs to the most adjustable species of freshwater fish because he can bear extreme water temperature variations, organically polluted water, and low concentrations of oxygen.

The pike is a carnivore and a typical predator. The young fish feed on zooplanktons and zoo benthos (animals from the bottom of the water) and start hunting other fish at the size of 5 cm. The pike hunts almost all types of fish above the bottom of the water. Cannibalism has been noticed among specimens of the same size. Having the status of a predator in the food chain, the pike regulates the natural water balance by controlling the quantity of certain species like the bleak, bream, characin and others.

The pike spawns in the first months of spring at the temperature of 7 to 9 oC. Eggs are laid in

flooded and flowing waters and on weedy terrains. The spawning is single. The males in our area become sexually mature in the first year, whereas the females do so in the second or third year. Absolute female fertility varies from 8.000 to 120.000 eggs.

#### Distribution

The pike is a valuable and consumable fish. In our area, he has been traditionally bred as a secondary species in carp fishponds. His market price is high, thus he is welcome as a catch in traditional and commercial fishing. This type of fish is also very popular in sport angling. Since he is aggressive and greedy, he himself becomes easy prey for anglers.

There is no legal protection of the pike in the Republic of Croatia, but the catch quotas are restricted in traditional fishing and sport angling.

#### European Common Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*)

The carp is economically the most important freshwater fish in Europe. The original wild species (from the Black Sea, Sea of Azov, Caspian Sea and Aral Sea) has a laterally compressed body, moderately elongated and covered with large cycloid scales. The snout is blunt; the mouth is large with two pairs of short barbells. The color is dark on back and golden on the sides. The belly, pectorals and pelvic are light yellow, the ventral fin is orange and the caudal fin is grey with orange shade. Coloration changes depend on habitat.

The carp is a strong fish up to one meter long or even more and can weigh 20 kg (sometimes over 30 kg). It grows very fast in the first year but later can weigh less than ordinary carps. This type of fish reaches sexual maturity at the age of 3 or 4 – males are mature one year earlier. They spawn in May and June in shallow waters with a lot of vegetation at the temperature of 15°C. Their spawning is very loud and they often jump high out of the water. The eggs are attached to the vegetation and the incubation period last for five days. Then the young ones hatch at the temperature of 20°C (approximately three). They are 5mm long and cannot stay attached to the vegetation. When old enough, they feed independently on small organisms and later on larger zooplanktons. By the time they are 2 cm long, they are eating animals from the bottom of the water. Feeding depends on the water temperature. Carps stop eating in autumn, move to deeper parts of the water and become inactive. The European Common Carp lives in deep but still waters; in rivers and stagnant waters; in armbands and basins. Their diet consists of large aquatic insect larvae, mollusks, scales, worms etc. Plants are also very important for their diet. The carp usually goes hunting in the evening or at night.

#### Catfish (*Silurus glanis*)

The Catfish is one of the largest fish of European waters. It has a long body without scales; a large head and an enormous mouth surrounded with 3 pairs of pulpy barbells – two on the upper part of the mouth and 4 chin barbels. The back fin is much shorter than the anal fin. The eyes are generally small and the nostrils look like short tubes. The colors depend on the habitat; the back is usually black, sometimes green, blue or brown; the sides are cream-colored while the belly has dark spots. This type of catfish can grow up to 2m long and can weigh over 100 kg. It lives in large and deep rivers and especially likes deep dams or embankments. If there is enough food, the catfish will grow very fast and by the time its 9 years old, will weigh 12-16 kg. It spawns in May and June at the temperature of 18°C in waters with a lot of vegetation. The female lays her eggs in a very messy nest; the male impregnates and guards them until they hatch. At first, the young ones feed on crabs and worms etc. Adult catfish feed on other fish (smaller species) but also prowl on frogs, small mammals or aquatic birds. The catfish has a great economic significance around the Black Sea. In the last few years the catfish has been bred in carp fishponds as a secondary predator.

#### Zander (*Stizostedion lucioperca*)

The Zander can always be differed from the perch because of the large gap between the back fins and the elongated body that is never strictly bended as the perch's. The Zander is a strong fish, up to 1m long weighing even 10 kg. It has a gray-brown or gray-green back; and light silver-green colors on the side of the body. During the spawning season, the male has a blue belly while the female has a white one. This type of fish usually lives in deep but still waters. It likes to hide during the daytime and hunt during the night or early in the morning. The Zander is extremely sensible when there is lack of oxygen in the water or if the water is polluted. It spawns in April and May in shallow waters at the temperature of 6°C. The male makes a rough nest at the bottom of the water so that the female can attach her eggs to the aquatic plants or roots. The male guards the nest, cools the impregnated eggs with his fins so that they receive enough oxygen and protects them from the sludge and other agents. The young zanders like to stay in shallow waters and first feed on planktons and small insects. When they are 3-4 cm, they feed on cyprinid fish eggs. The adult zanders feed exclusively on other fish. They never prowl on large fish, like the pike does, but they can stay in fishponds together with carps.

## Amphibians

### Fire Salamander

The Fire Salamander (*Salamandra salamandra*) belongs to the amphibian family and is related to newts and frogs. The Salamander is a stumpy and slow animal that feeds on different invertebrates. It hunts during the night but can also be seen during rainy days. The Salamander likes forests and hasn't been seen in the floodplain yet.

The insistent yellow spots warn us that its skin has toxic glands. Nevertheless, the Salamander is a harmless animal but still better not to disturb it.

#### Fire-bellied toad

The Fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*) has beautiful red stripes on the stomach, which is why it was named "fire-bellied". A large number of these toads live in Kopački rit. It's a small species that can rarely be seen. However, the whole Park is filled with their jamming sounds during spring when thousands of them can be heard. That is when we can realize how many Fire-bellied toads there are in Kopački rit.

The Yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*) has yellow stripes on the stomach and lives in the nearby mountains in Slavonia. This species hasn't been recorded in Kopački rit yet.

## Birds

The White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) is a well-known bird to us because it nests on chimneys or power posts. We know, for a fact, that 100 pairs used to nest in the villages near Kopački rit like in Bilje, Vardarac, and Kopačevo. However, today fewer pairs nest here as in whole Europe. That is why the White Stork belongs to the endangered and protected species.

White storks are typical migratory birds. They spend their winter in the South African Republic, a lot more south from the equator. They arrive to their nests here in the second half of March. After nesting, they form flocks and migrate to the south by August 25th. At the beginning of August, you can often see flocks of White Storks in Kopački rit preparing for their long journey.

#### Black Stork

Black Storks (*Ciconia nigra*) feed in shallow ponds overgrown with plants. They capture their prey as they carefully walk in the water.

They feed on animals living in the water like frogs and different fish species. The hard parts of the fish's fins do not even disturb them. They have been caught hunting Prussian carps and Brown Bullheads whose spines can be very sharp. They swallow the frogs when still alive but the fish are

turned with the beak and then eaten.

### Purple Heron

Purple Herons (*Ardea purpurea*) used to be the most numerous species in Kopački rit and in other wetlands not so long ago. Today they nest irregularly in only a couple of pairs at Mali Dunavac by Vardarac and Eblin. Even during migrations less Purple Herons can be seen. In the 19th century they used to nest in colonies up to 400 pairs.

The Purple Heron can stand still for hours in shallow water and wait for its prey. Uninformed observers consider this a waste of time so that is why the Purple Heron was named "danguba" which means, "loiter".

### Ferruginous Duck

The Ferruginous Duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) is the most numerous of all ducks in Kopački rit and nests in large colonies. The nests are regularly built on trees in spring when the water level is high. There were cases when the Ferruginous duck laid her eggs in a White-tailed eagles nest.

The number of these ducks rises to tens of thousands during autumn and winter. They move to the Danube or the Drava when the still waters freeze inside Kopački rit.

### Pheasant

The Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) is an extremely colorful bird, especially in winter when the area is covered with snow. This species is not a migratory bird but stays here throughout the year. It most often feeds on seeds. During the day it hides from prowlers in tall grass, weeds, reeds or shrubs.

The Pheasant usually spends the night on a high branch in order to avoid contact with foxes. In winter it likes to sun bake in the snow.

### Black-headed Gull

The Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*) is a regular breeding bird on all fishponds in Slavonia and in Kopački rit. Tens or hundreds of pairs form a colony.

Sometimes they nest with the Whiskered Terns. The nest is made of aquatic plants built on the water. The brood consists of 3 colorful eggs. This white bird has a beautiful chocolate-colored head during breeding time. The breeding ritual is very complex and magnificent, even for a birdwatcher.

Black-headed Gulls often visit the Podunavlje fishponds. We know that most of these birds come from Hungary because of the ringed specimens that were found in the area. We also found Black-headed Gulls coming from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Finland and Russia. After breeding, the



black heads become white, only a dark spot above the eyes and a black stripe at the tail and wing can be found.

#### Wild Goose

Wild Geese (*Anser anser*) are great flyers and the ones coming to Kopački rit nest in Sweden and Finland. They must constantly keep their feathers in good condition in order to keel over the long journeys. So they spend a lot of time cleaning these feathers even when standing still or resting.

#### Little Ringed Plover

The Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*) is the size of a sparrow and admires pebbly shores of rivers and streams. It feeds and breeds in Kopački rit. The plover usually has 4 colorful eggs that are difficult to notice between pebbles on the banks. They regularly appear in Kopački rit during the spring and autumn migrations. A few pairs were breeding in Kopački rit in 2002, which were also recorded with a camera.

#### Coot

Coots (*Fulica atra*) are numerous birds inhabiting the water areas of Kopački rit rich in vegetation like fishponds, armbands and other ponds. However, these birds have many enemies. In spring, many birds of prey like the Black Kite or the Marsh Harrier, prowl on their broods and steal the eggs from them and other marsh birds. That is why Coots have large broods containing more than ten eggs.

#### Imperial Eagle

The Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*) is a heath bird. It feeds on European Sousliks, other small mammals and birds. Today it also breeds in Hungary and Slovakia. They rarely and only occasionally appear in Kopački rit. When they do appear, they conflict with the White-tailed eagles.

#### White-tailed Eagle

Kopački rit is a famous breeding place for White-tailed eagles (*Haliaeetus albicilla*). Eagles come from Slavonia, Serbia and one part of Hungary. We can often see ten to twenty specimens if there is enough food. These specimens are usually young that are sexually immature. If an adult eagle appears, the young know who is in charge.

The White-tailed eagles feed on meat; sometimes they eat injured birds or live their life as scavengers eating mallards, geese, wild boars, game intestines and marsh turtles. Fish also play a

special role in their life. The eagles either eat them when they are injured or they prowl on the live fish in the shallow waters. Adult eagles can easily fly down from the sky to catch their prey at once while the young have to try a couple of times.

### Grey Heron

Kopački rit is a paradise for different species of heron. All species that live throughout Europe also stay and breed here. The most numerous herons are the Grey Herons (*Ardea cinerea*). A large colony exists at "Ćošak šume" ("Forest corner"; name) counting more than a thousand pairs. They like to build their nests high up on the treetops. The young observe other animals and people passing by from a safe height.

### Lapwing

The Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) is a regular breeding bird in Baranja. It likes to breed and feed on wet pastures. In spring it also likes to settle on wet arable lands.

The Lapwing avoids the floodplain because the water regularly floods the broods. During migration, these birds gather in large flocks and settle on the fishponds or Kopačko Lake.

### Spoonbill

Spoonbills (*Platalea leucorodia*) are extremely beautiful white birds with bizarre spoon-shaped beaks. These birds are quite rare. In Croatia they breed in Krapje Đol by the Sava River and on some fishponds in Slavonia.

They fly over Kopački rit regularly and appear in this area in large numbers during summer, especially in August. Often hundreds of flocks can be seen. At one time a flock of 1000-1500 specimens was recorded at Kopačko Lake.

## Mammals

### Wild Boar

Wild Boars (*Sus scrofa*) live in large numbers in the Park. They settle in oak forests during autumn and feed on acorns. In summer they admire the ponds in which they puddle, feed on snails, muscles and other pond animals. Sometimes they can even skillfully catch fish. Apart from food of animal origin, they dig up roots and browse grass.

## Red Deer

Kopački rit is a habitat of the European Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*). There is abundant food for them here, starting from juicy white water-lily roots, rapeseeds, acorns or rorippas, which are green from summer to the beginning of spring and appear after the water withdraws. Stags, hinds and calves, of course, are used to floods. They are excellent swimmers and can even swim across the Danube. During summer, they often stand in the water for hours to protect themselves from mosquitoes and gadflies. However, they are very precautions, even when swimming across smaller waterways.

The period of reproduction or "deer roaring" lasts for one month during September in Kopački rit. In the Carpathians, the reproduction starts somewhat later, in October. During the mating season, the stags, as kings of the forest, express their love by roaring. This love sound is very loud and can be heard from far away. The sound is similar to the bulls and the lions roar. In the mating season, the stags have their own harem containing a few hinds and calves. The stags do not have time to eat, but fights for the hinds are frequent. They lose considerable weight by the end of the mating season.

## Beech Marten

The Beech Marten (*Martes foina*) likes rocky areas. That is why it is often found in Dalmatia in karst habitats. The Pine Marten (*Martes martes*) is more common in the forests of Slavonia and Baranja. However, the Beech Marten does live here, but in smaller numbers, usually in Osijek and in villages like Kopačevo or Vardarac. Buildings and houses have replaced the rocks here, especially attics where Beech Martens like to stay.

## **Bansko Brdo (Bansko Hill)**

For wine production it has historically been known for "Golden Hill" in the municipality Popovac, called at the time of Austria-Hungarian rule "Goldberg". The name "Goldberg" is used for marketing purposes in the production of famous Belje wine. Natural advantages for growing grapes and other fruit on Bansko Brdo and historical tradition of winemaking on the hill "Goldberg" also represent a potential for protection products, wines and fruit brandies called "Goldberg".

Growing vines is most developed in the district of Kneževi vinogradi. The largest area planted with vineyards has company Belje (about 520 ha). Larger area under vineyards manufacturers have known Baranja wines, winery Josic, OPG Kolar, Gerstmajer Winery, Winery Gregurek, Kalazić Winery and others. The construction and decoration of the wine museum in Zmajevac as part of the "Wine tour" project that will raise the level of wine tourism in Baranja is in final stages.

In recent years, Bansko Brdo is increasingly developing fruit production, especially the cultivation of apples, peaches and apricots. The largest apple orchards, peach and apricot orchards have company Baranjski voćnjaci doo.

Local and tourists hike, go off-roading, visit vineyards and sight seeing points.

Hiking and trekking are potentially appealing to a broad market. Main market segments are, however, middle-aged or elderly individuals of higher income and educational level, usually travelling in couples or with groups of friends. Younger individuals and families with children are also interesting segments, especially in case of shorter educational trails. For the most part, these are individual tourists or special groups (hiking clubs). Hiking and trekking are popular throughout the whole year (except for the winter), with the late spring and early fall months being considered the 'high season'. Hiking and trekking tourism is considered one of the most environmentally responsible forms of tourism.



The following development priorities of hiking/trekking tourism in region can be set:

- Development of hiking and trekking facilities and services is to be environmentally sensitive;
- Ensuring visitor safety – very clear and complete information regarding the eventually still existing mine fields must be undertaken;
- Upgrading of facilities and services, creating an experiential value chain for visitors;
- Upgrading of hiking/trekking infrastructure, continuous investment in trails, upgrading outdoor interpretation facilities, shelters, rest stops, viewing points, (bilingual) information and maps is necessary;



- Upgrading of human resource capacities – training programmes for diverse groups of service providers, information sharing services, awareness-raising programmes and DMO support are key steps in expanding the knowledge and capabilities of stakeholders;
- Development of attractive hiking/trekking destination images;
- Product and sales capacity improvements are necessary to generate increases in visitor spending.

## **Danube, Drava and inland waters**

Baranja is bordered on two sides with Drava on West and Danube on East.

Croatia is one of the ten countries participating on the Danube River as the river flowing through more countries and nations than any river in the world. Croatia's share in the Danube is one of the shortest of all countries and it is one of the countries without large cities on its shores. The length of Danube River in Croatia is only 188 km and almost all of it is a border between Croatia and Serbia. The Danube flows less kilometres only in Slovakia, Ukraine and Moldova. Croatia's only larger town on the Danube is Vukovar with only about 30.000 inhabitants, opposed to Austria, Slovakia and Hungary with its capital cities on the Danube river.

Although the shore on the Danube in Croatia is relatively short, the majority of the Croatian territory is drained by the Danube River and the area near its shores is the most important for Croatia's river transport. Therefore the region near Danube River in Croatia is considered as very important for the country. Croatian Danube area, which comprises two counties, Osijek-Baranya and Vukovar-Srijem, is known also as country's most fertile area and due to many natural and cultural attractions it is becoming as one of the most important of all continental touristic areas of Croatia. There are many documents concerning tourism development in Croatian Danube area on regional and local level. The most important for the overall development due to their operational strength are spatial plans for the two counties Osijek-Baranya and Vukovar-Srijem. Since main purpose of those plans is defining spatial zones for certain development, they do not offer strategic approaches and tourism in those plans does not play important role anyway considering its relatively low actual importance. Former Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs) and current County Development Strategies for the two counties give special accent on the development of tourism superstructure and development of various tourism products, especially in Vukovar-Srijem County. But opposed to spatial plans, ROPs or CDSy do not have operational strength and they do not offer efficient mechanisms for the projects implementation.

Osijek-Baranya and Vukovar-Srijem set off the production of specialised tourism master plans for their areas, but those plans were either not implemented or even accepted in a draft form as in the case of Vukovar-Srijem county. Some ideas in those plans can be noted as very useful for the future tourism development. It refers to the accentuation of local architectural and traditional heritage in the case of Osijek-Baranya county or the emphasis on education and training in the case of Vukovar-Srijem county, especially in tourism planning and tourism services for rural tourism providers.



There are some spatial plans on local level (NUTS 5) for some towns and municipalities, which also include some measures regarding tourism development. In most cases they mention promotional measures and in some cases also brand strategy. There are also some local development plans on NUTS 5 level referencing stimulation of investment in tourism and services, as well as creation of tourism development centres.

Tourism in the Danube area is becoming more and more popular in all the countries on its shores. One of the factors contributing such growth in tourism importance of the Danube area is general diversification of tourism offer, which includes also river cruises as especially important type of tourism activity for this region. Another probably even more important element is general easement of border formalities and better security level in the area. This is caused as a consequence of

Romania and Bulgaria joining European Union in 2007, but also by easement of border crossing regime between Serbia and European Union, i.e. recent suspension of visa regime for the citizens of Serbia for entering into European Union.

Such development is very supportive for all types of tourism and for all countries, because it enables important widening of tourism activities for the tourists coming in any of those countries and easier guidance of cruises through different countries. Actual strong growth of tourism in Croatian Danube area is definitely a consequence of afore mentioned processes and it is expected that it opens very good prospective for the future. It includes proposed suspension of all border control between Croatia and Hungary few years after Croatian joining into European Union and full implementation of Schengen regime starts and in more distant future also with Serbia considering its policy of joining European Union too. The establishment of proposed Mura-Drava-Danube World Biosphere can also help tourism development and increase cross border co-operation between the countries on the Danube.

Croatian Danube area covers easternmost part of Croatia in the Pannonian plain. This area is generally known as the flattest part of all Croatia and its most important part regarding agricultural production, especially cereals, industrial plants and the livestock. The most populated areas are around bigger towns, and the most sparsely populated those in swampy areas in the east near the rivers Sava and Danube, and on the western side of the area on the slopes of the mountains Krndija and Dilj.

The geographical position of Croatian Danube area is unfavourable in comparison with other Croatian counties due to the distance from the most important tourist flows and main markets. On the other hand, the transport connections are very good because there is a motorway on Paneuropean corridor X (Zagreb – Belgrade) and on the corridor Vc (connection of Osijek with corridor X). There is also an international airport near Osijek with more and more connections every year due to attraction of budget airlines. Only the railway connections are not so good, although there is developed railway network in the whole area connection the majority of towns. Danube river as Paneuropean corridor VII is becoming more and more important, but at the moment only Vukovar is partly used as a port for goods and for passenger river cruising.

Unfortunately the Croatian Danube area is also known as the area which was at the most destroyed in the war between 1991 and 1995, with the last territories returned to Croatia after occupation in 1998. The biggest damages in the whole war happened in the town of Vukovar, which was almost completely destroyed by former Yugoslav People's Army, but heavily damaged were also Osijek and many other towns in the area. Therefore this part of Croatia, once one of the most developed, is

today one of the most undeveloped with the majority of economic indicators under the Croatian average.

Besides direct war damages, Croatian Danube area was damaged also by inefficient privatization, both in industry and agriculture. Considering the pauperization of the population and the position far from main transit flows, the trade also played much smaller role in the eastern part of Croatia than in the rest of the country. It is important because that was one of the most important activities in Croatia after the war, together with tourism and transport.

The recovery that started slowly about ten years ago was again stopped with the World crisis, which hit especially continental parts of Croatia. Although Croatian Danube region belongs to Continental Croatia as generally undeveloped area in tourism point of view, the actual results in tourism are relatively good considering its position and attractiveness, especially in the last five years. Such trends show that Danube area has strong tourism potential and that with adequate incentives it can become one of the leading areas of continental tourism in Croatia and important factor of future development.

For Croatia, the river traffic in general is of low importance, so there are no important environmental impacts. The only area with certain importance is Croatian Danube area with two largest Croatian river ports Osijek on Drava and Vukovar as the only Croatian Danube port for goods. The total traffic in 2009 was 224.000 tons for Osijek and 182.000 tons for Vukovar.

Vukovar became recently a stop for Danube river cruises, although this traffic is recently very low. According to unofficial data in 2009 there were total 150 river cruisers that stopped in Vukovar with average 140 passengers each, but they usually did not spend more than eight hours in Croatia. There is another cruising port in the picturesque small town of Ilok as Croatia's easternmost town, also in Vukovar-Srijem County.

There are active projects of building small river ports in Batina and Aljmaš in Osijek-Baranya County and there is existing port in Osijek on Drava river, but only occasionally used for river cruise tourism. In Vukovar-Srijem County, there are plans to enlarge and upgrade the port in Ilok situated at the Danube.

Batina port is nearing completion and it should play major role in tourism development in years to come.



The data related to Danube tourism are not updated regularly and are hard to obtain but here are some relevant figures that show some trends from period around 2009.

The Croatia Danube area is one of the less developed parts of Croatia regarding tourism, making only 0.47 % of total and 0,13 % of foreign overnights. The total number of overnights was 265.455 in 2009, from which 187.422 were made in Osijek-Baranya and 78.033 in Vukovar- Srijem county. In relative figures, overnights in Osijek-Baranya represent 70,6% of the total overnights in the Danube Area. In the year 2006 the total number of overnights was 230.304 from which 163.363 were made in Osijek-Baranya and 66.941 in Vukovar-Srijem county. That means total 15 % increase of tourism in the last three years in comparison with only 6% in Croatia, what is very good considering the actual crisis and is showing important rise of tourism importance in the area.

The majority of the tourism is happening in the large towns and is based on business tourism. Therefore Osijek is the most visited destination with 96.209 overnights in 2009 and is followed by Vinkovci with 49.696 overnights. More than 10.000 overnights were made also in the towns of Vukovar (21.567 overnights), Valpovo (13.810), Đakovo (10,583) and Našice (10.147 overnights). The only tourist resort not connected to towns is Bizovac as the only spa centre in the area with 28.017 overnights.

The accommodation in the area is therefore based on hotels, different from the coastal Croatia oriented much more on complementary accommodation such as bed&breakfast or camp sites. In the whole area there were 3.330 beds in 2009, from which 2.415 were made in Osijek-Baranya (72,5%) and 915 in Vukovar-Srijem county (27,5%). The majority of beds were in hotels (total

2.317 or 69,6%), 327 or 9,8% in other forms of similar establishments (pensions, inns, guest houses, hunting lodges) and the remaining 686 or 20,6% mainly in bed & breakfast accommodation.

