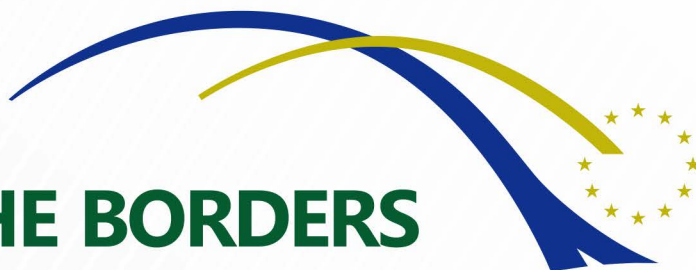


Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives
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CROSSING THE BORDERS

Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

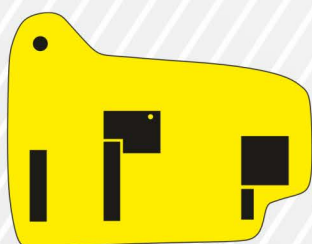
Case Study

Pons Danubii EGTC



pons danubii

Written by the
**Institute of Spatial Planning
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1. Introduction

1.1 The best example for cross-border cooperation

Cross-border cooperation is one of the most actual topics which resonate within Europe and especially within the framework of European regions. That means phenomenon of cross-border cooperation is a topic which should be and/or must be studied in order to reflect the newest trends and to understand the life of the regions in Europe. Subsequently, this paper aims to investigate the one specific cross-border cooperation, namely the Pons Danubii EGTC, seated in Slovakia which covers the Slovakian-Hungarian cross-border region.

First of all, there is a need to give a brief introduction about the legal framework of European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. It is a separate legal entity with full legal capacity, it can act independently, thus enabling the EU member states, regional authorities, local governments and public institutions to establish cross-border, transnational or interregional cooperation with institutions of similar profile from other member states. An EGTC is an organization jointly owned by authorities from at least two EU member states. These can be local or regional authorities or even member states. The grouping is a separate institution, has its own budget, it can sign contracts, acquire property and be party to legal proceedings.

The object of this case study is the cross-border cooperation implemented by the Pons Danubii EGTC. The study gives a profound picture about the region, about its historical formation; moreover, it informs the reader about the organizational structure of the EGTC, about its activity and future plans of the cross-border cooperation, and finally it evaluates Pons Danubii through SWOT analysis.

There are several reasons why the Institute of Spatial Planning has chosen Pons Danubii as the best practice cooperation. The meaning, scope and institutionalized form of cooperation put Pons Danubii above other forms of cross-border cooperation, like Euro-regions or twin cities. Another reason of selection is that the Pons Danubii EGTC is a European legal instrument designed to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation, thus the EGTC is a legal entity with capacity to enable regional and local authorities and/or other public bodies from different member states and to set up cooperation groupings with a legal personality. In addition, the EGTC is unique in the sense that it allows public authorities of different member states to cooperate and/or to deliver joint services without requiring formal international agreement ratified by the national parliaments. Furthermore, the attractiveness of Pons Danubii (next to other EGTCs based in the Slovak Republic, like the EGTC Karst-Bodva or the EGTC Via Carpatia Limited) lays in the fact that despite of its low number of members (7 member cities and towns), its institutional net covers approximately 120 000 inhabitants. Another astonishing fact about Pons Danubii is that it has applied for 12 projects in total amount of 12 million Euros since its establishment in 2010.



The Pons Danubii EGTC is analysed through methodology of interviews, where information was gathered through direct contact with the Director, Zoltán Bara. Moreover, the case study reflects various accessible materials related and relevant to the Pons Danubii, like its official documents, reports and media articles, hence the case-study partly applies desk research methodology. The following part describes the geographical confines of the region and it gives a geographical introduction about the selected cross-border region and cooperation.

2. Determination of geographical confines

This part of the case study informs the reader about the natural conditions of the region, economy, settlement structure, human resources and about the members of the Pons Danubii EGTC.