From total 29 hotels, 7 were four star and 14 three star, with the largest concentration in Osijek with 9 hotels from which 3 were four star and 4 were three star.

Within the Danube area there are over 30 TDMOs (tourist agencies), from which only several sell tourist products typical for the area.

In the Danube region there are more than 50 registered restaurants, with majority of concentration in larger cities (Osijek, Vukovar, Vinkovci).

The guests in the area are predominantly domestic (total 75%), what is completely different from the coastal Croatia, where majority is coming from abroad (total 90% in the whole Croatia). The reason is afore mentioned orientation towards business tourism and spas, which are traditionally attracting mainly domestic market. From total 67.117 foreign overnights, 10.281 from Germany, 9.942 from Italy, 6.956 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 4.206 from Austria, 4.019 from Slovenia, 3.949 from Serbia, 2.178 from Romania and 1.931 from Hungary. Figure below illustrates overnights of foreign visitors by country of origin in 2009.

Tourism sector in the Danube area employed 4.985 people at the end of 2009 or 3,8% out of the total employment in the area. Number of employed workforce within the tourist sector in the Danube area represents 6,6% out of the total in tourism at the national level (75.113 persons). Figure below illustrates employment in tourism sector in the Danube area for the period 2005-2009. Out of total employment in the Danube area, 67,2% refers to Osijek-Baranya.

In the period 2004-2008, investments in tourism sector in the Danube area were 571,5 mln. HRK or 2,5% out of the total investments in fixed assets of the area's economy. These investments represent 74% out of the total investments in tourism compared to NUTS 2 (Panonian Region) and 3,3% compared to the investments in tourism sector at the national level. Out of the total investments in tourism sector in the Danube area for the same period, Vukovar-Srijem's investments were 65,8% and Osijek-Baranya's 34,2%.

Drava is less important for tourism in Baranja but it is important as area of interest for cooperation with Hungary.

Local inland waters are used for low level water-based tourism.

Water-based tourism involves all activities connected to water. The market can be segmented



according to the level of skill and physical exertion.

- Sport and adventure: here the substantial motivation is to reach a high performance; choices can range from easy to extreme, from low- to high impact, from individual- to team pursuits, from casual- to committed participation, from modest- to sophisticated equipment usage, and from relatively inexpensive to expensive setup and participation cost (e.g. fishing, rafting, kayak-tours).

- Leisure: water is used here as an ‘element of experiences’ (e.g. theme parks, aqua parks, kayak-tours).

- Recreation: here water has a healing, soothing role, it can be described as an ‘elixir for the everyday problems’ (e.g. visiting of spas, bathing, boating, walking along the coast/riverbank).

Principal locations relevant for the development of water based tourism in Croatia are located on the river banks of Mura, Drava and Danube (i.e. mainly in Zone A of the programme area). Large artificial lakes, namely Dubravsko, Varaždinsko and Ormoško, as well as a number of smaller lakes such as Matičnja near Varaždin (‘Aquacity’), Šoderica near Koprivnica and Čingi Lingi lake near Đurđevac also lie in close proximity to the Drava. Other important locations suitable for water sports located somewhat further away from the rivers, but still within Zone B of the programme area, are mainly small lakes, the most important are near Orahovica, Našice, Đakovo, Darda, Vinkovci and Županja. As locations suitable for water-based tourism several spas in the area have to be considered, namely Sveti Martin, Varaždinske Toplice, Daruvar, Velika and Bizovac, even though they offer only bathing.

In Hungary the Danube, the Drava and the Mura are usable for development of water- based tourism in the area – rafting and kayaking-canoeing are possible on these rivers. There are approximately 125 lakes in Zone A of the programme area on the Hungarian side which are suitable for water-based tourism, most of them are fishing lakes. The most famous lakes for fishing are: Gyékényes (app. 300 ha), Deseda (app. 218 ha), Lake Pötréte (app. 150 ha), Lake Merenye (app. 120 ha) and Lake Zalaszentmihály (app. 107 ha). The most important kayaking or canoeing societies are based near Nagykanizsa and Lake Deseda.

There are approximately 21 spas or thermal baths in the wider region (9 in Zala, 7 in Somogy and 5 in Baranya County). There are a lot of wellness spas on this side of the area, the most famous are Zalakaros, Zalaszentgrót, Kehidakustány and Gelse. The medicinal element determines the profile of some spas, like in case of Hévíz, Harkány and Szigetvár. Besides the above-mentioned spas there are some smaller, less developed baths in the region which have not yet determined their profiles or

target groups.

Water-based tourism, with the exception of bathing, is not traditionally offered in the area except along the Hungarian rivers where kayaking tours are very popular. Almost all clean and calm waters in the area, both on rivers and on lakes, are used for bathing, especially near larger towns, but other items of the water-based offer are currently relatively limited.

In Croatia the demand for water-based tourism besides bathing is very small and almost exclusively domestic, with many Croatians in fact frequenting the better locations for water-based tourism in neighbouring Slovenia and Hungary. This is also mostly bathing tourism in spas, characterised by a heavy dependence on day trips. The majority of areas suitable for water-based activities except for spas are poorly equipped even with basic facilities and in many cases there are no catering facilities.

The following development priorities for water based tourism can be set:

- Development of water-based tourism in line with sustainability principles;
- Ensuring visitor safety – clearing eventual remaining mine fields, provision of complete information regarding eventual mine fields, furthermore lifeguard services in main bathing areas must be ensured;
- Upgrading of facilities and services creating an experiential value chain for visitors;
- Upgrading of infrastructure for water-based tourism – continuous investment in adequate water sport facilities and recreational sections;
- Upgrading of human resource capacities – training programme for diverse groups of service providers, information sharing services, awareness raising programmes.
- Development of attractive water-based tourism destination images. The Danube-Drava National Park can play a significant role in the development of the 'green' or 'eco' image of the destination.
- Increasing visitor spending all year round.



## Surduk

Surduk is traditional local name for deep cut in mountain side caused by nature and deepened by man. They are place with many wine cellars and new centre for tourism activities such as restaurants wine selling places and souvenir shops. They are usually named by dominant religion of owners so we have Chatolic, Orthodox and Reform Surduk. During the tourism season concerts and festival are held there. One of the to 50 restaurants in Croatia is located there. Time of Surduks is yet to come after they undergo serious refurbishment and more intense marketing promotion.



## Gator

Gator is form of traditional historic architecture, They are deep tunnels dug in vertical mountain walls and Surduks. They were used as wine cellars, animal shelters and even for human inhabitation. Most of them is currently abandoned and in bad condition but they have potential for renewal.

## Baranjske pustare

Pustara is planned settlement common on agricultural land owned by nobility. Once they were the centres of production and rural and now they are mostly abandoned. Several large buildings are located in them and they are ideal for future use.

## Castles

There are four main castles in Baranja region and they are mostly unused for tourism purposes due to their protected status, ownership issues and huge investment needed for their reconstruction. They remain huge potential and Points-Of-Interest for visitors.

Geocaches are also placed near all castles and are often visited.

### The castle in Bilje



The hunting castle in Bilje was erected in the 18th century by Austrian military leader Prince Eugene of Savoy. He was granted the land by tsar Leopold as a token of his gratitude for the victories he won over the Turks. The castle is insufficiently explored in historical and architectonic terms, its park is hardly mentioned in literature while certain statements about the time the castle had been build cannot be considered reliable. The architect of this castle is also being speculated, with Austrian architect Johann Lucas Hildebrandt being mentioned, also known as the architect of Vienna's Belvedere Castle. The castle in Bilje is situated on the edge of the swampy and alluvial



area of Kopački rit. Its shields resemble the Renaissance protection, in other words the late medieval and Renaissance lowland burghs.

The park occupies about eight hectares and in 1824 the castle was surrounded by plum orchard and forest, only later to be transformed into the park. As a part of the edifice, a court chapel dedicated to Mother of God was erected in 1720. Until the parish church was built, it acted as a parish chapel. The castle was renovated in 1974 and it also used to be the seat of the Work Organization for Hunting named »Jelen« (deer). Today, the Hunting Court houses a part of Croatian Forests Ltd as well as the Management of Public Institution of Kopački rit Nature Park. At its basement, an exhibition gallery "Eugene of Savoy" has been set up.

### **The castle in Darda (Esterhazy Castle)**



It was erected in the second half of the 18th century as the centre of spacious estate owned by baron Kazimir Eszterházy. The castle is a single-storey edifice with the area of 1,700 square metres. It unifies the baroque layout concept typical for the time when it was built. In the centre of the main



facade there is a glazed wooden veranda with single-storey outbuildings stretching in the yard. The complex of the castle and park is entered through Secession gate. The castle in Darda belongs to the second category of monuments. During the Homeland War it was devastated and robbed. There is a big park area with an obelisk monument for WWII fighters and a pond.

### **The castle in Tikveš**



It was built in the spirit of Romantic Historicism in the second half of the 19th century. Around the castle, there is a park and promenade connected to a hunting villa built in the manner of country architecture. During its rich history, the castle in Tikveš was a hunting centre visited by members of the noble Teschen lineage, the Habsburg lineage, later by members of the Karađorđević dynasty and many others. Numerous photographs of Isabella von Habsburg, the wife of Friedrich von Habsburg who owned an estate there until 1918, bear witness to castle history. After the World War II, the castle was one of the presidential residences of Josip Broz Tito, and numerous world politicians stayed there during their hunting visits. Today this complex has a new purpose, housing the European Centre for Environment.

## The castle in Kneževo



The late Baroque Historicist and Classicist building in the centre of Kneževo. Until the early 19th century the castle had an economic and partly managerial purpose on the large Belje estate. It was built in 1828 as a two-storey house with modest classicistic features with a purpose to function as estate's economic seat. The west facade faces the settlement, whereas the east faces the park. The central, three-storey part of the castle rises from the basic volume. All facades were shaped in a simple manner, however, the main facade is prominent due to its ornaments. The park dating from the 19th century, situated just next to the castle, is protected as a horticultural monument. The park is next to baroque castle and it is protected as horticultural monument with 59 tree species. It is named after Maria Christine, the daughter of Queen Maria Theresia.

## Biking

Bicycling tourism can be defined as trips where bicycling is the main activity undertaken, being both the purpose of the trip and the mode of transportation to and/or between destinations. Forecasts show the number of trips in Europe focused on bicycling will increase by 6% to 12% in the next ten

years. Main motives are engaging in healthy physical activity, spending time outdoors, recreation and relaxation (including mental relaxation), new challenges and, especially for the younger segments, 'high adrenalin' challenges.

Product success factors:

- Availability of safe and maintained routes. For recreational cyclists, also the availability of shorter, circular and less arduous routes, preferably with no (or low) other traffic, as well as thematic routes with attractions along the route and views of picturesque landscapes.
- Availability of accurate information about each route, including level of difficulty, duration, available facilities (e.g. lodging, F&B), available attractions.
- Availability of services along the route, namely food, lodging, repairs, transfer of equipment and luggage (if talking about a non-circular route).
- Simple and comfortable accommodation, preferably B&B, small family-style hotels or pensions, camping grounds. Accommodation facilities catering to cyclists should offer facilities for bicycles (e.g. appropriate and safe storage, possibility to wash the bikes and to perform small maintenance activities on them).
- Availability of bicycle signage.
- Availability of precise maps.
- Targeted marketing through specialised channels (print media, internet, specialised agents).

There are many national and foreign bike tourists cycling in Baranja but exact data is unavailable.

There are several major bike routes passing across Baranja

This sector can be upgraded and there are many possibilities to attract more tourist in the future.



Danube bike route map





Panonian path of the peace bike route map

## **Abandoned mines (speleology)**

Unknown even to the most of Baranja inhabitants, small hills in Baranja are not made of earth only, but they hold mineral riches that were broadly used before WWII such as basalt. Preliminary speleological researches were made and they found massive underground chambers in basalt rock deposits that served as mine shafts. Some of them are very high and they even have bridges cut in rock. Tourism board has plans to revitalise them and use them for guided speleology tourism. Some of those abandoned and sunk mines are inhabited by rare bat species.

## **Natura 2000**

NATURA 2000 is the centrepiece of EU nature and biodiversity policy. It is an EU-wide network of nature protection areas established under the 1992 Habitats Directive. The aim of the network is to assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. It is comprised of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated by Member States under the Habitats Directive, and also incorporates Special Protection Areas (SPAs) which they designate under the 1979 Birds Directive.

The Habitats Directive identifies some 230 habitat types and over 1000 species of plants and animals of EU importance. The Birds Directive lists over 190 vulnerable species for which habitat protection through site protection is required. It also recognises the need to protect areas of importance for migratory bird species, especially wetland habitats.

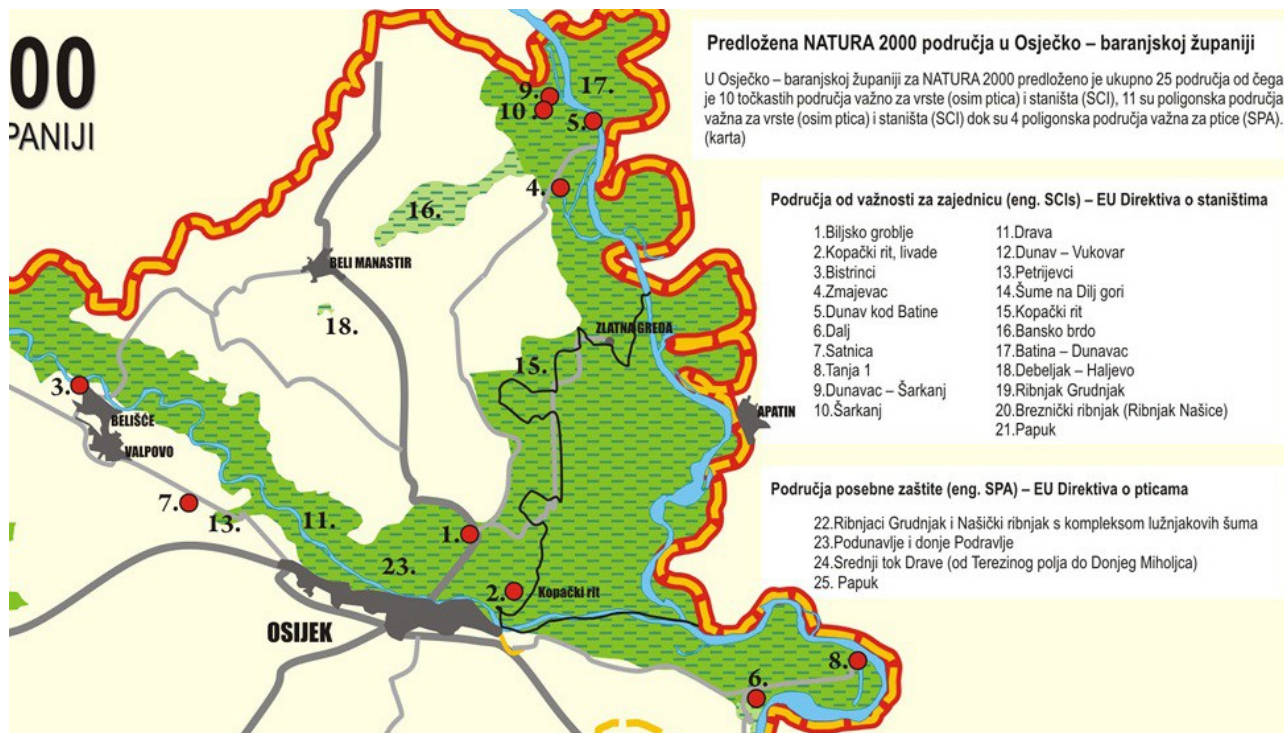
The long-term conservation of these habitats and species cannot be achieved by protecting isolated pockets of nature however great their individual value. That is why it is so important that countries in Europe cooperate through Natura 2000 so that they can work to save threatened species and habitats across their entire natural range in Europe irrespective of national political and administrative boundaries. Many species like the European Crane migrate across Europe. If one country protects the species in their territory and another doesn't, the chances of survival will be limited. On the other hand, by establishing a dynamic, living and ecologically coherent Natura 2000 network of sites across the European Union, there is a real chance that we manage to save Europe's most valuable habitats and species.

Currently there are around 25,000 sites in the Natura 2000 Network, together they cover a substantial area of the EU of 28 countries (around a fifth of the territory) – this is bigger than the



whole of France.

Because of their stunning locations and diverse wildlife, NATURA 2000 can also act as a magnet for the ever increasing number of people who like to enjoy nature and explore the great outdoors. In contrast to mass tourism operators, these eco-tourism activities are traditionally run by small local businesses. As a result, the revenues generated help to support the local economy and increase the value of protecting nature. What is more, nature- based tourism is less likely to damage the environment and local wildlife provided certain safeguards are introduced.



*Proposed Natura 2000 sites in Baranja region.*

As seen above, major part of Baranja is Natura 2000 site and that could be crucial for sustainable eco tourism development.

## NATURA 2000 and Eco Tourism

Europe's Natura 2000 sites are the crown jewels of its natural heritage. Croatia already attracts many tourists each year to its coast and there is much potential for nature tourism inland as well in Croatia's existing National and Nature Parks as well as other NATURA 2000 candidate sites.

There is an increasing appetite for more specialised form of tourism and eco tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in Europe. However, if this potential is to be realized, it is important it does not damage the natural values of the areas concerned, but does fulfil the needs of

the visitor. There is little merit in developing a visitor centre or a nature trail in a NATURA 2000 site, if there is no easy access to the site and nowhere for people to eat or stay overnight. Integrated Quality Management Plans need to be developed which offer the visitor opportunities to watch nature, hike, explore, cycle, canoe etc without damaging habitats or species and that make the local community aware of the possibilities for developing the local economy and stimulate inward investment to local enterprises.

#### Ecotourism - Cooperation

Management Plans for NATURA 200 sites can include Interpretive Plans supported by Annual Implementation Plans. These identify and analyze interpretation, education and visitor goals and issues. They recommend the most effective, efficient and practical ways to address these goals and issues. Interpretive plans address personal and non personal services and the planning process is sensitive to which site resource experiences should be made accessible to visitors, negative impacts on resources are minimised and active stewardship is encouraged.

#### Gorski Kotar

The NATURA 2000 Candidate Site of Gorski Kotar is the most important site for the conservation of large carnivores – bears, wolf and lynx in Croatia.

The PHARE Project is assisting the State Institute for Nature Protection (SINP) to introduce a Management plan and Interpretive Plan to protect this unique habitat and find intelligent ways to give ecotourism a clearly marked out pathway. The educational facilities at the Gorski Kotar Large Carnivore Centre's visitor centre will be enhanced as part of the plan.

Staff, stakeholders and the local communities will all be involved in the planning process, and it is intended that participating in the process should give them:

- \* An increased sense of ownership
- \* Greater support for the protection of the area
- \* Greater public involvement in decision making
- \* Linking plans for conservation with plans for development
- \* Provision of mechanisms for communication with public and media

#### European Strategy

The European Commission has adopted an ambitious new strategy to halt the loss of biodiversity

and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020. There are six main targets, and 20 actions to help Europe reach its goal. Biodiversity loss is an enormous challenge in the EU, with around one in four species currently threatened with extinction and 88% of fish stocks over-exploited or significantly depleted. Full implementation of Habitats and Birds Directives is one of the key mechanisms for reaching the Strategy goals.

The six targets cover:

1. Full implementation of EU nature legislation to protect biodiversity
2. Better protection for ecosystems, and more use of green infrastructure
3. More sustainable agriculture and forestry
4. Better management of fish stocks
5. Tighter controls on invasive alien species
6. A bigger EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss

The Strategy is in line with global commitments made by world leaders in Nagoya in October 2010, at the Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

## **WW II heritage**

Two major second world war battles happened in Baranja: The Battle of Batina, when Red Army and partisans crossed the Danube, and Battle of Bolman. Both sites are often visited by Russian delegations. This heritage is still undeused and needs reconstruction.

## **Multiculturalism**

Baranja is a melting pot with three dominant ethnic groups: Croats, Serbs and Hungarians and various other ethnic groups and subgroups who all brought their customs and culture. Their heritage is often presented and celebrated.

There is an interesting initiative where Roma NGOs and Roma community want to start a Roma Ethno village for tourist and education where they would present traditional Roma way of life, culture and traditional Roma crafts.

## Industrial heritage

There are several old industrial sites in Baranja which can be upgraded to serve tourism purposes. One of those is Šećeransko Lake which is described further in the paper. There are abandoned properties, buildings, brick making kilns, machines and technical exhibitions.

Some of it is refurbished and exhibited, like old steam tractor on entrance to Kneževi Vinogradi which attracts many tourist who take pictures next to it.



## Mythology and tourism

Myths, legends and stories are part of every traditional culture. There are many local legends in Baranja which are told to visitors. Many of them are about Ottoman rule and many more about Red Martha, local ruler who tormented her subjects.

Tourism board of Baranja is collecting all local legends and stories and plans to make educational points in Baranja informing tourists about those legends on the places where they allegedly happened.

## Gastronomy and oenology in tourism development

Food and drink are key for attracting tourists to Baranja. Baranja is very well known in Croatia and wider region for its specialities. There is ever increasing number of small restaurants and wine makers that cater to tourists needs.

Some of the main specialities include “Kulen” and “Fiš Paprikaš”. Main vine produced is white vine of “Graševina” (Welschriesling) variety.

Kulen is a type of flavored sausage made of minced pork that is traditionally produced in Croatia (Slavonia) and Serbia (Vojvodina).

A kind of kulen from Slavonia has had its designation of origin protected in Croatia by an organization from Bošnjaci. In parts of Slavonia, kulen is called kulin in Ikavian accent.

The meat is low-fat, rather brittle and dense, and the flavor is spicy. The red paprika gives it aroma and color, and garlic adds spice. The original kulen recipe does not contain black pepper because its hot flavor comes from hot red paprika.

The traditional time of producing kulen is during the pig slaughter done every autumn by most rural households. Kulen matures during the winter; it can be eaten at this time, although not fully dried and cured yet, with very hot taste, but it will develop its full taste by the following summer. To produce a dryer, firmer kulen, it is sometimes kept buried under ashes, which act as a desiccant. Kulen is a shelf-stable meat product, with a shelf life of up to two years when refrigerated or even kept at room temperatures.

The meat is stuffed and pressed into bags made of pork intestine, and formed into links that are usually around ten centimetres in diameter, and up to three times as long, weighing around a kilogram.

The pieces of kulen are smoked for several months, using certain types of wood. After the smoking they are air-dried for another several months. This process can last up to a year. Although similar to other air-dried procedures, the meat is fermented in addition to the air-drying. High-grade kulen is sometimes even covered with a thin layer of mould, giving it a distinct aroma.

When the kulen meat is stuffed into the small intestine, it is thinner and requires less smoking and drying, but it also takes less time to prepare. This type of sausage is often referred to as kulenova seka (literally kulen's sister).



Kulen is perceived as a premium domestically-made dried meat product. Although it has also been produced commercially throughout former Yugoslavia since World War II, industrial process of production is significantly different, resulting in major differences in appearance and aroma. However, it is economically feasible, given that on the Zagreb market even a low-grade kulen can cost much more than other types of sausages and is comparable to smoked ham. An annual "Kulenijada" festival is held in many Croatian and Serbian cities to honor the history and great regional masters of making kulen.



Fiš paprikaš (a traditional spicy fish stew) – a specialty of Slavonian and Baranja cuisine prepared with at least two fish species and served with homemade, wide noodles. During the meal, guests first help themselves with noodles onto which they add the stew.





## **Tourism in Croatia**

Tourism in Croatia is a well-developed industry. Many tourists visit to experience the country's extensive coastline and well-preserved coastal Renaissance towns. In 2005, Croatia had 10 million tourist visitors, and in 2008 11.26 million tourists.