2.1 Natural Conditions

Komárom-Komárno Cross-Danube Region stretches from Nové Zámky to Tatabánya over Komárom-Komárno border towns. Dominant towns of the region are the following: Tatabánya (County seat), Nové Zámky, Komárno, Komárom and Tata. Almost whole area on the Slovakian side is located on the Danube upland (Podunajská pahorkatina) and the Danube plain (Podunajská rovina). The Hungarian territory of the region belongs to the Little Hungarian Plain (Kisalföld), the area around Tata and Tatabánya is between the hills of Gerecse. The most important side rivers of the Danube River are the rivers, like Váh (SK) and Által-ér (HU). The southern parts of the region are rich of water resources; consequently, several thermal springs are located in the region, like Patince, Komárno, Komárom and/or Tata. The main part of the region is covered by high-quality agricultural soil, hence the region is one of the most productive agricultural centre of Slovakia. Moreover, the region is one of the hottest territories, where the average year temperature is 10,2 °C.

Typical feature of the northern (Slovakian) part of the region is a combination of agricultural production with limited industrial activity. The process of transformation in the last decade of 20th century caused a significant decrease of the crucial industrial activity, e.g. food processing, ship construction, electrical engineering, production of synthetics, etc. Some of the key industrial activities were renewed again; however, their capacity and ability to employ the local citizens have not reached the level previous to the economic/market transformation.

There are several water courses relevant for water management. The most important are the lower reaches of the major Slovak river Váh with its inflows and number of water canals. The highest quantity of usable ground water is located in County of Komárno. In the Hungarian part of the CDR, carstic water plays the most important role in potable water supply. The carstic water comes from the hills of Gerecse in the Southern part of the CDR. Consequently, sensitivity of carstic water against pollutants calls for careful attention in water distribution and its profound protection.

2.2 Brief Characteristic of the Members

Komárno is a town in Slovakia at the confluence of the Danube and the Váh rivers. Historically, it situated on both sides of the Danube, but after the First World War, it was separated into two cities, connected by the Elizabeth Bridge. One of the most interesting and also the most visited monument in Komárno is the fortification system. The construction of the extensive fortification system of Komárno started during the Napoleonic wars but the events of the 1848/1849 revolution interrupted the work. Komárno as the last bastion of the Hungarian bourgeois revolution played an important role.

In 1938, the Vienna Arbitrage resulted that the town was incorporated into Hungary, but after the Second World War, it once again became a frontier-city of Czechoslovakia. At the moment Komárno is a busy frontier town of the Slovak Republic with 38 thousand inhabitants.

Hurbanovo is another Slovakian city. It is a town and large municipality in the Komárno District in the Nitra Region. In 1948, its Slovak name was changed to Hurbanovo, named after the Slovak writer, Jozef Miloslav Hurban. The town was first mentioned in 1329. It is an agricultural center with 11,000 inhabitants. Its fortress belongs to an important monument, which played a less important role in the history than other regional fortresses. Furthermore, the Holy Trinity Column can be found in the city which was built in order to commemorate the victims of cholera.

Komárom is a cultural, tourist and commercial centre on the right bank of the Danube with a population around 20.000 inhabitants. History of Komárom and its fort system were influenced by the Turkish and Napoleonic war. The fort itself is contiguous building which includes 14 separated wings of buildings with 640 rooms. Useful area is more than 34.000 m² and buildings cover 39.000 m². The total circumference of the fort system is nearly 15 km.

Tata is the next Hungarian member of the Pons Danubii EGTC. It is located in the valley between the Gerecse and Vértes Mountains, some 70 km from Budapest. Tata was first mentioned in 1221. During the Ottoman occupation, the castle of Tata was an important fortress. It was captured in 1529 and it had numerous different owners in the next decades until it was burnt down by the Habsburgs.