The interior of the country, with the exception of the capital Zagreb, the erstwhile Baroque capital Varaždin and a plethora of medieval castles, has fewer tourist attractions and Art Nouveau town of Sisak with a lot of buildings in this style, which this year began to be hit destination noteworthy that the three rivers: Sava, Kupa, Odra. Eight areas in the country have been designated national parks, and the landscape in these areas is afforded extra protection from development. Several companies run flotillas of yachts along different stretches of the coastline, which is also popular with divers.

The country is currently being advertised under the motto The Mediterranean As It Once Was.

Lonely Planet named Croatia as the top pick destination for 2005, while National Geographic Adventure Magazine named Croatia as Destination of the Year in 2006.

The peninsula of Istria has the many notable interests. Its west coast has several historical towns dating from Roman times, such as the city of Umag, which hosts the yearly Croatia Open ATP tennis tournament on clay courts. The city of Poreč is famous for the UNESCO-protected Euphrasian Basilica, which includes the renown 6th century mosaics depicting old-style Byzantine art. Furthermore, the city plan still shows the ancient Roman Castrum structure. The main streets are Decumanus and Cardo Maximus, still preserved in their original forms. Marafors is a Roman square with two temples attached. One of them, erected in the 1st century AD, is dedicated to the Roman god Neptune. A few houses from the Romanesque period have been preserved and beautiful Venetian Gothic palaces can be seen here. Originally a Gothic Franciscan church built in the 13th century, the 'Dieta Istriana' hall was remodeled in the Baroque style in the 18th century.

The region's largest city Pula has one of the best preserved Amphitheaters in the world, which is still in use for festivals and events. It is surrounded by large hotel complexes, resorts, camps and sports facilities. A short boat ride away is Brijuni national park visited by numerous world leaders since it was the summer residence of Josip Broz Tito. Roman villas and temples still lie buried among farm fields and along the shoreline of the dozens of surrounding fishing and farming villages. The coastal waters offer beaches, fishing, wreck dives to ancient Roman galleys and World

War I warships, cliff diving, and sailing to unspoiled coves and islands large and small. Pula is the end point of the EuroVelo 9 cycle route that runs from Gdańsk on the Baltic Sea through Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia.

The town of Rovinj contains well-indented coastal areas with a number of small bays hidden within dense vegetation, open to naturists. Although the beaches are not specified as naturist, many people choose to enjoy the sea and the sun in this way with a reserved toleration of other swimmers.

The interior is quieter, very green and wooded, with dozens of tiny stone towns perched on hills, such as Motovun. The river Mirna flows below the hill and on the other side of the river there is the famous Motovun forest, an area of about 10 square kilometres in the valley of the river Mirna, of which 280 hectares (2.8 km<sup>2</sup>) is specially protected. This area differs completely not only from the nearby forests, but also from those of the entire surrounding karst region because of its wild life, moist soil and rich-with-prized-black-and-white truffles (*Tuber magnatum*), which grows successfully there. Since this fungus grows underground, it is gathered with the aid of specially trained dogs. Since 1999, Motovun has hosted the international Motovun Film Festival for independent and avant-garde films from the U.S. and Europe. Groznjan, another beautiful hill town, hosts a successful three-week jazz festival every July.

A former Habsburg favourite, the seaside town Opatija is still fashionable.

One of the most varying regions, the entire Kvarner gulf provides striking scenery, with tall mountains right next to the sea, overlooking a dozen large islands. Tourist resorts range from the coastal towns of Opatija and Lovran, with their feel of Austro-Hungarian imperial decadence, are regaining their former prominence. Opatija is the oldest tourist resort in Croatia, its tradition of tourism ranging from the 19th century.

The former Venetian island towns of Rab and Lošinj are popular tourist destinations. The island of Rab is rich in cultural heritage and cultural-historical monuments that make it a popular vacation destination. Rab is also known as a pioneer of naturism after the visit of King Edward VIII and Mrs Wallis Simpson. The island is nowadays very popular with tourists and families for its beautiful nature, beaches, heritage and many events, particularly the Rab arbalest tournament and the Rab Medieval festival - Rapska Fjera. With around 2600 hours of sunshine a year, the island of Lošinj has become a popular destination for Slovenian, German and Italian tourists in the summer months. Average air humidity is 70%, and the average summer temperature is 24 °C (75 °F) and 7 °C (45 °F) during the winter.

The rare Eurasian lynx can be found in the highlands.

The interior regions Gorski kotar, Velebit and Lika have vast stretches of virginal nature, with mountain peaks, forests and fields, many animal species including bears, and the national parks of Risnjak and Plitvice Lakes. The Plitvice Lakes National Park lies in the Plitvice plateau which is surrounded by three mountains part of the Dinaric Alps: Plješevica mountain (Gornja Plješevica peak 1,640 m), Mala Kapela mountain (Seliški Vrh peak at 1,280 m), and Medvedak (884 m). The national Park is underlain by karstic rock, mainly dolomite and limestone with associated lakes and caves, this has given rise to the most distinctive feature of its lakes. The lakes are separated by natural dams of travertine, which is deposited by the action of moss, algae, and bacteria. The encrusted plants and bacteria accumulate on top of each other, forming travertine barriers which grow at the rate of about 1 cm per year. The sixteen lakes are separated into an upper and lower cluster formed by runoff from the mountains, descending from an altitude of 636 to 503 m (2,087 to 1,650 ft) over a distance of some eight km, aligned in a south-north direction.

The Plitvice Lakes National Park is the most popular park in Croatia.

The lakes collectively cover an area of about two km<sup>2</sup>, with the water exiting from the lowest lake to form the Korana River. The lakes are renowned for their distinctive colours, ranging from azure to green, grey or blue. The colours change constantly depending on the quantity of minerals or organisms in the water and the angle of sunlight. The lakes are divided into the 12 Upper Lakes (Gornja jezera) and the four Lower Lakes (Donja jezera): Under the travertine waterfalls Cratoneuron moss sometimes grows, the moss gets encrusted with travertine and fresh moss grows further out, first a crag is formed but later a cave roof forms under the crag. If the water continues flowing the cave becomes progressively bigger. Limestone caves are present as well. The area is also home to an extremely wide variety of animal and bird species. Rare fauna such as the European brown bear, wolf, eagle, owl, lynx, wild cat, and capercaillie can be found there, along with many more common species. At least 126 species of birds have been recorded there, of which 70 have been recorded as breeding there.

#### Dalmatia - Zadar

This region is a yachting paradise. The Kornati National Park has hundreds of mostly uninhabited islands. Kornat, the biggest of the islands with a total area of 32,525,315 m<sup>2</sup> (350,099,577 sq ft), comprises two-thirds of the park's land area. Although the island is 25.2 km long, it is no wider than 2.5 km. The park is managed from the town of Murter, on the island of Murter, and is connected to the mainland by a drawbridge.

Zadar, the largest city in the region, gained its urban structure in Roman times; during the time of Julius Caesar and Emperor Augustus, the town was fortified and the city walls with towers and gates were built. On the western side of the town were the forum, the basilica and the temple, while outside the town were the amphitheatre and cemeteries. The aqueduct which supplied the town with water is partially preserved. Inside the ancient town, a medieval town had developed with a series of churches and monasteries being built.

The interior has mixed plains and mountains, with the impressive Paklenica canyon as the main attraction. Paklenica National Park is the most visited climbing site in Croatia, and the largest in Southeast Europe. The close proximity of seawater gives this climbing site a special charm, making Paklenica Riviera an ideal place to combine climbing, hiking and water sports.

Today, there are over 360 equipped and improved routes of various difficulty levels and lengths within Paklenica's climbing sites, so each climber can find to their liking. The main climbing season begins in spring and goes on until late autumn. The Park area contains 150–200 km of trails and paths, from those intended for tourists, leading from Velika Paklenica Canyon to Manita peč cave, Lugarnica forest cottage and the mountain hut, to those intended for mountaineers, leading to the highest peaks of Velebit. The trails in the Park are marked with boards and mountaineering signs.

The Great Gorge of Paklenica (Velika Paklenica) is a popular rock climbing destination.

The island of Pag has one of the biggest party zones in Europe in the town of Novalja and Zrće. These beaches are well-known Croatian summer destination for partygoers, with several all-hours discotheques and beach bars operating during summer months. It regularly features gigs by internationally known house and trance DJs at the peak of the Croatian summer season in July and August. Zrće is particularly popular among young club goers, while other pebble and sand beaches on the island are more family-oriented, and are one of over 100 Blue Flag beaches in Croatia.

## Dalmatia - Šibenik

This is another popular yachting region, dotted with islands, and centered around Šibenik and its famous cathedral, the Cathedral of St. James, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Several fortresses, remnants of the Renaissance era (which includes St. Nicholas Fortress) can be seen surrounding the city. Skradinski Buk is one of the most attractive parts of the park, with numerous attractions and facilities available among various footpaths, sightseeing tours and presentations, boat trips, restaurants and museum. Roški Slap, located near Miljevc, is the second most popular attraction of

the Krka National Park in terms of numbers of visitors, and whose cascades can be visited throughout the year. The most attractive way to reach Roški Slap is to take one of the excursion boats operated by the Krka National Park, although the falls can also be reached with a public road. Inside the park is the island of Visovac which was founded during the reign of Louis I of Hungary, home to the Roman Catholic Visovac Monastery founded by the Franciscans in 1445 near Miljevci village. The island can be visited by a boat tour from Skradinski Buk. The park also includes the Serb Orthodox Monastery Krka founded in 1345.

The area around the city of Knin has medieval fortresses and many archeological remains. The recently discovered Roman town Burnum is 18 km far from Knin in direction of Kistanje. There are the remainings of the biggest amphitheater in Dalmatia built in 77 AD, during the rule of Vespasian which could host 8000 people. The nearby villages Biskupija and Kapitul are extremely interesting archaeological sites from the 10th century where many remains of medieval Croatian culture are found including churches, graves, decorations, and epigraphs.

#### Dalmatia - Split

The coastal city of Split is also the second largest city in Croatia, and is well known for its unique Roman heritage which includes UNESCO-protected Diocletian's Palace. The city was built around the palace, which today is well known for its excellent preservation, and is one of the most famous and complete architectural and cultural features on the Croatian Adriatic coast. The Split Cathedral stems from the palace.

The Makarska Riviera is a stretch of coastline known for its pristine beaches and are popular destinations among sunbathers for its beaches, clubs, cafes, kayaking, sailing, and hiking along the Biokovo range. Makarska, Brela, Omiš, and Baška Voda are the most popular.

#### Makarska Riviera

The large islands of this region, which such pearls as the town of Hvar, known for its fishing and tourism industries. Hvar has a very mild Mediterranean climate, bountiful beaches and Mediterranean vegetation that make it one of the most attractive tourist centers in Europe. The island promotes itself as "the sunniest spot in Europe", with over 2715 hours of sunlight in an average year. Cultural and artistic events within the Hvar Summer Festival take place throughout the summer, from late June to late September. These events include classical music concerts performed by national and international artists, and performances by amateur groups from Hvar. Performances are given nearly every day in a number of venues around the town. The Gallery of

Modern Art in Hvar is located in the Arsenal building, in the lobby of the historic Theatre of Hvar. The permanent display contains the most valuable paintings, sculptures and prints from the collection, and temporary exhibitions are organised within the Museum project Summer of Fine Arts in Hvar. The historic old town of Trogir. The Cathedral of St. Stephen and the Bishop's Palace have a Renaissance-baroque style, and a façade with three-cornered gable and a Renaissance Bell Tower in Romanesque style from the 16th century, created by Venetian artists.

Other notable islands in the region include Brač, Čiovo, Šolta, and Vis.

The old city of Trogir is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and contains a mixture of influence from the Hellenistic period, Romans, and Venetians with its Greek architecture, Romanesque churches, Renaissance and Baroque buildings. Trogir is the best-preserved Romanesque-Gothic complex not only in the Adriatic, but in all of Central Europe. Trogir's medieval core, surrounded by walls, comprises a preserved castle and tower and a series of dwellings and palaces from the Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque periods. Trogir's grandest building is the Cathedral of St. Lawrence, whose main west portal is a masterpiece by Radovan, and the most significant work of the Romanesque-Gothic style in Croatia. Another notable attraction is the Fortress Kamerlengo

## Dalmatia - Dubrovnik

One of the most famous Croatian tourist site is the fortified city of Dubrovnik with its Renaissance culture. The finest Renaissance highlight is the Sponza Palace which dates from the 16th century and is currently used to house the National Archives. The Rector's Palace is a Gothic-Renaissance structure that displays finely carved capitals and an ornate staircase. It now houses a museum. Its façade is depicted on the reverse of the Croatian 50 kuna banknote, issued in 1993 and 2002.

The St. Saviour Church is another remnant of the Renaissance period, next to the much-visited Franciscan Monastery. The Franciscan monastery's library possesses 30,000 volumes, 22 incunabula, 1,500 valuable handwritten documents. Exhibits include a 15th-century silver-gilt cross and silver thurible, an 18th-century crucifix from Jerusalem, a martyrology (1541) by Bemardin Gucetic and illuminated Psalters. Dubrovnik's most famous church is St Blaise's church, built in the 18th century in honor of Dubrovnik's patron saint. Dubrovnik's baroque Cathedral houses an impressive Treasury with relics of Saint Blaise. The city's Dominican Monastery resembles a fortress on the outside but the interior contains an art museum and a Gothic-Romanesque church. A special treasure of the Dominican monastery is its library with over 220 incunabula, numerous illustrated manuscripts, a rich archive with precious manuscripts and documents and an extensive



art collection. The main feature of Dubrovnik is its walls that run 2 km around the city. The walls run from four to six metres thick on the landward side but are much thinner on the seaward side. The system of turrets and towers were intended to protect the vulnerable city.

Just off the coast of Dubrovnik is the forested island of Lokrum. The small island boasts of a castle, a thousand year-old Benedictine monastery, and a botanical garden initially started by archduke Maximilian in the 19th century. Peacocks and peahens still roam the isle, descended from the original peafowls brought over by Maximilian.

The nearby islands include the historical island of Korčula. The devout Catholic inhabitants of Korčula keep alive old folk church ceremonies and a weapon dance, the Moreška, which dates back to the middle ages. Originally danced only on special occasions, in modern times there are performances twice a week for tourists. The main town's historic sites include the central Romanesque-Gothic Cathedral of St Mark (built from 1301 to 1806), the 15th-century Franciscan monastery with a beautiful Venetian Gothic cloister, the civic council chambers, the palace of the former Venetian governors, grand 15th and 16th-century palaces of the local merchant nobles, and the massive city fortifications.

#### Mljet island

Further along the Adriatic are the untouched forests of Mljet island. Over 72% of the island of 98.01 square kilometres (37.84 sq mi) is forest. Its geological structure consists of limestone and dolomite forming ridges, crests and slopes. A few depressions on the island of Mljet are below sea level and are known as blatine ("mud-lakes") or slatine ("salt-lakes"). During the rain seasons all blatine are filled with water and turn to brackish during dry seasons.

#### Central Croatia

The most interesting part of this large region is the north, with the hilly area of Zagorje, dotted with castles and spas, and the old city of Varaždin. Varaždin, with its unique monuments and artistic heritage, represents the best preserved and richest urban complex in continental Croatia. The Old Town (fortress) is a beautiful example of medieval defensive buildings. Construction began in the 14th century, and in the following century the rounded towers, typical of Gothic architecture in Croatia, were added. Varaždin's Cathedral, a former Jesuit church, was built in 1647, and is distinguished by its baroque entrance, 18th-century altar, and paintings. Among festivals, the annual Špancir Fest begins at the end of August and ends in September (lasts for 10 days). At this time the city welcomes artists, street performers, musicians and vendors for what is called 'the street walking festival'. Varaždin is also the host of the "Radar festival", which hosts concerts at the end of

summer. It has already hosted musical stars such as Bob Dylan, Carlos Santana, The Animals, Manic Street Preachers, Solomon Burke among others.

The Marian shrine of Marija Bistrica is the largest and most notable pilgrimage spot for the faithful in the entire country. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims visit the site every year where the 14th-century church has stood and contains elements of Romanesque, Gothic, and Baroque styles. The church is most famous for the statue known as the "Black Madonna with Child," whose story dates back to the Turkish invasion in the 16th century when the statue was hidden in the church and then lost for decades until its miraculous discovery. Another one of the shrine's highlight is the process of "The Way of the Cross" behind the church, in pilgrims begin the trek that ultimately leads to Calvary Hill. Pope John Paul II visited the site in 1998 in his second tour of Croatia.

The south has some natural highlights, such as the nature park Lonjsko polje, where it covers the area of the former Jasenovac concentration camp. The southwest area is known for its forests and wilderness, especially. Baroque churches are found readily throughout the area, along with other cultural architecture. Much rebuilding is being done in the areas destroyed during the Croatian war of independence.

## Slavonia

Tourism in this region is just developing, mostly with spas. The area of Baranja has the national park of Kopački rit, a large swamp with an incredible variety of fauna and birds. It is one of the most important, largest and most attractive preserved intact wetlands in Europe, hosting about 260 various bird species such as (wild geese and ducks, Great White Egret, White Stork, Black Stork, White-tailed Eagle, crows, coots, gulls, terns, kingfishers, and European Green Woodpecker.

Guided tourist visits by panoramic ships, boats, team of horses or on foot are available, with some packages offering the possibility of photographing or video-recording animals, birds in particular.

The cultural center is the historical city of Osijek, with its baroque style buildings, such as the Church of St. Peter and Paul, a neo-Gothic structure with the second highest tower in Croatia after the Zagreb Cathedral. The city of Đakovo boasts of the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul in Đakovo is the town's most famous landmark and the most important sacral object, not only in Đakovo but also throughout the whole region of Slavonia.

There are three major yearly events celebrating folklore in Slavonia and Baranja: Đakovački vezovi, Vinkovačke jeseni and Brodsko kolo. They present traditional folk costumes, folklore dancing and singing groups, customs, with a parade of horses and wedding wagons as a special part of the program. During the Đakovački vezovi, the Đakovo Cathedral hosts choirs, opera artists, and art

exhibitions are organized in the exhibition salon, and during the sports program, pure-bred white Lipizzaner horses can be seen on the racecourse. Ilok and the war-torn city of Vukovar are also points of interest in the area.

Slavonian gastronomy specialties are popular, with traditional Slavonian wines and cuisine being a unique part of the region. The traditional Slavonian cuisine, famous for its meat specialties (kulen smoked sausage, kobasica sausages, smoked ham), venison and freshwater fish dishes are popular, along with the wines: Weissburgunder, Traminer and Riesling.

## Zagreb

Like Prague or Budapest, Zagreb has a Central European feel to it, with a large and well-preserved old town on the hill and a 19th-century city center. The Croatian capital is also the country's largest cultural center, with many museums and galleries.

The historical part of the city to the north of Ban Jelačić Square is composed of the Gornji Grad and Kaptol, a medieval urban complex of churches, palaces, museums, galleries and government buildings that are popular with tourists on sightseeing tours. The historic district can be reached on foot, starting from Jelačić Square, the center of Zagreb, or by a funicular on nearby Tomićeva Street.

Zagreb's numerous museums reflect the history, art and culture not only of Zagreb and Croatia, but also of Europe and the world. Around thirty collections in museums and galleries comprise more than 3.6 million various exhibits, excluding church and private collections. The Archaeological Museum consists of nearly 400,000 varied artifacts and monuments, have been gathered over the years from many different sources. The most famous are the Egyptian collection, the Zagreb mummy and bandages with the oldest Etruscan inscription in the world (Liber Linteus Zagrabienensis), as well as the numismatic collection. The Croatian Natural History Museum holds one of the world's most important collection of Neanderthal remains found at one site. These are the remains, stone weapons and tools of prehistoric Krapina man. The holdings of the Croatian Natural History Museum comprise more than 250,000 specimens distributed among various different collections.

There are about 20 permanent or seasonal theaters and stages. The Croatian National Theater in Zagreb was built in 1895 and opened by emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria. The most renowned concert hall is named "Vatroslav Lisinski", after the composer of the first Croatian opera was built in 1973. Animafest, the World Festival of Animated Films, takes place every even-numbered year,

and the Music Biennale, the international festival of avant-garde music, every odd-numbered year. It also hosts the annual ZagrebDox documentary film festival. The Festival of the Zagreb Philharmonic and the flowers exhibition Floraart (end of May or beginning of June), the Old-timer Rally annual events. In the summer, theater performances and concerts, mostly in the Upper Town, are organized either indoors or outdoors. The stage on Opatovina hosts the Zagreb Histrionic Summer theater events. Zagreb is also the host of Zagrebfest, the oldest Croatian pop-music festival, as well as of several traditional international sports events and tournaments. The Day of the City of Zagreb on November 16 is celebrated every year with special festivities, especially on the Jarun lake near the southwestern part of the city.

Many Zagreb restaurants offer various specialties of national and international cuisine. Domestic products which deserve to be tasted include turkey, duck or goose with mlinici (a kind of pasta), štrukli (cottage cheese strudel), sir i vrhnje (cottage cheese with cream), kremšnite (custard slices in flaky pastry), and orehnjača (traditional walnut roll).




## Sisak

Central Croatian city of Sisak is situated on the banks of three rivers: Sava, Kupa and Odra. Sisak has 33,049 inhabitants and is the seat of the Sisak - moslavina County, as well as the seat of Roman Catholic Diocese of Sisak. Inside the old part of the town the Baroque - Art Nouveau Cathedral of Exaltation of Holy Cross is situated. In front of the cathedral the Roman ruins are popular sightseeing place, and classicist palace Veliki Kaptol, where first theatre play in Croatian language took part, serves as bishop's residence. City centre is marked by many Art-Nouveau buildings which are yet to be renovated. On the banks of the river Kupa there is a baroque building Mali Kaptol, first masonry building of the city. Along The Kupa a nice promenade and many bars give pleasant entertainment for families. In the vicinity of the city lies Nature Park Lonjsko Polje and village Čigoč, known as the European Stork Village. At the mouth of Kupa in Sava is the Old Town fortress, where in 1593 battle against Ottoman Turks took part, and from that day the Ottoman Empire did not extend.

## UNESCO World Heritage Sites

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) has included the following Croatian sites on its World Heritage List:

Image	Name	Location	UNESCO data	Description
	<u>Plitvice Lakes National Park</u>	<u>Plitvička Jezera</u>	<a href="#">98</a> ; 1979; Natural; (vii, viii, ix)	Over time, water has flowed over the natural <u>limestone</u> and chalk, creating natural dams which in turn have created a series of connecting <u>lakes</u> , <u>waterfalls</u> , and <u>caves</u> . The nearby forests are home to bears, wolves and many rare bird species.
	Historical Complex of <u>Split</u> with the <u>Palace of Diocletian</u>	<u>Split</u>	<a href="#">97</a> ; 1979; Cultural; (ii, iii, iv)	The palace was built by the <u>Roman emperor Diocletian</u> at the turn of the 4th century AD, and later served as the basis of the city of Split. A cathedral was built in the Middle Ages inside the ancient mausoleum, along with churches, fortifications, Gothic and Renaissance palaces. The Baroque style makes up the rest of the area.
	Old City of <u>Dubrovnik</u>	<u>Dubrovnik</u>	<a href="#">95</a> ; 1979; Cultural; (i, iii, iv)	Dubrovnik became a prosperous <u>Maritime Republic</u> during the <u>Middle Ages</u> , it became the only eastern Adriatic <u>city-state</u> to rival <u>Venice</u> . Supported by its wealth and skilled <u>diplomacy</u> , the city achieved a remarkable level of development, particularly during the 15th and 16th centuries.

	<p>Episcopal Complex of the <u>Euphrasian Basilica</u> in the Historic Centre of <u>Poreč</u></p>	<p><u>Poreč</u></p>	<p>The episcopal complex, with its striking mosaics dating back to the 6th century, is one of the best examples of <a href="#">809</a>; 1997; Cultural; (ii, iv) early <u>Byzantine art</u> and architecture in the Mediterranean region and the world. It includes the basilica itself, a sacristy, a baptistery and the bell tower of the nearby archbishop's palace.</p>
	<p>Historic city of <u>Trogir</u></p>	<p><u>Trogir</u></p>	<p>Trogir's rich culture was created under the influence of old Greeks, Romans, and Venetians. It is the best-preserved Romanesque-<u>Gothic</u> complex not only in the <u>Adriatic</u>, but in all of <u>Central Europe</u>. Trogir's <u>medieval</u> core, surrounded by walls, comprises a preserved castle and tower and a series of dwellings and palaces from the Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque periods.</p>
	<p><u>Cathedral of Saint James</u></p>	<p><u>Šibenik</u></p>	<p><a href="#">963</a>; 2000; Cultural; (i, ii, iv) The cathedral is a triple-nave <u>basilica</u> with three apses and a dome (32 m high inside) and is also one of the most important architectural monument of the <u>Renaissance</u> the eastern</p>



				Adriatic.
	<u>Stari Grad Plain</u>	<u>Hvar</u>	<u>1240</u> ; 2008; Cultural; (ii, iii, v)	The Stari Grad Plain is an agricultural landscape that was set up by the <u>ancient Greek colonists</u> in the 4th century BC, and remains in use today. The plain is by and large still in its original form. The ancient layout has been preserved by careful maintenance of the stone walls over 2,400 years.

#### Statistics on tourist numbers for Croatia

Year	Total tourist arrivals	Total tourist nights	Notes
1985	10,125,000	67,665,000	
1986	10,151,000	68,216,000	
1987	10,487,000	68,160,000	
1988	10,354,000	67,298,000	
1989	9,670,000	61,849,000	
1990	8,497,000	52,523,000	First democratic elections Early Log Revolution-related incidents
1991	2,297,000	10,471,000	Croatian War of Independence begins Siege of Dubrovnik
1992	2,135,000	11,005,000	
1993	2,514,000	13,208,000	
1994	3,655,000	20,377,000	
1995	2,610,000	13,151,000	End of Croatian War of Independence
1996	4,186,000	21,860,000	
1997	5,585,000	30,775,000	
1998	5,852,000	31,852,000	
1999	5,127,000	27,126,000	NATO bombing of neighbouring FR Yugoslavia
2000	7,137,000	39,183,000	
2001	7,860,000	43,404,000	
2002	8,320,000	44,692,000	
2003	8,878,000	46,635,000	
2004	9,412,000	47,797,000	

2005	9,995,000	51,421,000	
2006	10,385,000	53,007,000	
2007	11,162,000	56,005,000	
2008	11,261,000	57,103,000	
2009	10,935,000	56,301,000	Global financial crisis
2010	10,604,116	56,416,379	
2011	11,200,113	65,116,830	

## **Tourism in Slavonia region**

Slavonia region is “big brother” of Baranja, however Baranja has growing tourism sector, while Slavonian stagnates or drops. Beside Osijek-Baranja County where Baranja is located, two counties with most attraction for tourists are Vukovar-Srijem County and Požega County.

Vukovar-Srijem covers western Srijem and the south-eastern part of Slavonia, with three natural geographical entities: the loess plain of Vukovar, the Bosut lowlands with the basin of Spačva and the Posavina around Županja. In the far, eastern section, the loess plain extends into the foothills of Fruška gora, ending in steep inclines by the Danube. The Spačva basin is the core of the once famous Slavonian forests, with some 400 km<sup>2</sup> under common oak. The most valuable parts of that forest now enjoy protection as special reserves of forest vegetation (Lože and Radiševo). Natural sites of Spačva also include the locality of Virovi. The most important aspects of cultural heritage are found in Vinkovci, Vukovar, Županja and Ilok. The centre of the county, both historically and today, is Vukovar, also the largest Croatian port on the Danube. Its development took off at the beginning of the 18th century, when the picturesque heart of the town was shaped with many prestigious buildings built in Baroque style along the main street. The terrible devastation suffered by the town during the Croatian War of Independence, and the role it played in that war, resulted in Vukovar becoming a memorial monument, and occupying a unique place in the collective consciousness of the Croatian people. Županja has been a venue for tennis and football since as far back as 1880s. The county also stages a number of manifestations more than well worth a visit: “Šokačko sijelo” (Encounters of Šokadija, Županja, II); How lovely is Srijem (Nijemci, V); Springtime in Otok (Otok, V); Festival of Actors (V); Where the Danube Kisses the Sky (Vukovar, VI); White Horses (Babina Greda, VI); Harvesting and Threshing in the Past (Županja, VII); Harvest Festivities (Cerna, VII); Grape Picking in Ilok (IX), and Autumns in Vinkovci (IX). This County also has unique Danube ancient culture sites at Vučedol.

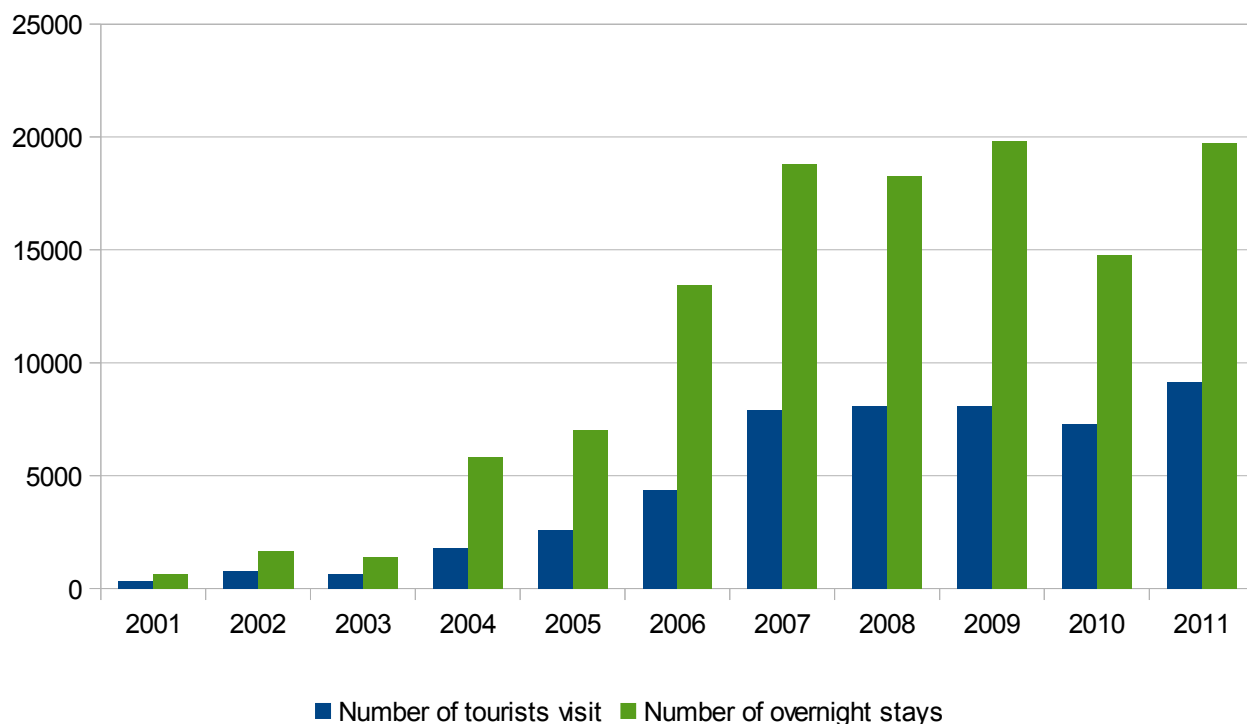
In the central part of western Slavonia, situated between Podravina and Posavina, is the County of Požega-Slavonia. Its landscape is dominated by the mountainous chain encircling the Požega valley, separating it from the Drava valley to the north, the River Sava to the south, and the River Pakra in the west. Covered in forests, the mountains of Psunj, Papuk, Krndija, Požeška gora and Dilj-gora also abound in water. The peak belt and the slopes of those mountains are replete with springs feeding numerous streams, while their foothills hold thermal springs. The natural treasures of Slavonia's mountains are further enriched by the protected natural heritage (“Muški bunar” (Man's

well at Psunj, and “Sovsko jezero” (lake) on Dilj-gora). The traditional centre of this part of Slavonia, and today also the seat of Požega-Slavonia County, is Požega, with its rich cultural heritage-particularly its central square, one of the most beautiful in the country. This town has been made famous throughout the world by its native son, the Congo explorer, Dragutin Lehrman. The Požega Valley, enclosed and sheltered by its relief, has a long winegrowing tradition and is now becoming widely known for its ecological food production. In the north, at the foot of Krndija and Papuk, are locations interesting to tourists: Kutjevo, with its famous wine cellars, and Velika together with Toplice, its thermal spa. The cultivated appearance of this part of Slavonia is contributed to by its protected parks (Kutjevo, Trenkovo, and Lipik). The Cultural manifestations held here also play an important role: Grgurevo (III), Festival of one-minute films (V), Golden Strings of Slavonia (IX), Days of Graševina (Kutjevo).

## Tourism in Baranja

### Overview

Tourism in Baranja is growing at a steady rates trough the years. Baranja is the only region in continental Croatia with growing tourism. Tourism is based on protected nature, rural lifestyle, traditional culture, gastronomy and enology. Due to unavailable jobs, many people are starting their own small tourism projects: boarding rooms, guided tours, selling own agricultural produce to tourists etc.



Main tourism promotion organizations are tourism boards (Turističke Zajednice): TZ Baranje, TZ Općine Bilje and TZ Draž.

In the future, strong role in tourism promotion and development will be held by LAG Baranja. In the main strategic document based on LEADER approach “Local development strategy of Baranja” there are several key goals related to tourism development, so new tourism marketing project can be expected:

- 1.4. Rural tourism development 1.4.1. Encouraging the development of rural tourism 1.4.2. Encouraging the development of specific forms of tourism
- 1.5. Development and promotion of local products 1.5.1. Supporting locally distinctive products - protection and branding 1.5.2. Promotion of local products and manufacturers

## **Analysis of tourism in Baranje region**

In-depth analysis of tourism for Baranja micro region was never performed since key statistics are unavailable in such microregion, but looking at the available documents, very relevant SWOT analysis can be found in “Handbook to Tourism projects” IPA CBC Programme Hungary – Croatia.

### **Strengths**

Destination success factors

Programme area strengths

Existing and potential attractions

Nature based:

- Extensive and preserved natural resources: the area encompasses vast natural green spaces and, particularly, natural river landscapes; it abounds with water resources including lakes, rivers and thermal wells; it lies along three large Central European rivers: Mura, Drava and Danube; it sports large hunting grounds.
- Diversity of natural landscapes: the area encompasses a large diversity of landscapes such as rivers, flatlands, hills and mountains.
- Unique natural sites: Lake Balaton, the largest lake in Central Europe; Danube- Drava National Park, Nature Park Kopački rit, Nature Park Papuk, NATURA 2000 network.
- Important wine growing regions: major wine growing regions are dispersed throughout the area.

Culture based:

- Authentic rural lifestyle: traditional rural lifestyle is the way of life as seen in folk celebrations, gastronomy, crafts, clothing and architecture.
- Hospitality: the traditional welcoming culture of the local population and their positive attitude toward hospitality services are important assets in the development of quality tourism products.
- Multicultural character: the area’s minority population, which in addition to Croats and Hungarians includes most significantly Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Germans and Roma, is the source of the region’s cultural diversity.



- Important cultural sites: Pécs UNESCO World Heritage Site and European Capital of Culture 2010 developments; baroque town of Varaždin; a number of small, picturesque towns; a large number of individual protected sites, particularly castles, religious monuments and archaeological sites.

Other attractions:

- Thermal spas: based on the quality of the thermal wells/waters, the spas are a very important feature of the area, also being a major element in the area's image.

Location, accessibility and infrastructure

- Proximity to large generating markets: the area's location is close to large domestic (e.g. capital and larger cities) and foreign generating markets (e.g. Austria, Czech Republic, Germany);
- Accessibility: the area is easily reached from Budapest and Zagreb by modern highway networks, on the Croatian side it is serviced by international and regional

Destination success factors

Programme area strengths

airports, and the river ports on the Danube also service international river cruisers.

Tourism supra- structure

- Increasing diversity and quality of accommodation: growing diversity of accommodation, including hotels, camps, rural accommodation and stays in private homes; overall growing quality of accommodation and particularly of small, family owned hotels.
- Increasing offer of themed route networks: an already significant number of hiking and bicycling paths, as well as wine and routes with other themes traverse and link the area, being a crucial component of a variety of single- or multi-day tours.
- Increasing development of quality waterfront facilities: new, quality developments of beaches, F&B (food and beverage) sites, playgrounds and fishing areas are taking place along lakes and rivers.
- Increasing number of events: there is a tendency toward quality events with a capability to transcend local and even regional borders.

Networking

- Increasing number of destination management companies: there is a steady growth of incoming agencies providing a regional 'experience chain' by integrating a variety of products and services.
- Increasing co-operation between tourism sector and local food and wine producers/associations and with local cultural institutions/associations: there is an increasing awareness of the mutual

interdependence and consequent co-operation between the tourism sector and producers of local food specialities (meats, pastries, honey, herbs, spirits and wines), but also with traditional crafts producers, music and dance associations and museums.

- Increasing co-operation with foreign medical institutions and insurance companies: co-operation with the foreign (namely Austrian and German) medical services sector is an important prerequisite to opening international markets for the area's substantial health, spa and wellness facilities.
- Sub-regional co-operation: best practices of sub-regional co-operation exist in the programme area, these may provide incentives for less developed regions.
- Product-level networks: increasing co-operation along specific value chains [e.g. rural tourism, health and wellness tourism, MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions), wine and cultural tourism.

#### Political and business environment

- Growing political interest in tourism development in the area: tourism is increasingly seen and supported as an important additional economic activity in this – with the exception of the immediate vicinity of Lake Balaton – traditionally non-tourism region.
- Market-oriented regional development: regional development is integrated with marketing policies, ensuring the long-term feasibility of tourism investments.
- Flourishing SME (small- and medium enterprises) sector: increasing and professionalising entrepreneurial activity, including greater openness towards innovation.
- Increasing incentives for tourism and SME-s: there is an increasing number and variety of state- and international incentive schemes supporting SME-s and particularly tourism development, with additional emphasis being placed on support to non-tourism regions.
- Centres of business, commerce, administration, religion and research: the big cities in the region (for example Pécs, Kaposvár and Nagykanizsa from the Hungarian side) generate demand for business tourism (including MICE and incentive tourism).

#### Human resources in tourism

- Traditional hospitality of the local population: the traditional hospitality and welcoming culture of local communities is an asset in services- and tourism development.
- Positive attitude of local communities towards tourism: there is a general positive attitude towards services and particularly tourism, being perceived to be a welcome additional source of income.

- Increasing special training opportunities: there is awareness and, actually, a surge in the offer of training programmes essential to tourism development, namely entrepreneurial training (e.g. vocational skills, marketing), nature conservation, guiding (including eco-guides) and language skills.

#### Marketing and promotion

- Strong and positive image on the domestic markets: the area has a clear and overall positive image on the domestic markets, being perceived as traditional, self-sufficient, hospitable, green and natural, a place of spas, good home-made food and good wine.
- Pécs on the Hungarian side is a recognisable marker on the international tourism market as a city of Mediterranean flair and lively culture, especially with being a World Heritage Site and having been the Cultural Capital of Europe in 2010.
- Synergies with other sectors: agricultural and industrial products with strong brands on the domestic market support tourism promotion (e.g. Villány wine and Zsolnay china on the Hungarian side).
- Increasing availability of themed tourism products: there is a growth of available themed products, namely bicycle-, gastronomy- and wine tours, short culture breaks, events.
- Increasing promotional activity: there has been a significant 'push' in the promotion of destinations within the area, as well as the promotion of local values (culture, gastronomy, events, sport activities); co-operative promotional schemes between destinations within parts of the area are also on the rise.
- Increasing efforts in destination database development: inventories of attractions, tourism facilities and even an 'eco-inventory' are being compiled into databases as a prerequisite for IT applications (e.g. website content, info points).

#### Organisation of tourism

- Tourism included in county/regional government: although not commanding a department in its own right, the tourism sector is usually represented within Departments of Economics or SME-s.
- Broad network of Tourinform Offices in Hungary: tourism information offices available across the Hungarian part of the area represent very important information dissemination points about accommodation, transport, attractions and services.
- Established tourism board system in Croatia: there is a functioning and active system of tourism boards (town/municipality and county levels) across the area, charged primarily with destination promotion and, to a lesser extent, with product management.
- Market-oriented DMO-s (destination management organisations): there is a transformation going

on from public to public-private schemes in destination management, allowing for more market orientation, solid funding and independence from political changes.

## Weaknesses

### Destination success factors

### Programme area weaknesses

### Existing and potential attractions

- Disparity of tourism development within the area: the area encompasses very well known, highly popular and developed attractions (e.g. Lake Balaton, Pécs), as well as large stretches with only sporadically developed attractions and very little tourism activity.
- Insufficient market-ready attractions: whether due to a lack of funds, understanding, know-how or owing to inefficiency in attraction development, much of the attraction-generating potential throughout the area remains untapped, many attractions have only local significance.
- Insufficient diversity of attractions: this is particularly with reference to the capability to apply innovative approaches to traditional attractions (e.g. creating 'fun', interactive museums), to generate new ones (e.g. theme- and adventure parks), and to adapt attractions to important targeted market segments (e.g. attractions tailored to families with children).
- Sporadic management of attractions: lack of professional management skills and, especially, lack of the 'visitor's perspective' in attraction management.
- Insufficient and inadequate interpretation of attractions: lack of information and/or lack of 'user-friendly' information (i.e. easy to understand, educational and fun, adapted to targeted customer segment, in several foreign languages), this decreases the perceived quality and attractiveness of the site, facility or event.
- Spatial imbalance between attractions and services: some areas with high attraction potential lack a sufficient tourism suprastructure and vice versa, this hinders income generation.

### Location, accessibility and infrastructure

- Partially poor access: access to the region is poor, especially by air but also by train and highway (except from Budapest by train and motorway).
- Relatively poor quality of local road and railroad networks: inferior local traffic infrastructure makes moving around within the area difficult.
- Poor tourism signage: too often the sporadic and poorly maintained tourism signage makes getting

around the area more difficult and unpleasant.

- Low levels of spatial beautification: too often neglected buildings and/or facilities built in disregard of building codes, as well as neglected communal areas especially in smaller villages and rural areas, significantly reduce the attractiveness of such locations and can be a major deterrent to tourism development.

#### Tourism supra- structure

- Lack of quality accommodation: despite increasing diversity and growing accommodation quality, there is still a general lack and a distrust of the quality of available accommodation; particularly lacking are quality facilities with local charm and atmosphere [e.g. B&B (bed and breakfast) or small hotels]; additionally, there is a low occupancy rate within existing accommodation.
- There are no campsites currently available in Zone B on the Croatian side of the border.
- Lack of quality F&B facilities in Croatia: despite increasing quantity, there is still a lack of quality F&B offer, particularly of the gastronomic offer reflecting traditional local cuisine styles.
- Lack of other 'tourism value chain' services: numerous other tourism services (e.g. lake and/or riverside recreation, shopping, culture, information, guides) remain underdeveloped, with the area offering only an elementary tourism value chain; there is a lack of innovation and a lack of appeal particularly for special interest guests.
- Overtly medical character of thermal spas in Croatia (with a very limited offer for 'non-patients'), as well as legal regulation, outdated facilities and lack of investments are at this point practically annulling the thermal water/spa assets as a tourism industry resource.
- Sporadic and rudimentary offer of rural tourism: despite ever increasing support and incentives, any fully-fledged rural tourism offer (e.g. farm stays with lodging, F&B, recreation) is still scarce; there is a distrust of quality of accommodation and services offered.
- Low service quality: still insufficient knowledge of services and lacking understanding of visitor expectations on the part of potential service providers result in generally low service quality.
- Lack of specialisation and profiling: especially the spa sector suffers from the lack of innovative specialisation which results in intraregional competition and low effectiveness.
- Limited provision of services along the rivers in Hungary: the river belts offer very few services, especially along the Drava and the Mura quality catering and programmes (including the interpretation of attractions) are missing.

#### Networking

- Insufficient co-operation: despite cases to the contrary, there is still overall insufficient co-operation on practically all levels: public-public, public-private, private-private; only sporadically occurring partnerships within the tourism sector itself, between the tourism sector (wholesales and retailers) and local food-, wine- and craft producers, as well as with cultural institutions result in limited capability of establishing tourism value chains.

#### Political and business environment

- Lack of 'tourism thinking' and confidence in the tourism sector: despite growing interest and support of tourism as the 'new opportunity', there is insufficient understanding of the implications of this service industry and real (as opposed to 'lip service') confidence in it, both on the part of political and entrepreneurial structures.
- Limited capabilities for facilitating start-up projects: an underdeveloped financial sector and the underfinanced local governments are not in a position to provide stable financing or subsidising schemes to tourism-related start-up projects; funds for entrepreneurial initiatives are limited; interest of foreign investors is limited; there is a significant discrepancy between large and small towns' capability in attracting or initiating projects, with the smaller administrative units 'being left out'.
- Investment potential not realised: due to the world financial crisis and the poor political and administrative preparation of the Cultural Capital of Europe programme in Hungary, the majority of private investments into the tourism sector has been cancelled, with especially hotel projects remaining in the pipeline; the impact on the area's tourism sector also lags behind.
- Restrictive regulatory environment in Croatia: overwhelming and contradictory regulations, particularly in reference to tourism services on farms and in thermal/spa 'special hospitals', are restricting tourism activity and future development.

#### Human resources in tourism

- Lack of well trained management and line staff in tourism: labour force with training in the tourism industry and particularly with management skills is scarce in the area; contributing factors are the insufficient mobility of labour, particularly to rural areas, as well as a generally decreasing interest in hospitality professions (e.g. cooks, waiters, chambermaids); the innate hospitality of the local population does not automatically translate into a visitor-friendly approach.
- Lack of trained tourism supportive staff: labour force with training in tourism supporting skills,



particularly those of importance in the area (e.g. ecotourism, project management, destination management and marketing) is scarce.

- Poor command of foreign languages: foreign language skills among tourism services staff and the local population in general are still inadequate.

#### Marketing and promotion

- Lack of a strategic marketing framework: strategic tourism marketing plans for the destinations making up the area have not been tackled (the Marketing Strategy being drawn up as part of Module 3 of the RTPP project is the first such attempt).

- Lack of clear targeting: many destination areas and tourism enterprises are not able to clearly define their target groups and thus to cater for their needs, instead a 'something-for-all' approach is typical, resulting in ineffective and conflicting image and service components.

- Lack of marketing and sales know-how: lack of a 'guest perspective', of understanding market trends, of potential for special interest products, of packaging, of selling and e-marketing.

- Lack of joint promotional and sales efforts: despite sporadic successful attempts at co-operative promotional efforts, the general approach is still 'every region/county for itself', this results in lost opportunities at image building that would stem from unified budgets and messages.

#### Organisation of tourism

- Severe understaffing of tourism-related bodies: staff responsible for tourism within regional/local governments, as well as staff of the tourism board systems are typically very small (often 'one-man-show' like), limiting tourism development or promotional efforts.

- Lack of destination management function: lack of organisational framework and know-how supporting this relatively new function.

- Re-cultivation: severe environmentally degraded areas may be attractive for tourism in the future after re-cultivation.

- Town and villagescape renewal: urban regeneration and villagescape renewal projects may enhance the attractiveness of the area.

- Pécs events to continue: events which have been part of the 2010 Cultural Capital of Europe year (and the previous years) become more widely known and attractive as they establish.

- Synergy-oriented development of new attractions: parallel attraction development projects in various fields contribute to the general attractiveness of the region as the experience offer reaches a critical level.

- Access valorises existing attractions: with the development of new access routes/gateways, existing attractions may become more popular as the cost (time) of access decreases.

#### Location, accessibility and infrastructure

- Close potential urban generating areas: a number of potential generating areas lie within easy reach, visitors from urban areas (Vienna, Graz, Bratislava, Prague) may be interested in unspoilt nature, authentic culture and gastronomy.
- Access to local and regional generating markets: the area may be co-marketed on local and regional markets (e.g. regional one-day visits and local leisure services); this would increase return on investment into events, spas, visitors centres and catering facilities, thus would make the region more attractive to investors.
- Croatia's access to the EU and especially to the Schengen Zone: this would (will) cease administrative barriers to visiting the core programme area (the river belts).
- Cross-border transport development: development of cross-border transport schemes (both routes and services) could foster the integration of the Hungarian and Croatian tourism sectors into one single destination, enabling the division of labour among these sides and the decreasing of spatial inequalities (e.g. by increasing occupancy rates of the Croatian accommodation sector through the pull of Hungarian attractions).
- M9 motorway development in Hungary: the external motorway belt will link the project area to the Austrian motorway network and thus to Western European generating markets.
- Danube Strategy: the EU has been developing a common Danube Strategy which aims at exploiting the potentials of one of Europe's main rivers; policies stemming from this might impact on river cruise tourism towards Southern Hungary, Serbia and Romania, increasing the number of ships and visitors calling at the port of Mohács.

#### Tourism supra- structure

- Making up cancelled private investments after the crisis: the recovery from the world economic crisis will make investments into new hotels and other establishments more attractive, this may then lead to the realisation of a number of hotels currently in the pipeline (primarily in Pécs and on spa locations);
- Specialisation: careful selection of target groups and innovative service- and image development may contribute to a more colourful tourism offer (e.g. spas with different characters may attract tourist for a longer stay).

#### Networking

- Developing and deepening sub-regional networks: with an increasing number of ties among sub-regional actors and through deeper co-operation the tourism products may become more integrated

and thus more attractive to potential visitors.

- Product-level networks: co-operation across sub-regions may enhance the image of the region as a whole by offering coherent experiences across large territorial units (e.g. long-distance bike trails, gastronomy thematic routes and the like).
- Danube-Drava-Sava Euroregion co-operation: if the development of the area becomes part of a larger Euroregion, it will be more recognisable and also more funds may be available

#### Political and business environment

- Accession of Croatia to the EU: Croatian EU accession allows for more joint cross-border initiatives and may lead to higher EU funding for the two countries' co-operation during the next budgetary period (from 2014 on).
- Economic recovery: economic boost will have a multiplied effect on vacation- and business tourism demand through the fast increase of discretionary income.

#### Human resources in tourism

- Dynamically increasing command of foreign languages: both demand from the labour market and the school and higher education requirements contribute to the young people speaking more foreign languages. As a consequence a labour force able to deal with foreign guests will become available.

#### Marketing and promotion

- Further enhancing the Pécs image: a more conscious use of the World Heritage of Pécs and of its former European Cultural Capital status may enable the reaching out to new markets (given that access is developed).
- Developing sub-regional image: market visibility could be increased through the development of coherent, branded images of the sub-regions and via an overall regional umbrella brand.
- Marketing actions reach critical levels of visibility: if the marketing activity (both the funds available and the quality of the actions carried out) develops, it may reach the critical level necessary to raise awareness of the area and its tourism product.
- New technologies: Currently a number of new solutions in e-marketing and m- marketing emerge on the market; if professionally applied, these may provide opportunities to effectively manage co-operative tourism development and branding.

#### Organisation of tourism

- DMO professionalisation: the establishment of private-public destination management

organisations is a relatively new development on the Hungarian side; if these bodies will be able to build effective structures and to work professionally, they may become crucial actors enhancing the overall competitiveness in the domestic and international tourism markets.

-

Local incoming operators: a few local incoming tour operators have been established in the area during the last couple of years; they may represent an important potential in attracting visitors with labour-intensive, special interest tourism products (e.g. incentive tourism ecotourism, cultural tourism, gastronomy tourism etc.).

- Western European operators increasing interest in the area: the overall image of the area may be developed with generating market tour operators (predominantly special interest tourism operators, e.g. Studiosus) who could become interested in the regional tourism offer.

## Threats

Destination success factors

Programme area threats

Existing and potential attractions

- Poverty hinders attraction development and use: poverty and the resulting social problems in rural areas may hinder tourism development as other development objectives will be ranked higher.

- Industrial heritage disappears: former industrial buildings and locations tend to deteriorate, some of these are demolished or re-developed in a less favourable way as regards tourism, in this way declining the area's tourism potential.

- Minority cultures disappear: German and Serbian minority cultures may become less authentic and also more commercialised in some cases, as new generations live a more modern and culturally integrated lifestyle (see e.g. the loss of dialects).

- Newly developed attractions may deteriorate fast: if new public attractions' management schemes are not well planned or missing this could result in rapid deterioration.

Location, accessibility and infrastructure

- Increasing intra-regional spatial inequalities: the sub-regions of the area develop at highly different paces which may present social and economic tensions if not treated well [see e.g. the Siklós-Villány sub-region vs. the neighbouring Lower Drava (Sellye) sub-region].

- Delays in M9 motorway development: due to limited funds this project may be realised during the 2020's only, resulting in missed opportunities and the region's lagging behind after competitors.

- Increasing fuel costs: constantly increasing fuel costs hinder access from generating areas

especially; this impact may be especially strong with short visits (thus the newly gained opportunity to serve as an excursion destination may be lost quickly).

#### Tourism supra- structure

- Investments fall away: if demand remains low, planned investments will not become feasible and thus hotel and projects will be stuck in the pipeline.

#### Networking

- Vested interests undermine co-operation: the recently introduced DMO scheme is based on the assumption that actors will be able to give up vested interests – if this is not the case, such schemes will not be successful and will not be able to deepen co-operation.
- Stacked cross-border and interregional co-operation: too strong local and sub- regional interests may become barriers to cross-border and interregional co- operation.

#### Political and business environment

- West Balkans political situation: political tension in Bosnia and Herzegovina may be threatening for Western European tourists.
- Parallel developments: if development plans are not co-ordinated on the intra- /inter-regional and cross-border level, synergic effects may fall away due to a number of parallel developments (as is the case currently with spa development).

#### Human resources in tourism

- Disappointment in tourism as an agent of development: if tourism cannot provide substantial contribution to income and quality of life the current supportive atmosphere may become less favourable, resulting in less public funds for the development of this sector.
- Low motivation to study tourism: if unemployment rates remain high and tourism is not seen as a potential employment sector, the motivation of the potential labour force to become tourism professionals will cease or at least decrease, which in turn may lead to a less professional tourism offer.
- Migration of skilled labour: if no employment opportunities in tourism open up, skilled labour may migrate to more successful destinations or may look for employment in other sectors.

#### Marketing and promotion

- Decreasing prestige: the current prestige of some of the sub-regions may deteriorate in the future if they cannot provide constant innovations in order to remain trendy and fashionable.
- Lagging behind: there is a danger that other competitors develop faster and more successfully, both on the domestic and the international scene.

- Contradictory messages: the effectiveness of tourism marketing may decrease if sub-regional and regional actors are unable to co-ordinate marketing messages.
- No successful use of new technologies and schemes: if marketing organisations are not able to apply new network-oriented attitudes and technologies then they will miss the most effective current marketing tools.

#### Organisation of tourism

- No tour operator interest in the region: the main threat in this field is that the image of the region does not become strong enough for generating area tour operators to become interested in programming the area.
- DMO-s ineffective: if the newly established DMO-s are not able to consequently apply the effectiveness principle and to employ highly professional – if necessary external – staff they will not reach the level of impact necessary to attract more visitors.

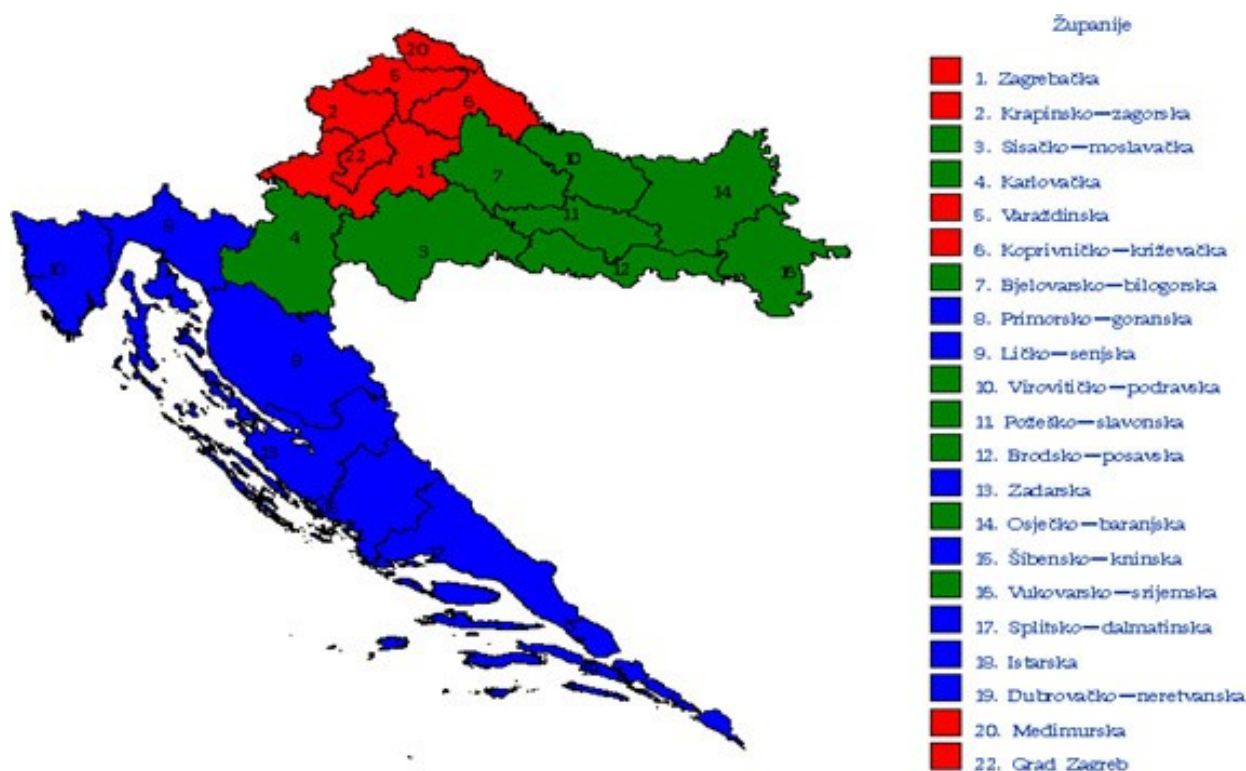


## **Main public organizations in tourism marketing and development**

To have successful implementation of any project or any strategy, frame for such implementation has to be in place. County has its own development strategy and all other strategies have to be in line with each other – local development strategy, county development strategy, national development strategy and in case of Baranja region with cross border strategy for the development of Hungarian part of Baranja. There are also other public organisations dealing with tourism marketing and development such town and municipalities, Croatian Tourist Board (HTZ) and local Tourism Boards, LAG Baranja and different NGOs.

### **County**

By the definition County is local (regional) governments that carries out operations of (regional) importance, especially activities related to education, health care, physical and urban planning, agricultural development, transport and infrastructure, and implements all needed planning and development of a network of educational, scientific, social and cultural institutions. At the head of the county is a prefect. Croatia has 21 counties and Baranja Region is part of Osijek-Baranja County.



*Map of all counties in Croatia*

Public organisations in charge for development of tourism in Baranja are various. County is one of them through its strategy and work of Regional Development Agency Slavonia and Baranja but also Administrative office for economy and regional development of Osijek-Baranja County. Both develop the County by fundraising through different national and EU available funds with the goal to develop the County, including the tourism.

## **Towns and municipalities**

The city is the urban, habituated area with all the characteristics of an urbanized, cultivated settlements (asphalt or paved) streets, squares, neighbourhoods, parks and gardens, walkways and promenades, urban promenade and the main street, administrative and municipal functions (police, health centre, post office, fire department, insurance companies), schools and kindergartens, educational institutions, general and special character, the media (radio and television stations, news outlets), religious buildings, a number of shops and stores, in most cases with department stores or shopping centres, restaurants (hotels, hostels, city bars, pubs, cafes and discos), industry and manufacturing facilities etc.

Local governments or municipalities are carrying out tasks of local jurisdiction which is directly related to the needs of citizens, particularly activities related to the organization of settlements and housing, spatial and urban planning, utilities, child care, social care, primary health care, education and basic education, culture, physical culture and sports, consumer protection and improvement of the environment, fire and civil protection.

Towns and municipalities as local governance units have the lead role in tourism development because of their legal power to build infrastructure, plan construction zones, proscribe working time for local business, promote the place and insure institutional support for other development projects. There is no successful tourism development without leading role of a town or municipality, they are THE key stakeholder.

Croatia has 127 cities and 429 municipalities.

Tourism is also developed by municipalities who are independently of each other invest in various types of tourism but also in cooperation with each other. In Baranja Region there are 8 municipalities and town of Beli Manastir.

Due to the high number of local self-government units future reform and consolidation of them is

highly likely in the future.

## **Croatian Tourist Board (HTZ) and local Tourism Boards (Turističke zajednice)**

Croatian Tourist Board is a national tourist organization founded with the purpose of creating and promoting the identity and reputation of Croatian tourism, planning and implementation of a common strategy and conception of its promotion, proposal and implementation of promotional activities at home and abroad of common interest for all stakeholders in the tourism industry, and raising the quality of the entire Croatian tourism.

The most important tasks are the following:

- combines the overall tourist offer of Croatia
- organizes and conducts operational market research for the promotion of Croatian tourism
- designing programs and plans for promotion of Croatian tourism product
- organizes, implements and monitors all activities concerning the promotion of Croatian tourism product
- analyse and evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of promotional activities undertaken
- organizes Croatian tourist information system
- performs general and tourist information activities
- promotes and coordinates all tourism promotion board as well as all economic and other operators in the tourism industry which act directly or indirectly on the advancement and promotion of tourism in Croatia
- establishing tourism offices and branch offices abroad, organize and supervise their work
- cooperation with national tourist organizations of other countries and specialized international regional tourist organizations
- based on reports from county tourist boards, analyses and evaluates the performance of plans and programs established tasks and role of tourist community take measures and actions for the development and promotion of tourism in undeveloped parts of Croatian

HTZ divides Croatia in several tourism regions:



Most important role at local level is at Tourism Boards in Osijek-Baranja County, 13 of them: Tourism Board for Osijek-Baranja County, for Baranja, Belišće, Donji Miholjac, Đakovo, Našice, Osijek i Valpovo, Municipality Bilje, Bizovac, Draž i Erdut. They detect tourism possibilities, create different public manifestations to promote local producers, local accommodation suppliers and to strengthen local community. Also, they are key partners for each important project in tourism because of their deep knowledge of supply and demand.

One of the roles Tourism Board is caring out is to connect travel agencies with needed contacts and suggestions about „on the spot“ supply. This way Tourism Board is directly bringing the tourist to area of its operation.

Funding and operation of tourism boards is highly regulated and inured by the law.

There is national strategic plan to transform tourism boards in DMO (Destination Management Organization) form.

The European Commission proposes the establishment of a DMO as a leader, which assists the creation of optimal business models, as well as relevant regional support agencies. The Commission quotes six basic criteria for the establishment, development and maintenance of partnership among stakeholders (EC, 2000):

- Establishment of a strong leadership, a management with stable financial and human resources, which would thereafter provide firm support to the public and private sectors, as well as to the local population.
- In all the implementation phases, starting from the formulation of policy and plans, to the final supervision, establishment of close and reliable cooperation of all stakeholders at the local, regional and national level is needed.
- Preparation of a strong system for distribution of internal information among stakeholders, especially agencies and the local population, in order to create the common vision of tourism development.
- Creation of conditions for the achievement of benefits and positive impact for all stakeholders: visitors, tourist professionals and their staff, as well as the population of the region.
- Creation of a firm and stable policy of management of those services and products which additionally affect the visitors' experience and satisfaction: public transport, safety, police, cleanliness.
- Stimulation of private initiatives for improvement of different aspects of quality of tourism (tax relief, various subventions, promotions, information, awards, etc.).

## **LAG Baranja**

Local Action Group Baranja (LAG Baranja), was established as an independent and non-profit organization in all three sectors of the population of Baranja (private, public, non-governmental),

and operates from 4th of February 2010. LAG has a task to identify and implement local development strategy, make decisions regarding the allocation of its financial resources and their management.

In the future, LAG Baranja will have very important role of developing and encouraging local stakeholders in rural area. Since LAG Baranja local development strategy as one of most important goals has development of tourism, they will have to cooperate with all above mentioned public bodies.

As there is no working experience with LAGs and LEADER approach in Croatia, implementation of this project will strongly help our Lag Baranja with needed experience, knowledge and skill transfer.

LAG Baranja is recently certified and granted initial funding from line Ministry in group with 20 other LAGs in Croatia.

Members of LAG Baranja are: City of Beli Manastir, Popovac Municipality, Darda Municipality, Čeminac Municipality, Draž Municipality, Kneževi Vinogradi Municipality, Bilje Municipality, Petlovac Municipality and Jagodnjak Municipality. The list contains all Municipalities in Baranja regions and that clearly shows how important role will LAG Baranja have.



## **NGOs**

Association is every form of voluntary association of natural or legal persons, who, in order to protect their interests or for the protection of human rights and freedoms, as well as environmental, humanitarian, informational, cultural, national, pro-natalist, educational, social, professional, sports, technical, medical, scientific or other beliefs and goals, and with no intention of making profit, subject to the rules governing the organization and functioning of an umbrella organization.

It is not unusual for non-governmental organisations or associations to be one of important stake holders in tourism development. Some of NGOs that are developing tourism are also the members of LAG Baranja: Mirovna grupa Oaza, Udruženje "Baranja" Bilje, Udruga žena "Izvor" Općine Kn. Vinogradi, Savez mađarskih udruga, Projekt građanske demokratske inicijative - P.G.D.I., Udruga BURP, Udruga za ruralni turizam "Đola".

Several other NGOs are also developing tourism in indirect way, by producing lavender, herbs, making teas, juices, soaps etc. and selling them to finance main work – rehabilitation of disabled children, integration of long term unemployed women or Roma.

NGOs in Baranja region were first to start community organizing and tourism development projects because funding available to them. They also played important role in capacity development of other stakeholder due to their experience in project management, strategic planning, proposal writing and citizen participation skills.



## **Funding of tourism development**

Main sources of funding of tourism development until entrance in EU were national funds and EU pre-accession funds. Currently we expect to see how will financing work in post accession period.

### **National level programs**

National funding opportunities are available by calls for projects submission by Ministry of tourism and Croatian Tourist Board. Both are distributing public money for development of special kinds of tourism – tourism on islands, tourism in rural areas, reconstruction and building of pools, installation of free Wi-Fi points, development of innovative tourism to prolong tourism period and attract tourist, to fund manifestations, etc. Usually once or twice per year calls for projects are published by Ministry of tourism and Croatia Tourist Board. Selection of the project proposals takes two until three months and grants go from 700 until 50.000 EUR. Co-financing is required from grant recipients in percentage up to 50%. There are special funding lines for underdeveloped tourism areas such as Baranja or funding lines for innovative tourist projects.

HBOR (Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development) is also financing major tourism development projects of private and public bodies. By investing into tourism industry, HBOR strives to influence the development of small, medium and large hotels and tourism companies through the increase in accommodation capacities, categorisation, level of services, as well as the extension of the tourist season. According to their purpose, long-term loans are mostly used for fixed assets – purchase, construction or reconstruction of facilities and their equipping, and short-term loans for the preparation of tourist seasons – investments in current assets for the purchase of food, beverages, small inventory and current maintenance.

Commercial banks finance private projects but the data is unavailable.

Due to financial crisis larger scale private and/or foreign investments are lacking.

### **EU funds**

Cross Border Cooperation is an important part of EU regional policy, which aims to reduce economic and social disparities between EU regions. The objective of CBC is to mitigate adverse effects of borders on the social and economic situation in the cross-border areas.

For the period 2007-2013, the EU foresees a single Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) for financing the programmes between EU member countries, candidate countries and potential candidate countries.

Available EU funds for development of tourism in Baranja Region are IPA Business Related Infrastructure (IPA IIIc) programme and IPA cross border cooperation programmes with Hungary and Serbia.

### **IPA CBC Croatia-Hungary**

Only at the first two calls for proposals through IPA Hungary-Croatia cross border cooperation programme 97 applications were received while the third invitation approved 39 projects with a total value of 21 million euros, of which 20 from Osijek-Baranja County. On all three calls total funding generated 140 projects. These numbers are placing Osijek-Baranja County on the top of the list of all counties by EU funds withdrawal criteria.



*IPA Hungary-Croatia eligible area*

The eligible area lies on the south-western and southern borders of Hungary and northern and north-eastern borders of Croatia. The largest part of the border is the area of river Drava. On the Croatian

side, in addition to border counties – Međimurska, Koprivničko-križevačka, Virovitičko-podravska and Osječko-baranjska – four other counties participate in the present Programme with Hungary as the adjacent regions and can use the maximum 20% of the amount of the Community funding available in the Programme (Varaždinska, Bjelovarsko-bilogorska, Požeško-slavonska and Vukovarsko-srijemska županija).

The areas eligible on the Hungarian side are the NUTS III counties of Zala, Somogy and Baranya. Zala County is part of the Western Transdanubian Region; counties Somogy and Baranya of the Southern Transdanubian Region.

The surface of eligible area, with the Hungarian and Croatian counties, comprises 31 028 km<sup>2</sup>.

SWOT Analysis on tourism in the region is interesting overview and analysis:

### **IPA CBC Croatia-Serbia**

The overall objective of the IPA Cross-Border Programme Croatia-Serbia is to stimulate cross-border cooperation in order to diversify and improve the regional economy in a socially and environmentally sustainable way, whilst at the same time improving good neighbourly relations across the border.

The programme has been jointly developed by both participating countries based on the partnership principle. The programme document *IPA Cross-border programme Croatia-Serbia 2007-2013* has been adopted by the European Commission on 20 December 2007.

The duration of the Programme is from 2007-2013, while a total IPA contribution for both countries amounts to 5.4 million EURO for the first three years (2007-2009).

Three calls for projects were also available through IPA Croatia-Serbia cross border programme.



*IPA Croatia-Serbia eligible area*

## **IPARD**

IPARD is a pre-accession Programme of the EU for the period 2007-2013. It is an integral part of the IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance), whose main objectives are to assist candidate countries and potential candidate countries in their harmonisation and implementation of the EU acquis, as well as preparation for utilisation of the future EU funds.

Measure 101 - "Investments in agricultural holdings to restructure and to upgrade to Community standards" that allows investments in:

- dairy sector
- beef sector
- pig sector
- poultry sector
- egg sector

- fruit and vegetable sector
- grains and oilseeds sector.

Measure 103 - "Investments in processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products to restructure those activities and to upgrade to Community standards" that allows investments in:

- the milk and dairy
- meat processing sector
- fisheries sector
- sector of fruit and vegetables
- wine sector
- olive oil sector

Measure 201 Actions to improve the environment and the countryside. Framework for the implementation of agri - environmental measures under the IPARD program is defined in the three pilot areas:

- Nature Park Velebit,
- Nature Park Lonjsko Polje,
- Zagreb County.

Measure 202 - "Preparation and implementation of local rural development strategies".

LEADER approach within IPARD program consists of three sub-measures:

Sub-measure 202.1: Acquisition of skills, animating the inhabitants of the territory,

Sub-measure 202.2: Implementation of local development strategies.

Measure 301 - "Improvement and development of rural infrastructure" allows for investment in the following sectors:

- sewer system and wastewater treatment;
- local unclassified roads;
- heating;
- fire with elements of forest roads;

Measure 302 - "Diversification and development of rural economic activities" to the stated objectives, and allows investment in the following sectors:

- rural tourism,
- Traditional crafts sector,
- sector of direct sales,
- freshwater fisheries sector,
- services sector,
- processing sector on farms,
- renewable energy sector.

All above mentioned measures help develop tourism in rural area but for development of tourism in Baranja most important measure are 202, 301 and 302.

## **Strategic planning of tourism development**

The country is currently being advertised under the motto “The Mediterranean As It Once Was”. Even from this simple sentence it is clear that the strategic planning focus is on the coastal area. However progress is made in recent years to develop also inland parts such as Baranja region. Strategies until now were fragmented and not unified, but with accession to EU strategic document are getting more advanced.

### **National**

With beginning of 2013 Croatia published new national strategy on tourism development until 2020. Strategy states:

Why a Strategy for tourism development matters?

- A prerequisite for a faster and a more sensible tourism development
- To ensure the future of tourism management
- To encourage investors to implement their plans
- A basis for defining tourism development plans and physical planning acts by lower administrative levels
- A basis for acquiring access to the EU funds

Why does Croatia need tourism? We need tourism:

- for investments and a stronger economic growth
- for employment/ new jobs creation
- for the overall contribution to the society

By means of tourism, we wish to:

- position ourselves in the forthcoming access to the EU as a country with a prominent tourism identity
- be hospitable and sincere hosts, focused on quality
- offer an attractive range of products and experiences based on authenticity and emotions
- persevere with sustainable development, focusing on innovation



State of affairs:

Supply:

Over 852 thousand registered beds – 13% in hotels, 25% in camp sites, 13% in other accommodation facilities and 49% in private households %

Only 40% of hotel capacity within a high category (4 and 5 star) %

Predominant tourist products: sun and sea

Demand:

Over 60.4 million overnights in registered commercial accommodation (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2011) % 11.5 million tourist arrivals (2011. CBS)

Every third overnight registered in private households accommodation

Result:

Over 95,500 persons employed in the catering and tourism sector, close to 7% of total employment in Croatia 7.3 billion EUR worth tourism expenditures (6.3 billion foreign and 1 billion national)

Attributable to the pronounced seasonality of the product structure – 87% of all the overnights in Croatia take place in four summer months ( June- September)

Competitive status:

Products and services not being differentiated to an appropriate degree • Lack of innovative attractions appealing to the guests • Growth based on expansion of private households accommodation • Insufficient investment activity and too few new hotel capacity • Country's traditional ways in tourism marketing • Inherited orientation towards seasonal operation

However, in spite of these competitive adversities, Croatian tourism has, in this time of crisis, has been achieving better results than its Mediterranean competitors!

### **10 key directions in Croatian tourism development till 2020:**

Deregulation

Tourism embracing the entire national territory

Success through partnership

Hotel trade – key initiator of the investment cycle

Culture of quality

Innovation of the market image

The 'Green' as an operational concept

Authenticity and creativity

Beyond the sun and sea

Croatian products for Croatian tourism

### **Vision for Croatian tourism by 2020**

By 2020 Croatia will be a globally recognised tourist destination, competitive and attractive to investments. It creates jobs and manages in a sustainable way the development on its entire territory, nurtures the culture of quality, and offers its guests hospitality, safety and authentic attractions and experiences all year round.

### **Main goal of development Croatian Tourism**

Getting ranked among top 20 tourist destinations in the world in terms of competitiveness

### **Marketing:**

- Restructuring the Head Office of the Croatian National Tourist Board (CNTB) and the tourist boards system into the DMOs (Destination Marketing Organisations)
- Tourism branding conceptualized and run in a professional way
- Public relations in tourism conceptualized and run in a professional way
- Switching to online communication with the markets
- Staff at all levels involved in life long learning

### **Tourism products development**

- Re. The sun and sea – re-positioning by strengthening all the value chain links and extending the season

- Nautical tourism – 15,000 new berths, new regulation, focus on ecology
- Health tourism – market specialisation, networking, upgrading the quality of accommodation
- Cultural tourism – keeping up with adding tourism appeal to cultural events, interpretation centres, events
- MICE tourism – infrastructure ( congress centres), management, air connections
- Golf tourism– infrastructure ( courses) at the most prominent destinations , golf resorts
- Cycle tourism • Wine and gastro-tourism • Rural and mountain tourism • Adventure and sports tourism

### **Investment environment:**

Privatisation of the state owned companies • Solving the issue of tourist land • Keeping on creating the business environment attuned with the one in competitive destinations • Strengthening further the involvement of the CBRD ( Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development) as the development bank for enhancement of tourism development projects • Maximizing the use of the EU fund

### **Human resources development:**

- Strong regional centres of education for tourism within the network of technical schools • Aligning the curricula with the requirements indicated by the economy • Training centres/ refurbishment of technical schools with the appliances needed • Establishing specialised business schools • Setting up a life-long learning system

### **Effects expected by 2020**

- 7 billion Euros of new investments • 955,000 beds in commercial accommodation ( 102,000 increase compared to 2011) • 30,000 new employees ( 20,000 in tourism and 10,000 in ancillary activities) • 86 million overnights in commercial accommodation (43% increase compared to 2011)
- 14.3 billion Euros worth total tourist consumption (an increase of 6 billion Euros)

One can clearly identify that current development of Baranja tourism is in line with new strategy and that Baranja region will be able to keep the current course and probably attract government grants.

## County / regional

County of Osijek Baranja development strategy and other relevant documents broadly mention tourism as one of the important development fields and assign broad goals. This is probably caused by County mission to work on broader regional infrastructure projects. Tourism development is always mentioned when new infrastructure such as roads is being developed.

County development agency and County is participating in several larger tourism development related projects.

## Local (LAG strategy)

LAG Baranja also recently finished development strategy based on LEADER principles.

Vision for Baranja region is:

***Baranja recognizable as microregion on the principles of sustainable development and optimal use of development resources and strengthening of economic competitiveness, human resource development and the satisfaction of public needs.***

There are several key goals related to tourism development, so new tourism marketing project can be expected:

- 1.4. Rural tourism development 1.4.1. Encouraging the development of rural tourism 1.4.2. Encouraging the development of specific forms of tourism
- 1.5. Development and promotion of local products 1.5.1. Supporting locally distinctive products - protection and branding 1.5.2. Promotion of local products and manufacturers

It also includes several operational measures related to future tourism development:

Measures to encourage the development of rural tourism will be encouraged projects based on linking agriculture and tourism. As part of these measures will support the projects of rural tourism in order to allow farmers to part of his family farm maximizing sales of its products on the doorstep and the tourist offer to acquire an additional source of income. The Fund will support projects and programs that contribute to the increase of accommodation for rural tourism, economic upgrading facilities to provide services to rural and inland tourism, aparthotel, motel, building a wine tasting, bike trails, fishing grounds and interior decoration "wine road".

Measures to encourage specific types of tourism will be encouraged to build trails for recreational

tourism, nature trails, kayaking trails, campgrounds, rest stops, inns. It also will support the construction of facilities and activities that contribute to the improvement of hunting, sports, health, adventure and other specific forms of tourism. Preference will be given to activities that generate the joint efforts of local governments, businesses and civil society organizations in the field of farm machinery.

Measures to support local recognizable products - protection and branding will promote and strengthen the development of locally recognizable products so that they are on the market differ from the competition and to be recognized as valuable products for consumers. As part of these measures will be supported specific activities such as development of a network of relations between producers and consumers, creating a reputation of producers and production and supply chains, market research to identify the desires of consumers. Measures to support local distinctive products will create a market distinctive products with protected origin and thus will increase the market value.

These measures will include products such as "Baranjski kulen", "Baranja pepper", "Baranja brandy", "Baranja wine", "Baranjski cheese", "Baranjski honey" and other recognizable Baranja products that will start the process of protecting geographical origin and authenticity of the product.

Measures to strengthen the promotion of local products and manufacturers will support various forms of promoting local products and Baranja manufacturers through the organization of joint appearances, issuing brochures and leaflets, record video clips and use other marketing techniques.

Measures to preserve cultural heritage, traditional customs and architectural values of the area will be encouraged to programs and projects which aim to preserve the cultural heritage and traditional values of the region of Baranja. The Fund will support projects "Baranja Buše," "Baranjsko bećarci" and other events in the tourist farm machinery. Under this measure will support projects and programs which aim to record, register, catalog and the public to present valuable architectural objects in Baranja and architecture-specific objects for the Baranja area like basements in loess or Baranja houses.

Measures to raise awareness about the values of the area and the economic use of these values for

commercial purposes will support projects that raise and enhance awareness of the value in the region of Baranja ethnological and economic terms, and encourage projects that use of the Baranja raises the value.

Measures of implementation of infrastructure projects in rural areas will be encouraged to projects aimed at improving life in small communities in the planning and construction of the infrastructure and revive the significant buildings or structures in the village in order to maximize the value of the area.

Measures to promote the values of Baranja will support projects aimed at modern marketing techniques to present Baranja as unique and specific area to become recognizable Baranja Croatian area.

Strategy also includes a list of projects (not available to public yet) gathered in preparation phase (project portfolio or project pipeline) that should receive potential support from LAG in the future.

## **Baranja Travel destination promotion done by TZ Baranja**

Following part of the paper gives concrete examples from real promotional materials on how the TZ Baranje is marketing the region.

### **Baranja region in 5 steps**

Five steps described below are from Tourism Board of Baranja publications describing their marketing approach and “story” about Baranja. It shows main marketing points and descriptive approach used from high level officials to tourism workers on the field (waiters, guides etc.) This approach developed both from organic local/traditional narrative and professionally developed marketing strategy.

#### **Step 1: Meet friendly people and our traditions...**

When you arrive to Baranja it is best to stay in one of the many traditional tourism-rural-households. The families that own them will take good care for you, just as they would a long known friend. Right from the door the landlady and the landowner will offer you their homemade plum, walnut or cherry schnapps and langos-flat bread and the kids will enjoy the beloved elder-flower juice.

Visit the village of Karanac. This ethno village with preserved traditional architecture is the place where most of tourism-rural-households, bed & breakfasts, pensions, houses and rooms for rent are located. A few times per year interesting village fairs are held, like the Spring and Winter fair where you can find all kinds of home-made products like the “Kulen” sausage, ham, jam and cakes, schnapps and wine.

While you are in Karanac visit the restaurant “Baranjska kuća” (The Baranja House) and try the specialties like fish-paprikash, Čobanac - wild game stew, wine goulash...), tourism-rural-household OPG Sklepac and stay in their typical “Schwabisch” Baranja house, go to the OPG Tri Mudraca (The Three Wise Men) and taste their meals made from wild game and river fish or try out the off-road drive over the near-by Baranja hill and also with their help, organize “team-buildings” for your colleagues, friends and family. Also visit the OPG Ivica i Marica (Hansel and Gretel) and



try horse riding, rides thru the village in a carriage and many other activities.

In the villages nearby, interesting traditional festivals are held throughout the year. Be sure to visit the “Bushari” festival in Baranjsko Petrovo Selo. This traditional carnival parade in February with people dressed in “scary” masks that resemble wild animals and monsters is supposed to bring and end to the long and cold winter.

## **Step 2: Visit our villages with preserved traditional architecture...**

You will see traditional houses belonging to Croats, Hungarians, Serbs and Germans, because this is a region famous for its multiculturalism.

While in Baranja try to see as many traditional villages as you can. Popovac is one of the villages that managed to preserve the look of a typical Baranja village for the last two centuries. Wide streets lined up with walnut and linden trees and houses with long porches (Croatian: Ganjak; German: Gang) colored in white, yellow or green prevail in this village.

While you're here be sure to visit the tourism-rural-household OPG Novacic and the agricultural-family-estate OPG Goldberg (the Golden Hill) where you should taste their “rakija” schnapps made from the wild fruit and herbs that grow on the nearby Baranja hill, also known as the Golden hill.

Our region has always been “wealthy”. To prove that we have beautiful churches, castles and mansions that used to be centers of big agricultural estates, such as the Belje Estate established in 1697. Baroque castles that are located in the villages of Bilje and Darda have rich history thanks to their owners the Eszterhazy Family and Prince Eugen of Savoy. Beautiful baroque and medieval churches are scattered around all the villages in the region. They make unique spaces for various cultural events such as music recitals on the famous Josef Angster organs, our local organ builder from the 19th century.

## **Step 3: Let's explore the diverse and unspoiled nature along the mighty Danube...**

The Danube and Drava rivers spill their waters all over the south and west of Baranja. The merging of these two rivers makes one of the most beautiful nature parks in the Danube region – Kopački rit

Nature Park. This continental “delta” is rich in wildlife, especially the 290 species of protected birds...

Kopacki rit Nature Park is a God given natural pearl on the mouth of the Danube and Drava rivers. The vast marshland with lakes, fields and forests can be toured by tourist ships, traditional “čikl” fisherman’s boats, kayaks, on foot or on bikes. In some areas of the park and also on many other similar natural grounds all around Baranja fishing is possible while the most popular activities include teambuilding in nature. Hunting is possible in many open hunting grounds along the Drava and Danube rivers, in woods full of game such as wild boar and deer.

#### **Step 4: Taste the rich cuisine that describes our history...**

The history in these parts of Europe has always been very turbulent. As the “invaders” never came empty-handed today we enjoy their rich heritage both in culture and gastronomy. In Baranja on moments you might think you’re in Hungary as you try paprika-red and spicy “fish-paprikash” or that you stepped back into the old Ottoman Empire when you taste the tasty Sour-kraut rolls...

It is believed that in Suza village a golden carriage that used to belong to the Ottoman ruler and invader of central Europe in the 16th century, Sulleyman the Great, is buried under the church. While here visit the restaurant and pension Piros Cizma (the Red Boot) for their traditional cuisine, wild game and river fish prepared in a modern restaurant manner. Also an interesting wine cellar can be toured within the pension, located on the upper floor, buried deep into the nearby hill. Another superb typical fisherman’s restaurant is also to be found in the village, so for the best fish-paprikash or spicy Perkelt visit the Kovac-Carda restaurant.

Our famous traditional “Kulen” sausage can be found in the family-estate OPG Matijevic and if you’re looking for wine you can find the finest quality Welsh Riesling, Chardonney, Pinot or Blaufränkisch in the family-winery OPG Kolar. Their wine-cellar is dug deep into the hill. It's architecture is typical for the Baranja region and it is called the „gator“.

#### **Step 5: Enjoy the finest wines this region has to offer...**

The wine has been produced here ever since the Roman times but the oldest existing vinery dates

back from 1526. The premium quality Grasevina (Welsh Riesling), Chardonnay, Merlot or Blaufränkisch will serve as great introduction to the good times ahead with your new friends on the Croatian Danube!

The village of Knezevi Vinogradi (English: The Princes Vineyards) is the centre of wine production in Baranja. While here be sure to visit the Belje winery and visit the wine festival “Baranja Fest” that takes place every year in June. During the three day celebration you can visit the many wine cellars in the village and the nearby villages: Zmajevac, Suza, Kamenac... In Zmajevac don't miss the opportunity to see the famous family-owned wine cellars: Kolar, Josić, Gerštmajer, Kusić, Medić and Čočić thanks to whom Baranja is true to its name which in Hungarian means: The Wine Mother.

While here visit the tourism-rural-households: OPG Stara Baranja and OPG Jurini Dvori in Knezevi Vinogradi and OPG Baranjski Dvori in Zmajevac as well as the famous restaurant Josić located in an old wine-cellar.

## **The Magnificent Baranja**

The following text is from tourism board publication "The magnificent Baranja" which aims to evoke emotional response from potential tourist and give artistic description of Baranja features. Beside the text, information on local tourist offer and statements by local people, the publication is rich in artistic professional photographs that give desirable picture of Baranja. The publication can be downloaded here: <http://business.croatia.hr/Documents/905/The-Magnificent-Baranja.pdf>

### **How to be a part of the miracles and mysteries**

Croatian Baranja has been inhabited since ancient times. From the times of the Roman Empire, the border crossings and fortifications at the site of today's Batina, Zmajevac, Lug and around the Kopačevo area have been known to us and there are records of a settlement in the Popovac area. In the Middle Ages, Hungarian-Croatian kings established the system of counties, one of the oldest from the beginning of the 11th century being Baranja, initially with its centre in the area of today's Branjin Vrh. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Baranja County extended to the south side of the Drava river, all the way to Našice and Orahovica at the foot of Krndija mountain. Most of today's settlements in Croatian Baranja have been mentioned since the 13th century, and were mostly in

the possession of noble families such as the Čeminački, Biljski, Monoštorski and Lučki families, as well as others, some of them permanently occupying that territory and others with properties found elsewhere. When it comes to church institutions in Baranja, considerable estates were held by two local monasteries. The Benedictine Monastery of St. Michael the Arch-angel was founded near the old fort in Branjin Vrh, probably in the 12th century, nearby which the village, and later, the town of Beli Manastir developed. In addition, in the early 14th century, the Pauline Monastery of the Holy Saviour was probably founded under the fort of Kiskőszeg (today's Batina). Franciscan Oswald Laskai, one of the prominent preachers and religious writers in Hungary at the end of the Middle Ages, originated from the village of Lug in today's Croatian Baranja, at that time called Lasko, now the Hungarian name of the village. Among other intellectuals from Baranja working at European universities in the late Middle Ages was Vincent from Topolje (Vincentius de Izsep), a free arts master in Krakow at the end of the 15th century. In 1553, bishop and statesman Antun Vrančić took a diplomatic trip to Constantinople and while sailing down the Danube, he recorded three of Baranja's settlements from the ship: the demolished fortress of Ko'šzeg (Batina) and market places Vörösmart (Zmajevac) and Lasko (Lug). The Ottoman traveller Evlija Čelebi described two of Baranja's villages: the strong fortress of Darda and the wooden market town of Baranjavar (Branjin Vrh). In 1542, the famous wandering court singer and poet Sebastijan Tinódi stayed in Branjin Vrh while writing a Hungarian poem about the master of Valpovo, Peter Perényi. Significant and extensive literary work in Baranja is associated with the beginning of the Reformation and the names of Mihael Starin (Mihály Sztárai), Stjepan Kiš Segedinac (Szegedi Kis István), Stjepan Beytha (Beythe István), as well as the convert to Catholicism, Mihael Veresmarti (Veresmarti Mihály). During the reformation of the county system, the Baranja County, centered in Pécs, remained in the Hungarian part of the state, with the river Drava as a border with the Virovitica County, which was part of Croatian-Slavonian countries, and this administrative arrangement lasted until the end of World War I. Among the thirty villages that belonged to the Baranja estate of Eugene of Savoy, the village of Bilje (Bellye in Hungarian) was elected the seat of government, according to which the manor was called the Belje manor. This property, consisting of the main part of Croatian Baranja, stretched from Batina to Kopačevo in the Danube Valley, and West and North of the BANSKO BRDO (Petlovac, Beli Manastir, Branjin Vrh, Popovac, Branjina, Duboševica, Topolje etc.). Another great Baranja manor from the Habsburg era was established around Darda, together with twenty more villages, some of which are still part of Croatian Baranja (Baranjsko Petrovo Selo, Jagodnjak, Bolman, Karanac and a few others).

### **The Magnificent Baranja**

The fantastic Baranja has remained as it always was, and its authentic displays of traditional creation celebrate the life and wisdom of living with nature and surviving from it.

### **The Mystical Triangle**

Bordered by the Drava and the Danube rivers and divided by the Croatian- Hungarian state border, enchanted by the swamps in the East, protected by backwaters in the South and Southwest, and opened to connect with the wine roads and paths in the North and Northwest - Baranja is still isolated and more mystical than ever before.

### **It Remained Special**

Despite the reconstruction of old bridges and the building of new ones, despite several major international traffic routes passing through it and despite becoming a more and more interesting tourist destination every day - Baranja manages to remain special. Dario Topić The reason why Baranja remained special until today may lie in the fact that people here jealously guard and remember the stories older than their families, stories of life and survival, love and death, wine, hot peppers, fishing, weddings ... Thanks to this still existing ethno-magic, Baranja stays attractive, but never reveals itself completely. The important road connecting the major urban centres of Mursa (Osijek) and Sopišana (Latin Sopiana, today's Pécs) led through Baranja. When the Emperor Diocletian reformed the Roman Empire at the end of the 3rd century, the area of present-day Croatian Baranja went to the Second or Sirmian Pannonia (Pannonia Secunda or Pannonia Sirmiensis), which mainly comprised Eastern Slavonia and Srijem.

### **One for the Other**

Nature and man live here not only with each other but one for the other. The survival of wetlands depends on the specific water regime of the Danube and the Drava rivers. Their water levels rise when snow and ice start to melt in the Alps in spring. The first, shorter wave of water arrives to the mouth of the Danube by the Drava river. In those moments, the Danube river bed is broad enough to accumulate large amounts of water, but when the floods arrive through the Danube, this huge water flows into Kopački rit through the system of channels, crossing the natural barrier of the previous Drava wave and Aljmaš mountain system. The area then appears as the Danube delta, creating a series of channels called 'dunavci', with water coming in and out of Kopački rit, forming a specific relief still scientifically not fully researched.

### **The Beauty of Our Lives**

My grandmother Kristina always told me that describing nature is the most difficult thing. I realise

she was more than right. My other grandmother, Valeria, often used to say that God always heard the words dedicated to him from somewhere in this field. With every moment, every aroma, every blade of grass, every field path, every ‘surduk’, every grapevine full of bunches of sweet grapes, and every snow flake in the brisk winter air, Baranja always reminds me of childhood. Whenever I’m in Baranja, I always live at least two parallel lives – one that is so irretrievably gone, comes back, and the one that is going on right now feels much more intense than my urban everyday life. It is that simultaneous sense of melancholy and epiphany which probably everyone feels in their true homeland.

### **Calendar Costumes**

From the blackness of the Baranja soil to the whiteness of pure white Baranja snow, it is a journey which only a few landscapes could take. Is it the huge stacks of straw lying in the fields after the harvest? Or the stump of maize not fully covered by the snow? Or is it maybe a quail, leaping suddenly from a wheat field? Or a moustache of the same corn, only earlier, when the afternoon swelter wrapped it into an almost dry greenish-gray scarf that knew dark gold autumn was on its way... And so on and on, into the infinity of the plain which doesn’t let you hide from the abundant skies and the melancholy falling onto the ground.

### **The Wine Wisdom**

It is possible to hear a few wine legends in the cellars and on hidden wine roads even today. Here, wine brings people together and so confirms the exceptional power which has forever been pulsating in it, and because of it. Dario Topić The wines of Baranja permanently remain etched in your memory, with- powerful images of wine roads incised into mountains, hidden wine shops, wine cellars and the smiles of the hosts. The richness and the distinguished characteristics of the flavour of Baranja’s wine varieties have been enjoyed since the time Roman legions planted the first vineyards according to the wishes of their emperors. As they age, wines from the cellars of Belje attain noble golden tones, and the young wines become recognisable with their crystal clarity and yellow-green colour. Their flavour is accentuated yet not aggressive, with distinctive sorting characteristics. With an exceptional harmony of alcohol and total acids, they are characterised by a noble fullness of taste. Baranja’s offer starts and ends with wine. It is permanently rounded off by mysterious, mystical, rounded wines with a hidden message, because the sensations which they immediately provide subsequently bring enthusiasm and good mood.

### **Golden Hill**

... and two or three hinds watching peacefully from a safe distance, with their large eyes, as you

become just a small amazed point in the yellowish light of the window of a departing light rail. Delimir Rešicki Baranja was always an important transit location. There have been docks on the river Drava since Roman times. On the Danube border of the Empire, the Romans established a system of fortifications called “limes”, and the link in this chain of defence was the Baranja segment, with its four well-known fortifications: Ad Miliare in place of today’s Batina, Ad Novas in place of Zmajevac, Albanum in place of Lug and Donatiana somewhere around the Kopačevo area. The ancient sources also record Antianae village in the area of today’s Croatian Baranja, probably on the site of Popovac, as well as a toponym Mons Aureus (Golden Hill), which corresponds to today’s BANSKO BRDO.

### **Branjin Vrh**

... and then for a moment, you close your eyes and after a long time you feel the gift of the Baranja summer, remembering that once upon a time, you collected hot dust in your hand, throwing it in the air and feeling it fall back over your face and hair, and somehow just the thought that this is no metaphysical misfortune is enough, but indeed, a considerable fortune to become exactly the warm, cinnamon powder that once may become a bath for a baby’s bare foot. Delimir Rešicki Baranja’s neighbouring Osijek developed into an important city under the Ottoman rule, its role in transport becoming even more important after a critical wooden bridge was built during the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in 1566. The bridge connected Osijek to Darda through the Drava wetlands, as well as the biggest part of The Ottoman Empire with Hungary. One hundred years after the construction of the famous bridge, Ottoman traveller Evlija Čelebi travelled through this area, shortly describing two of Baranja’s villages in his capital work: the Karašica lake, rich in fish, the strong Darda fortress, and the wooden fort of Baranyavár market-town, situated in the place of today’s Branjin Vrh. The Croatian name of Branjin Vrh comes from the Latin “castrum Borona”, also connected with the name of Baranja.

### **Journey Through the Wetlands**

The beauty of the wetlands is revealed during a boat trip from the Skadaško to the Kopačko lake, through the Čonakut channel. Here you can see tens of thousands of wild geese in spring, colonies of cormorants in summer and flocks of wild ducks in autumn. Occasionally, a saker will fly over your head with the speed of an arrow, and the gray and white herons will slowly navigate the sky with their light wing strokes. It is a special pleasure for true bird and nature lovers to observe the thirty different hunting techniques of little white herons, or male ducks fighting to favour females. It’s the beauty of life in the wetlands.



## **The Wetlands**

The international significance of the Kopački rit Nature Park was confirmed in 1993 when it was included in the List of Wetlands of International Importance, in accordance with the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as a residence of wading birds. Kopački rit, at the contact point of the Danube and Drava rivers, is one of the best preserved flooded areas in Europe and is protected as a nature park. It is characterised by different types of vegetation: forests, grassland and wetland and aquatic plants. The largest area is covered by forests of white willow which, together with black poplar, dominate higher areas, and the highest areas are dominated by oak forests. Water surfaces within the park are covered in communities of water lilies, pondweed and water lilies. The most common in the occasionally flooded areas are reed-patches and tall sedge communities, providing a characteristic marshland atmosphere. Kopački rit is an important tourist destination and especially interesting as a place for relaxation, sport and recreational activities, attractive cruises on the Kopačko lake and very popular for bird watching and recording. Big cormorants represent a remarkable curiosity because their survival as birds is based solely on the abundance and quality of fish found, with an adult eating a few kilograms of fish a day.

## **Kopački rit**

The passengers rushed out of the bus to look for something more hidden, more mysterious and more precious than the most precious of metals. In a few moments the most precious nature reserve in this part of the world would show itself, out of the sedge and reed, under the wings of herons, in the shriek of a cormorant, a goldmine of life. Matko Peić Kopački rit Nature Park is a complex ecological system consisting of a large number of valuable, rare and endangered plant and animal species, as well as some unique ecological phenomena. The white-tailed eagle and the rare black stork are the most mentioned among those species but there are many other rarities. It is even less known to the general public that outside Kopački rit, Baranja abounds with a variety of rare species, ecological phenomena and even fossil sites, which together provide a great wealth of natural heritage to the area.

## **The Animal Country**

Baranja is an animal country. Not a moment passes by that you are not under the wing of an eagle, by the hoof of a horse, near the fang of a wild boar, or the paw of a wild rabbit, or even face to face with the eyelash of a mole. Matko Peić More than 2,000 species of animal and plant, many of which rare and endangered at the World and European levels, have been recorded so far in Kopački rit. A new species of shellfish called “kopačevska lisanka“ (*Unio tumidus kopaciensis*) has been added to

the large number of different invertebrates - kolnjaka, shellfish, leeches, spindles, butterflies and others, joining the more than 400 other species. Kopački rit has two water regimes. During the flooding period it is abundant in aquatic organisms, mainly in fish. A large number of birds, especially the fen fowls attracted by the fish, amphibians, reptiles and other organisms nest there during that period. At the same time, millions of frogs, green frogs, common frogs, red-bellied toads and other species provide a sound background to the natural orchestra of Kopački rit. In late summer the water withdraws and the vegetation begins to flourish, feeding deer and wild boar, and the area becomes a resting or wintering site for many migratory birds.

### **99 days, 44 fish species**

On average, floods in Kopački rit last 99 days in a year, a third of the time (32 days) flooding the greater part of Kopački rit. It is an ideal hatchery and breeding ground, with 44 recorded species of fish so far. Kopački rit is a flooded area on the right waterside of the Danube, situated in the northeast corner of Croatia, made by the Drava and the Danube rivers. This is one of the largest alluvial plains in Europe. The appearance of this whole area depends on the intensity of floods, so that the parts of Kopački rit, both dry and under water, change their shape and function depending on the amount of water in the river. The largest lake is Kopačko jezero, while the deepest lake is Sakadaško jezero. The lakes are interconnected with the Danube and the Drava rivers by a network of natural channels. During the floods, Kopački rit is the largest fish hatchery and breeding ground of the European Danube region. The most represented types of ichthyofauna are the river carp, bream, common whitebait, white bream, common dace, roach, tench, pike, bass, perch and catfish.

### **Bird Life**

The flutter of thousands of white and gray wings above the dark waters of Kopački rit at dusk, when, believe me, the thick, green plants smell nowhere like in Baranja, and you feel that all around you, in the evening chill, in those plants, the invisible, clean, healthy, thick, divine dark oil circulates. Delimir Rešicki Birds are what make Kopački rit recognisable. To date, 298 species of birds, 141 of which regularly or occasionally nest in the marsh, have been recorded. Those which nest in large colonies include the heron, common gull, sea swallow and cormorant. The area of Kopački rit is a nesting place for more than 20 pairs of white-tailed eagles, a world endangered species. As for the other European endangered species, 30 pairs of black storks, four to five pairs of saker, 40 pairs of white herons and about 100 pairs of wild geese regularly nest here, as do several hundred pairs of one of the most endangered European species, the Ferruginous Duck. During the spring and autumn migrations, Kopački rit is an important resting place for many species of fen

fowls, with several hundreds of thousands of the birds resting there.

### **Eagle's Nest**

Eagles' nests lie in the highest trees of Baranja's forests. One of these trees is the huge Polish elm (*Ulmus minor*) located in the vicinity of the castle in Kopački rit. It is about three hundred years old and is one of the oldest elms in Europe. The lowest areas of Kopački rit, where the water retains for a long time are covered in willow forests. Here and there we can find ancient trees six, eight or more metres in circumference. White and black poplar grow in higher areas while oak grows in the highest areas. The black poplar (*Populus nigra*) appears as a kind of relic because it can no longer re-generate; there are only old tall trees, some 30 metres and others even 40 metres high. They top all other trees, with white-tailed eagles nesting in them. There is a black poplar tree 12 metres in circumference in the Hulovo area. It remains unclear whether it is a single tree or more of them grown together.

### **The Roar**

In the first days of September, Baranja's oak forests echo the loud roar of the deer. It is the mating season. At that time locals avoid meadows and forest clearings where hinds stay and feed and males vigorously fight for them. Dario Topić Baranja and Kopački rit are widely known for their numerous deer population (*Cervus elaphus*). Until the Homeland War, the population of these beautiful animals counted up to 6,000 deer, and in spring and during the summer, the number would have grown up to 10,000. Males are known for their large and well developed horns. There are only a few places in the world with such deer with beautiful horns. Although roaring is a very important factor of the animal's mating ritual, it is also a double-edged sword. The deer's position can easily be detected by poachers and predators while it is roaring. At the time of roar, visitors are encouraged to enjoy the power of this natural music at a decent distance.

### **Prince Eugene**

After the liberation of the country from the Turks, Emperor Leopold I of Habsburg divided his estates in Baranja between his generals, allies, and other prominent figures. The largest estate in Baranja belonged to Prince Eugene of Savoy, general and statesman, the supreme commander of the Austrian army since 1697, and later president of the Court War Council in Vienna. Among twenty villages that belonged to Eugene's Baranja estate, the village of Bilje, or Belje (Hungarian Bellye), was elected the seat of administration. At the beginning of the 18th century, a four-winged castle with moats and a square inner yard was built in an early Baroque style. Most of Croatian Baranja was assembled within the Belje manor, with other settlements in the Danube region from Batina to

Kopačevo and those to the west and north of BANSKO BRDO (Petlovac, Beli Manastir, Branjin Vrh, Popovac, Branjina, Duboševica, Topolje etc.).

### **No tower**

The monumental Baroque Church of Saint Peter and Paul near Topolje village, near the old Danube riverbed, was erected by Prince Eugene of Savoy after the last in a series of his great victories over the Turks (Senta 1697, Petrovaradin 1716, Belgrade 1718). Unusual in having no tower, the church of Saint Peter and Paul has encouraged the belief of different legends in people for centuries.

After the death of Eugene of Savoy, the Belje manor was under the administration of the Court Chambers until 1780 when it belonged to the Habsburg- Teschen family until the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1918. Although in the second half of the 18th century Bilje was connected to Osijek by the royal road, in 1827 the administration of the estate was relocated to Kneževo, in the North of Baranja, and a representative classicist style castle was built for that purpose. With the help of European experts and above all thanks to the melioration of flooding areas, the Belje manor became one of the most advanced real estates in the entire Austrian Empire.

### **Around Darda**

Another great Baranja manor from the Habsburg era was gathered around Darda, and its first owner was yet another general, General Friedrich von Veterani. Except for Darda, more than twenty villages belonged to that estate, and some of them are still part of Croatian Baranja: Baranjsko Petrovo Selo, Jagodnjak, Bolman, Karanac and some others. The famous noble Esterhazy –Zvolen family bought the manor in 1749 and were the owners until 1842. In 1800, a three-winged classicist castle was built in Darda. In the same period, marked by the Enlightenment and the Revolution, two scholars born in the village of Bilje, brothers József and Lajos Mitterpacher studied and taught at the institutions of higher education in Vienna, Trnava and Budapest. The first brother was a well known mathematician, the other was a scientist and founder of the Hungarian University of Agriculture.

### **Old Fisherman from Kopačevo**

From written documents which have registered events in Kopački rit since 1212, one can conclude that very little has changed in the past eight hundred years. Up until recently, Janosz Horvat from Kopačevo and his fellow fishermen lived in a specific co-existence with nature, maintaining ancient fishing rituals. Horvat preserved the old and well known fishing tools, now occasionally used by his successors, not to be found in any other area rich in fish, and therefore as priceless as the surviving fishing knowledge. One of the most interesting fishing techniques was fishing with the

help of a cane barrier, set up as a labyrinth in the dry parts of Kopački rit. With the arrival of the flood from the Drava and the Danube rivers, the fish would come also, getting caught in the trap. This was a way of fishing that exploited but did not destroy nature, with the traps put in place so as not to damage the riverbed or water vegetation. Every year in September old fishing tools are exposed in Kopačevo, and local fishermen prepare fish dishes that would soon be forgotten, were it not for their culinary skills.

### **Old Songs**

The life story of a Kopačevo fisherman, his efforts to continue to live in nature and from nature in a way that he served it so that it could serve him - this story is the topos which determines the experience of the magical lands of Kopački rit and Baranja. Dario Topić Although the Croatian Baranja triangle forms a geographical, administrative and production unit, ethnographers divide Croatian Baranja into the Drava river basin region and the Danube river basin region. With this division, it is easier to classify the details of folk costumes and to monitor distinctive features of the 'pustaraši', the inhabitants of the 'pustare' settlements. From the mid 19th century until the 1970s, the people of Baranja lived in 'pustare', workers' settlements built by planned construction, testimony to early modern agricultural production. The 'pustare' included Brestovac, Zlatna Greda, Mirkovci, Jasenovac, Šebešir, Sokolovac and Kozjak in the Danube region and Širine, Sudaraš, Zeleno Polje and Malo Kneževo in the Drava region of Baranja.

### **At Puškaš**

A sudden flash of small fish while sitting on an improvised pontoon bridge made of empty metal barrels at Karolj and Maja's on the Puškaš, in the early morning when the dew shines in the spider webs above the spring waters. Delimir Rešicki Topoljski dunavac or Puškaš, as it is mistakenly referred to, because Puškaš is the name of the estate alongside a part of Topoljski dunavac, is about 10 km long. It was founded 150 years ago, when the Austro-Hungarian government decided to regulate the flow of the Danube. The shores are covered with cane, sedge and aquatic plants, making it an ideal nesting place for wading birds, and a hatchery for many types of fish which find ideal conditions for growth and reproduction here. Throughout the whole course of the Topoljski dunavac, beautiful pieces of tench and perch can be caught. Carp is also a good catch, especially in the evenings, as is the catfish. In the past, golden Crucian carp could also be found here, but the Prussian carp pushed out some of the original species from this fishing oasis.

### **Carriage on the Roof**

On Carnival Sunday, the "buše" masks move around the streets and villages of Baranjsko Petrovo

Selo, Gajić and Duboševica. Monday is reserved for childrens' "buše", while the adults rest after a tiring Sunday. On Tuesday, the "buše" masks occupy the streets of Topolje and on the same day the final party takes place in Draž. The old Carnival traditions of masked groups called "buše" passing through villages and visiting houses is preserved up to this day in the villages of the Danube valley and the Drava valley of Šokadija. Typically the most beautiful "buše" masks come from Baranjsko Petrovo Selo, the so-called "petaračke buše". The "buše" are still chased in Duboševica, Topolje and Gajić, and the final party takes place in Draž. There are the sweet and the terrible "buše", and the houses in which girls and boys live appeal to them most. If the gates are closed, "buše" tend to be unpleasant; if they feel like it, they will completely dissemble a carriage and then re-assemble it on the roof top, or take off the gates of the house and then leave them hanging in a tree. They may even plough through the courtyard.

### **Red Hot Peppers**

The relationship of the people of Baranja with the cultivation, drying and grinding of special red hot peppers, intended to breathe in soul to the fish stew, is simply touching. Distinctive gastronomy goes hand in hand with distinctive fishing. Red hot peppers are alleged to have many medicinal effects and are indispensable in preparing fish stew. The best fish stew in the world, according to the people of Baranja, is prepared with the flood waters of the Danube and Drava rivers. It also has to be prepared with many kinds of fish and the old fishermen believe that without pike, it's no good at all. Fish dishes are traditionally prepared in the open and include specialties such as carp on a fork, pike covered during preparation, fish fried in 'tanjurača' (a metal plate shaped like a part of a tractor), fish stew, and the famed pike stew, prepared with a little bacon. For another specialty, fish is salted, then smoked and dried.

### **Batina**

The Victory, the work of sculptor Antun Augustinčić, dating from 1947, is a reminder of the Battle of Batina in 1944. In this battle, Soviet Red Army troops and Tito's army liberated Baranja from German occupation. The Monument and the memorial complex mark the place of the great battle that took place from 11th - 30th November 1944, when the Soviet Red Army and the Yugoslav National Liberation Army troops crossed the Danube, established bridgeheads and pushed the German occupation forces together with the remaining parts of the Hungarian army out of Baranja. At the site of the fiercest battle, the so-called "Hill No.169", a monument to the fallen soldiers of the Red Army was erected, a monumental obelisk 27 metres high, with an eight metre high bronze sculpture of Victory on the top. A mass burial grave of 1,297 members of the Red Army is a distinctive feature of the monument.

## **The Distinguished Guests**

The Charms of the intact nature of Kopački rit were noticed by members of the political elite long ago, at the same time giving the opportunity to ordinary people to poach some fish for themselves. The Tikveš castle, built in the spirit of Romantic Historicism in the second half of the 19th century, is connected with the hunting countryside villa by a promenade. A number of noblemen, including the Habsburgs, the Karađorđević family and many others stayed in this hunting resort. Part of this history is preserved through the photos of Isabela von Habsburg, Friedrich von Habsburg's wife, the owner of the Tikveš estate. After World War II, the castle became one of the residences of the Yugoslav President, Tito. Today, this complex serves a new purpose as the European Centre for the Environment.

## **Belje**

The Belje estate has a good climate, good location (along the river Danube waterway), good soil for almost all types of crops and grains, growing fruits, stock breeding, fishery, forestry, hunting and more. Description of the senior official of the Belje estate, 1824. After the death of the first owner, Prince Eugene of Savoy, the estate belonged to the imperial family. Archduke Charles Louis moved the seat of the estate from Bilje (Hungarian Bellye) to Kneževo. The Habsburg management of the estate was highly advanced. Today the Belje wine cellars on the southern slopes of Banovo brdo have almost 600 hectares of vineyards. Mainly white grape varieties are grown: Graševina, Rhine Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot gris, Pinot blanc and Muscat Ottonel. Red wine sorts include Pinot noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Frankovka. The newly renovated wine cellar, opportunities for wine tasting, and a 7.5 kilometre long wine road with a view of the beautiful Baranja landscapes make for a fantastic experience.

## **The Pustara Settlements**

Today the remains of the pustara settlements testify to the once great success of the Agricultural Industrial Combine of Belje, and somewhere halfway between the shabby pustara homes and first country houses, it is still possible to hear stories of folk traditions and legends about the birth, life and slow death of the Baranja way. There was a time when living in pustara settlements was the culmination of the workers' living standards in the agricultural sector. The settlements had administration buildings, apartments for workers, with associated pigsties, farm buildings and barracks for seasonal workers. More than 50 families used to live in the larger pustara settlements. In a period of a little more than a hundred years, the differences in the ways of life in the villages and the surrounding pustara settlements have stimulated one another in the preservation of

Baranja's distinguished features. The inhabitants of pustara settlements and the villagers did not only learn from each other but became each other's lasting inspiration.

### **The Most Fertile of Lands**

Baranja is our most fertile land. Flour, milk, meat, lard, sunflower oil ... Matko Peić After World War II, Belje became the first major agro-industrial company in Yugoslavia, strongly developing the production of field crops, milk, meat, sugar, agricultural machinery, etc. An irrigation system was established and a narrow-gauge railway connected all the villages on the estate. After the independence of Croatia and the reintegration of Baranja, Agrokor, the largest food producer in this part of Europe, took over Belje, recently orienting itself towards the production of healthy food.

### **The Untamed Expanse**

Here I inhaled in opulent aromas the spring enchantment of the earth. In yellow, brown and red leaves, I trod through the autumn. Baranja is a land so strong that with too warm an eruption of summer, it provokes in the soul so glacial a winter, that with the vegetation's ripened juices, transports into a worn, deflated, late autumn, with a single example: the destiny of a leaf. Mirko Hunjadi The heart and the soul are full of satisfaction; full are the eye, the palm and ear; full are the lungs and nostrils. From a low branch, two or three small grey herons take off, just awoken. In front of a boat, a duck hurriedly drives its ducklings into the sedge. A grebe wants to play hide and seek, while pheasants fly from bank to bank without obvious reason. At very close distance, a capital deer can be seen gobbling water. Wild boar swim across the canal at dusk; a fox ably circles a hare, and roebuck battle rivals with their horns. An otter can be seen hauling a fish from under the ice, then greasing its whiskers on the shore. The nocturnal caterwauls of wild cats mating can be heard from the top of an old willow tree; Baranja's vagabond, the old boar, can be seen with binoculars, while in the summer dusk, a young fox on the concrete fence of the bridge laves under the headlights of cars, and a frightened herd of deer fumbles on the frozen brown ground, not wanting to cross the canal through the cold water.

### **The Green Mystery**

I knew and felt that I was close to home when I saw thick layers of dust on tiny leaves of acacia everywhere around me. And then, somewhere before Osijek I lowered the window of the train, deeply inhaled that green living mystery and an hour later, while dreaming, I blew the dust off that tiny leaf clearly saying who I am, where I come from and where I am heading to. Delimir Rešicki Travelling by night train from Osijek to Beli Manastir and back, looking through the window and not seeing any landscape, only his own face and the faces of the evening passengers, a man from



Baranja feels that behind that train, behind him, somewhere in the summer moonlight, the sunflower fields still remain. What the sunflower saw while the sun travelled from east to west every day, what it knows in its every grain that is silently to fall to that same soil in a day or two, and what was in its eyes, that is what no one could ever take away from it again. Every misfortune, even death itself, always comes too late for that very moment, that one unique and sufficient moment. To share it with Baranja means to be part of both a mystery and its wonders.

## **Tourism marketing with events**

There are lot of events being organised by many organisations that are interesting to tourists. Here is a tentative list as presented by tourism board:

### **Vinceška**

Celebrating St. Vincent Vinceška, 22 January

Vinceška is actually the feast of St. Vincent (celebrated in January) who is the patron of vineyards so that in his honour for centuries on that day we bless vineyards and wine. It is customary to choose the biggest sausage then hang it on a vine and then pour wine on it so the next year is fruitful. Likewise today, winemakers gather with their guests, and passers-by and tourists to hang out and eat of the many traditional Baranja cuisine, tamburaše and of course with exceptional wine. At St. Vincent day in Baranja all the wine cellar doors are opened (Wine tasting, vineyard blessings, entertainment).

### **Buše in Baranja**

Buše in Petarda, in mid-February, dressing KUD members and other villagers in the "lipe" and "ružne" buše.

Another of the old customs of Baranja are the "Buše" which are displayed in the most interesting ways in traditional Šokac villages (Gajic, , Duboševica, Baranjasko Selo ...). There the buše last two days. The first day on the street we can see small buše, mainly children who represent "lipe" buše that go from house to house and by singing and dancing force, according to legend, the evil, and all that had threatened the house out. The lipe-buše also has female participants. The second day we can see "ružne" buše in which men generally participate. Faces are covered in wooden masks (Larfa and bušalo) which have are attached animal horns on them, wear woolen jackets,

white pants full of straw and were surrounded by chains, belts and ropes on which bells hung, while in their hands are holding sticks, wooden swords, cow horns ... While the ružne-buše last sometimes women are disguised as men, and men as women.

#### "Pokladni" Carnival

The procession of masked pre-school and school children from school to the city center with an entertainment program and award ceremony in the town's Sports hall in Beli Manastir.

#### Carnival ride

A traditional carnival horse ride with buša's in Branjin Vrh held in February.

#### Sarmijada

It consists of the competitive part and the part that is intended for visitors to taste all the delicacies of meat, rice and cabbage, and what secret spices are used too prepare the food by the competitive teams, and from the kitchen picnic Tri Mudraca everyone will be overwhelmingly attracted by the aroma of venison. There is also the possibility of off-road SUV driving in the muddy slopes of the hills of Baranja for all those looking for an adrenaline rush.

#### MARCH

##### Spring fair in Karanac

The fair includes various culinary specialties, wines and spirits, handicrafts, tamburašk'a music and other entertainment. It is held in March. Also, at this fair, a competition is being held too find the heaviest bacon in Slavonia and Baranja.

##### Exchange of tavern musicians

In Karanac every winter you can hear the best "tamburaše and Roma musicians" from Croatian, Hungary and Serbia, nearly 50 different bands! Choose the merriest musicians for your wedding or any other party, and arrange the best price! Of course you have to know that in Baranja work begins with a shoot of brandy or a glass of wine, for serious negotiations to go more smoothly! Tamburaši, accordion and violinists will for your heart and soul perform operatic arias, gypsy laments, occasional Zagorje tunes, Bosnian tunes, and bećarci, czardas and old songs from Vojvodina to which the famous Baranja gastronomic specialties will taste even better!

#### APRIL

##### Days of Wine and Tourism

Tasting and evaluating wines, appearance of the cultural and artistic societies, presentation of

gastronomic and tourist offers of Baranja, exposure of ethnic products: souvenirs, food and drinks from local production, all this has been a traditional part of this event.

## MAY

### Kulenijada

Will be held in May in the village Jagodnjak. Every year on Kulenijada more and more contestants sign up and bring samples of their Kulen so the jury can assess and declared the best, they do this by grading the taste, colour, aroma, quality and so on. Visitors can enjoy a variety of flavours and the smell of real domestic Kulen. The event has become part of Baranja's tradition.

### Štruklijada

Is held in the village of Popovac, in May, with the majority of the population coming from Zagorje region and for this reason have given birth to the idea of štruklijadi. The event has a competitive spirit, preparing various štrukle with different flavours and ingredients, and thus making the jury's job more difficult.

## JUNE

### International Wine Festival

The event for all wine lovers, these days in June wineries open their doors to all visitors. The program lasts three days at different locations. The Offering is rich and you can expect different types of wine and an interesting cultural program. Their will be performing cultural associations, various musicians and musical groups, people will dance in the largest Čardaš and all this will be completed by street performers of the magic Baranja surduci.

### Baranjski bećarac

The first weekend in June, the preservation of folk customs, songs and dances of Baranjas Šokci ethnic group, various authentic culinary specialities, preservation of cultural heritage through the fashion show of tradinional costumes, folklore from home and abroad. The event lasts for 3 days (LOCATION CHANGING EVERY YEAR: GAJIĆ, DRAŽ, DUBOŠEVICA)

## JULY

### Grahijada

Is now held traditionally every year in July, on the last day of the football tournament, "In memory

of the victims of war" in Beli Manastir. Every year they try to break the record for most pot's. Contestants get the main ingredients from the organizers, but the key ones, the 'Secret' ones, you bring them yourself.

## SEPTEMBER

### Autumn in Baranja

A three-day cultural - tourist event in Beli Manastir, which is held the first weekend in September.

An economic and cultural tourism event which consists of a number of painting and folk handicrafts exhibitions, concerts, theatre performances, gastronomy, folklore, craftsman fair.

Baranja is multicultural and it is this event that is an ideal view of customs, cuisine and folklore of all nations that live in the Baranja region.

Competition in cooking fish stew, Beli Manastir, September, qualifying for the state competition in Osijek, cooking fish stew outdoors, with rich cultural entertainment, tastings, etc. and is held on the last day of the event "Autumn in Baranja".

### Fishing Days in Kopačevo

The event is held in September, and is celebrated to commemorate the bygone days when the locals of Kopačevo lived just from fishing. During these days you can sample a variety of authentic dishes made from fish and venison. It is interesting that on this occasion several thousand pounds of fish are prepared. All this is spiced up by Hungarian music and folklore.

### Ethno meetings Bilje

District Popovac, ethno fair of domestic products of Baranja, a rich offer of food and beverages (POPOVAC).

## OCTOBER

### Winter fair in Karanac - Čvarakfest

It is held in December and is a challenge for all those who wish to try their hand at creating the best cracklings. Creates the experience of traditional Baranja pig slaughter and provides an opportunity for all to participate, some who may never have seen or participated in creating delicacies from pork.

### Wine Marathon

The event, which is held in October. The Wine marathon is not a usual marathon in which you run or walk fast, but visit as many wine cellars, taste as much wine while you try to get to the goal. 18

cellars are visited, each wine that is tasted also needs to be graded, and you need to guess its kind. Each of the contestants at the beginning gets her glass and a map of the trails (the back of the map is used by the wine makers to confirm that the competitor visited his wine cellar). Many have a competitive spirit, but some of the visitors just come to relax walk through the furrow, taste some wine, try something from Baranja's cuisine, listen and maybe dance to the sounds of Hungarian music and famous Čardas and just enjoy all the charms the event offers.

## **Tourism promotion in media and on internet**

Last few years Baranja is „place to visit“ during all seasons. Buses with tourist come every weekend, and in local restaurants often are one day visitors from all parts of Croatia. Famous for its wine and beautiful nature, guests are also drawn to Baranja whenever there is some small manifestation like kulin competition, bacon competition, grahijada, sarmijada etc. Media take big part in promotion of Baranja. They provide charge free marketing with their reports that cover some specific local manifestations, some new forms of touristic supply like geocaching, winter ice picking of grapes etc. Baranja Tourism Board, public bodies and few privately owned companies send press releases whenever some event is happening. Also, media are very keen to cover implementation of various projects in Baranja because this region as a cross border area and formerly war occupied area that needs a lot of investments and gives lots of possibilities for development through implementation of project proposals.

Promotion of the tourism is done with the help of local radio and internet media, with the help of regional print, internet and TV media but also with the help of national radio, print, internet and TV media.

Locally two radio stations and one web portal are covering all events. Web portal is also covering every possible event with video reports. All three media are cooperating with all public, NGO and private bodies.

Regionally there are several radio stations covering news and events, two TV broadcasters and several regionally oriented web portals. All of regional media cover Baranja, but not through such extent like local media.

Nationally, Croatia has nine TV channels that are broadcasting program nationally. Mainly publicly owned broadcaster HRT is covering events in Baranja a bit broader than others.

Baranja Tourism Board also uses as a communication channel official web page, Facebook fan page and soon to be launched mobile phone application. They are also pretty important information channel for all current events.

Many small tourism business owners also use social networks, web sites and internet to promote their place.

## **Tourism development projects**

Since there is a lack of private funding, many projects are developed to compete for public financing and various funds available. Here are some tourism development projects described:

### **Bottom-up projects**

Main marketing tool is differentiation of region through cost effective, creative and innovative tourism projects that attract variety of visitors to the region. Some of the projects include:

#### **Geocaching Baranja**

Geocaching is an outdoor recreational activity, in which the participants use a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver or mobile device and other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers, called "geocaches" or "caches", anywhere in the world.

A typical cache is a small waterproof container containing a logbook where the geocacher enters the date they found it and signs it with their established code name. After signing into the log, the cache must be placed back exactly where the person found it. Simply put, it is high-tech treasure hunt in nature.

Geocaching is very developed in world but underdeveloped in Croatia and Baranja.

Goal of the project:

General objective: To increase the total tourist traffic to Baranja and extend the tourist season by providing a new kind of tourist services - Geocaching as a result of the "Putting Baranja on geocaching map of the world."

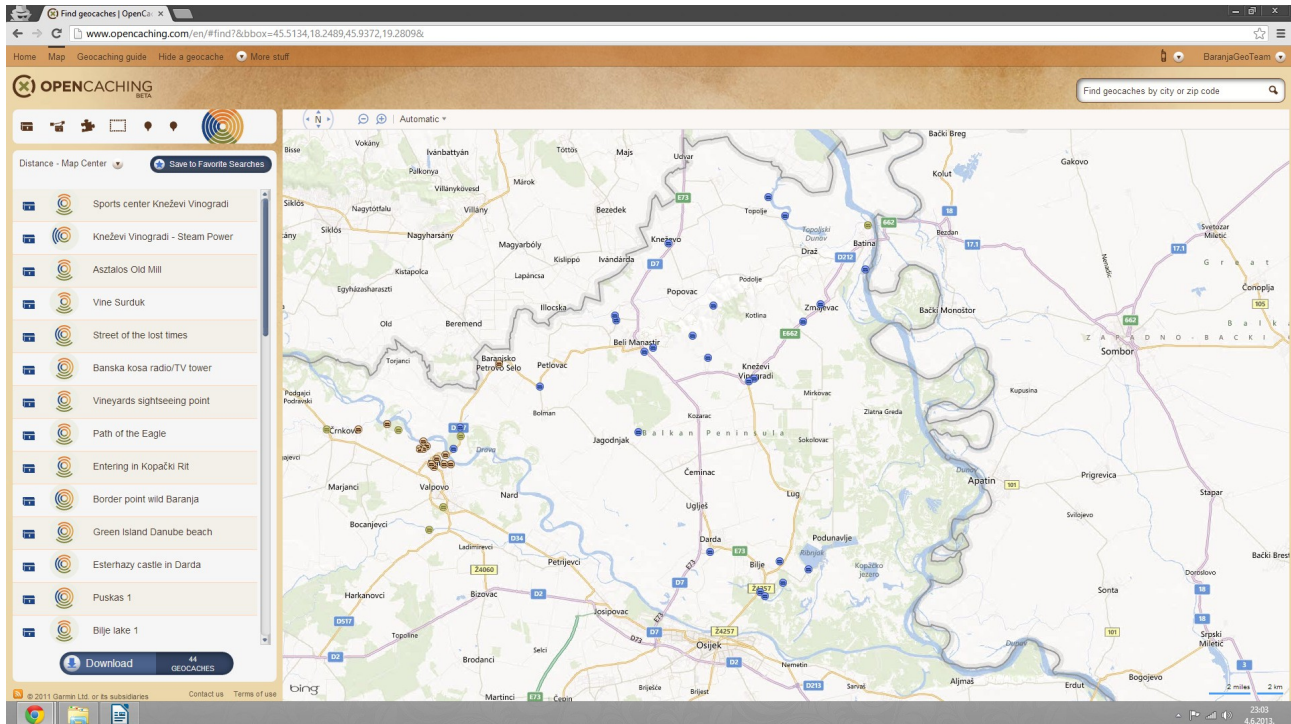
Specific objective: Posted 20 geocaches in key tourist spots in Baranja and their registration to the largest geocaching site in the world <http://www.geocaching.com/> to promote Baranja among the five million users of these sites.

Target groups:

- Geocaching community that has more than five million geocachers worldwide and over 2,099.477 geocaches active in the world (Source: [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com), [en.wikipedia.org / wiki / geocaching](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/geocaching))
- Families of geocachers who use other tourist services
- Local tourism entrepreneurs who should inform tourists about geocaching as a new kind of

tourist services and about geocaching points in their vicinity

- Potential future tourists from the Croatia and the world will begin to deal with geocaching after finding out about it and after finding out about geocaching in Baranja.



Internet map of geocaches in Baranja, similar to the map tourist gets on his mobile phone geocaching application. Geocaching does not require any fees to participate. Below is the geocache with informational materials:





[Images about FTF hunting](#)

---

**4 Logged Visits**

😊 3 🟢 1

[Decrypt ↶](#)


[View Logbook](#) | [View the Image Gallery of 4 images](#)

\*\*Warning! [Spoilers](#) may be included in the descriptions or links.

---

**Danijol**


Member



49

Found it 03/03/2013

14:45 nice cache.great place.history on one place


 [part of history](#)

[View Log](#)

---

**LuzickyPermonik**

Premium Member



696

Found it 02/23/2013

FTF


When we woke up in Suza this morning and checked the internet we found out that there were some new caches published nearby. We changed our plans and went for FTF hunting. When we came to this place at the begining we were walking around trying to found the right way to the cache. We almost decided to leave when we spotted the geocaching poster on restaurant ´s window. The owner of the restaurant was very kind, he let us in and we were able to see a nice small exhibition. Of course we also found the cache. A place really deserves a visit. TFTC

[View Log](#)

---

**Dr Zagy**

Premium Member



985

Found it 02/23/2013

Found it with Zagac5.




Second cache today and second STF.

We were driving from Beli Manastir hoping to find some ftf, but when we came here, we saw that we were overrun by more then 1 hour. Again from the same cachers. Another stf, looks like it's becoming a habit.

To find the cache, we had to go to restaurant and say hello to the owners. They just said that we don't have to be afraid from the dogs, that they are friendly.

The cache was found in just a minute, again had to read the hint because of lots of possible hiding places. After logging, we went to restaurant and had a cup of coffee. It's a nice place, we will come back another day to have a lunch here.

Thanks for the cache and greetings from Osijek!

 [Lost times street](#)  
 [Old house](#)  
 [Walking on lost street](#)

[View Log](#)

Geocachers find hidden caches with mobile phone or GPS, log in the web site, comment, share pictures and recommend the place.

This project combines cost effectiveness (free for tourists and promoters, minimal equipment and consumables needed), outdoor activities, IT/mobile technologies and internet promotion, social media marketing, partnership of public bodies and private companies.

The project is in constant development and new spots will be added.

## Sarmijada (and Off Road Sarmijada)

Sarma is a Turkish dish of grape, cabbage or chard leaves rolled around a filling usually based on minced meat, or a sweet dish of filo dough wrapped around a filling often of various kinds of chopped nuts. It is found in the cuisines of the former Ottoman Empire from the Middle East to the Balkans and Central Europe. In Croatia it is traditionally prepared with cabbage leaves and it is eaten as rural style speciality on many holidays or events.

Tourism Board of Baranja organizes “Sarmijada” event which is a contest in cooking of the best Sarma meal where visitors are welcome to taste, eat and participate. Targeted audience are foreign tourist and domestic tourist from more urban areas who are no longer cooking home-made rural traditional dishes.

In order to make it more appealing to younger and adventurous people, off-road Sarmijada is also organized where you can participate driving or travelling in off-road vehicle to reach locations in wild nature.



Marketing is made through social media (mostly Facebook) which appears to be a successful strategy.

This project combines unique gastronomy offer and adventure tourism.

### **Family Outdoor Area Šećeransko lake**

Near the Town of Beli Manastir there is an accumulation lake for abandoned sugar / starch factory. It was used only by a small number of local fishermen. Town of Beli Manastir is an administrative and economic centre of region and tends to develop tourism and outdoor activities. Since it doesn't have untouched nature, refurbishment of lake area was one of the possible steps. Financing was obtained through small grants from the Ministry of tourism and from one local Foundation “Slagalica” and community volunteers were involved in all steps of implementation.

The overall objective is to improve the tourist offer of Baranja region as a tourist destination, to help to extend the tourist season and the increase in the total tourist traffic by the implementation of the two-month project which includes planning, construction and equipping of old industry lake area to become the family picnic, a children's playground and a dogs playground.

The specific objective is to build a family resort on Šećerana Lake by setting up booths, tables and benches, holes for barbecue, children's playground and dogs training playground. To reach the specific goal, project will encourage the recycling of materials, co-financed by local businesses and community integration.

Target audience: families, individuals, adventurers, youth, senior citizens, the entire population in the Osijek-Baranja County and tourists who visit Baranja from around the world.

Evaluation of the project was performed and feedback from users is excellent. The lake is new outdoor centre for Beli Manastir and wider area.

Next planed step in this project is to refurbish old local famous train “Ćiro” which is rusting in the factory ground and make it in to functioning exhibit on the lake area with information offices, children playrooms or similar content.



This project combines old industrial heritage that would be otherwise destroyed with outdoor activities for all population groups providing multifunctional outdoor area. Geocaches were also deployed on the lake area.

	Activity	Event	Place
<b>Project</b>	Baranja Geocaching	(Off-Road) Sarmijada	Šećeransko lake
<b>Innovation</b>	GPS outdoor activity very popular in western Europe and north America, but relatively unknown in Croatia	Adding off-road event part for more adventurous and younger tourists	Putting abandoned industrial lake in tourist usage with help of local community
<b>Differentiation</b>	There are no systematic geocaching activities on regional level in wider area	There are no similar events in wider region	Using recycled materials and setting playground for the dogs
<b>Combination of new and old</b>	Cultural and natural heritage of Baranja and modern IT technologies connected game.	Traditional meal and modern marketing and off road activity	Old industry and new ecological - pet friendly methods

## **Larger public projects**

### **The Heranet**

The Project „THE HERA NET - network of highly educated rural animators“, funded by the IPA program of the European Union, the IPA component IV - Human Resources Development, started in October 2012 and will last 12 months with five year monitoring period. The value of the project is 172.096,03 EUR with the share of EU grant funds of 132.380,03 EUR. The project is being implemented in three counties: Osijek-Baranja, Vukovar-Sirmium and Brod-Posavina Counties, City of Valpovo and Croatian Employment Service in Osijek.

The project leader is Faculty of Agriculture in Osijek and it's committed to provide adequate space for meetings of partners and associates, and members of the project team. The project leader will be responsible for the overall implementation of the project activities: organization and implementation of the educational part of the project, workshops and lectures for the target group of the experts (teachers) for rural development and the rural economy, will be responsible for setting up and operating HERAnet, the writing, printing and distribution of the booklet "Rural development and rural economy", will be responsible for the financial management of the project, preparing reports, organizing meetings and conferences, will be responsible for arranging office space for action HERAnet and other project activities. The applicant will work with partners to be responsible for the selection of participants for the training, and will work with partners to organize appropriate events for the presentation of new knowledge and skills of participants to potential employers and the public.

### **Wine Tour**

In order to improve and develop wine tourism in the Osijek-Baranja County, the county Department of Agriculture and the economy designed a project called "Wine Tour".

Osijek-Baranja County in recent years through grants invested significant funds in the development of viticulture and wine production. In order to consolidate the content of a specific wine-growing region in all four vineyards in the county, the Assembly of Osijek-Baranja County reached a decision about tourist wine routes in the Osijek-Baranja County.

Tourist Wine Road is a special form of sales of agricultural, food and tourism products one wine-growing area where farms (family farms), producers of grapes and wine, and other legal and natural

persons engaged in similar activities, registered in accordance with relevant regulations and united under one name "Tourist Wine Route", offering their products, with wine and spirits from its own production. Being in the Osijek-Baranja County registered 60 peasant family farms that provide accommodation services to the rich cuisine and a large number of wineries, the activities of the Osijek-Baranja aimed encouraging peasant winemaker and family-tourist farms to extend their hospitality-tourism activities, in order to develop tourism and wine-growing areas of the county.

Department of Agriculture and the economy of the Osijek-Baranja County, along with technical assistance to the implementation of a grant scheme of the Ministry of Regional Development, Forestry and Water Management and the Regional Development Agency of Slavonia and Baranja developed his idea and developed the project proposal "Wine Tour". The project consists of three main activities - planned to provide pathways existing wine routes and arranging four mini-museum and a regional museum of wine, and provides for promotion.

The design of the existing wine routes is planned for this unique project that invests in road infrastructure through editing of eleven tourist wine routes in seven local government units: Tourist Wine Road Kneževi Vinogradi-Karanac-Kotlina-Kamenac, tourism and wine route at Zmajevac Tourist Wine Road of Suza in the district of Kneževi Vinogradi; Tourist Wine Road Northern Baranja Tourist Wine Route Martin's hill and tourist wine road "Wine Trail Batina" in the district of Draž; Tourist Wine Route Erdut municipality in the district of Erdut; Tourist Wine Route Mandićevac the Municipality Drenje; Holiday Wine Road Golden Hill in the municipality Popovac; Tourist Wine Road St. Martin in the City of Beli Manastir; Tourist wine road "Frankovka" in the municipality Feričanci. Total 18.5 km of wine roads will be reconstructed.

Under the second project activity four mini-museum in each of the four vineyards of County (Baranja, Erdut-Đakovo and Feričanci) will be reconstructed and one regional wine museum in Osijek. Four mini-museum will be decorated in the following locations: Dalj, Zmajevac, Drenje and Feričanci. In these facilities the tourists and locals will have the opportunity to become familiar with the tradition of the production of grapes and wine through the exhibition part and taste famous wines from Osijek-Baranja County, as well as other product offerings in the field of tourism and wine routes.

Promotion activities as final activity include printing promotional materials, training of members of the tourism and wine roads and organisation of the two conferences. Education would be held on each wine road with the aim of improving service benefits of organized groups of tourists and raising the quality of services in general. Conferences are intended as the opening ceremony and at the end of the project in order to promote the project to media in order to attract tourists.

For the implementation of the approved project proposal "Wine Tour" grant is secured from the program framework IPA Regional Competitiveness, Measure 1.1. Business infrastructure. Total value of the project amounts to nearly 1.25 million euros, most of which provided by the European Union, and the county and the partners involved in the implementation of accounting for 25% of the funds. Realization is expected within 18 months of signing the agreement and implementation of the project which was done in March of 2012.

## **Rural tourism development projects and best practice examples from wider region**

### **Paths of Lipizzaners and marten**

"Paths of Lipizzaners and marten" is the name of four million kuna worth project through which the cities Lipik and Pakrac reconstructed hundreds of kilometers of trails for walkers, cyclists and riders. The trails are properly labeled and properly equipped. The project includes landscaping of five destinations: Lake Raminac, Omanovac, Pjeskara and Pakurnovac and Cross Country circular path as part of the Cycling Park Psunj.

The project "Paths Lipizzaners and swears" wants to consolidate and strengthen the tourism potential at Pakrac and Lipik through the development of tourism infrastructure and thus attract more visitors.

98 km routes for pedestrians, cyclists and riders properly marked and equipped with urban equipment, which together make up the trails Lipizzaners and martens.

5 landscaped public destination: Lake Raminac, Omanovac, Lake Pjeskara, Lake Pakurnovac and Cross Country circular path as part of the Cycling Park Psunj.

Project is financed by IPA IIIC programme and its worth 515.397,83 EUR from which EU financed 75%.



## **Possible future projects and areas of interest for tourism development in Baranja**

- Fundraising and support for LAG project portfolio
- More Internet marketing and direct selling (ie.: AirBnB)
- More presence on various specialised tourism related social networks (ie.:EveryTrail)
- Promotion through Gamification / Geolocation / QR code apps (ie.: Munzee)
- Augmented reality presence building (ie.:wikitude)
- Geodesic architecture places
- Targeting small niche tourist groups and organising target special activities

## **Lessons learned in Baranja tourism development**

Examples shown above demonstrate how rural tourism can be developed and marketed with small investments and cooperation between several stakeholders and local population. Main lesson learned are:

- be creative and innovative
- differentiate and diversify
- combine new / modern and old / traditional
- use new technologies and internet marketing
- use social media marketing in various social networks, do not concentrate only on main ones (Facebook, Twitter) but also use specialised networks (Foresquare etc.)
- include all relevant stakeholders and local population
- local community involvement and volunteering reduces all cost and promotes community cohesion
- use momentum of ending one project as opportunity to plan and start new project
- don't forget about pets and animals
- combine large and small projects to achieve synergy
- sustainable development – partnership with nature



## **Conclusion**

Barnja is a region with great tourism potential which will be developed further in the future. It is successful because of combination of natural and cultural resources with people who made concentrated effort to improve their community and share it with tourists.

## Internet links:

<http://www.tzosbarzup.hr>

[www.tzbaranje.hr](http://www.tzbaranje.hr)

[www.beli-manastir.hr](http://www.beli-manastir.hr)

[www.obz.hr](http://www.obz.hr)

<http://www.obz-invest.hr>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bilje>

<http://www.tzo-bilje.hr/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%8Ceminac>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darda,\\_Croatia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darda,_Croatia)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dra%C5%BE>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jagodnjak>

<http://www.jagodnjak.hr/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kne%C5%BEvi\\_Vinogradi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kne%C5%BEvi_Vinogradi)

<http://www.knezevi-vinogradi.hr/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petlovac>

<http://www.petlovac.hr>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popovac>

<http://www.kopacki-rit.com/>

[www.hbor.hr](http://www.hbor.hr)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism\\_in\\_Croatia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_Croatia)

## **Sources and material used and quoted:**

Transnational Strategy for the Sustainable Territorial Development of the Danube Area with a Focus on Tourism DATOURWAY, NATIONAL STUDY Croatia

Handbook to Tourism Projects in the Hungary-Croatia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013

The Magnificent Baranja (HTZ)

Slavonia (HTZ)