The next member settlement is Kisbér. The town was first mentioned in 1277. Kisbér was home to the 15,648-acre (63.33 km²) Imperial-Royal Stud where the thoroughbred racehorse was bred. Kisbér raced in England, where he won the country's most prestigious race, the Epsom Derby, in 1876. He was then sent to Paris where he won France's most important race, the Grand Prix de Paris. The horning tradition is still strong and visible in the city. The Kisbér Horning Association organizes horse-jumping and equiPAGE-driving competition every year. One of the most memorable buildings of Kisbér is the Batthyány palace. The baroque style building was reconstructed in classicist style in 1840. In 2005, the new Cultural Center was named after Albert Wass.

Finally, Oroszlány is a city in Hungary, in Komárom-Esztergom County. It has a population of 20.487 residents. The main tourist attraction of the town is the 18th century Camaldolese monastery of Majk. During the communist era, rapid industrialization took place and Oroszlány became one of the most important coal mining regions of the country. However, it came to an end, all the mines have been closed down with the exception of the only running Márkushegy coal mine in Pusztavám.

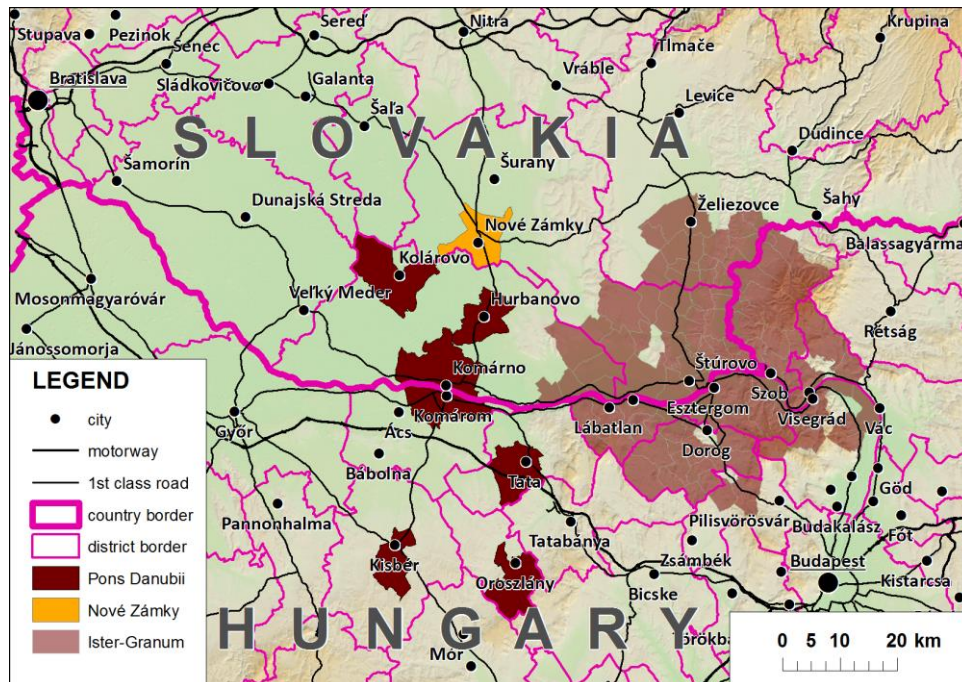


Figure 1: Involved areas by the Pons Danubii EGTC
 Source: Institute of Spatial Planning. (2014). Own elaboration.

Table 1: Area extent and population of every member city and town

Members of Pons Danubii	Population	Area extent in km ²
Komárno	36279	102,807
Hurbanovo	8041	59,943
Kolárovo	10747	106,823
Slovak part	55067	269,573
Komárom	19048	70,19
Tata	23726	78,16
Kisbér	7532	70,86
Oroszlány	18139	75,86
Hungarian part	68445	295,07
SUMMARY	123512	564,643

Source: Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Members. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.ponsdanubii.eu/en/members>. [Accessed: 6th December 2014]., websites of member cities and towns.

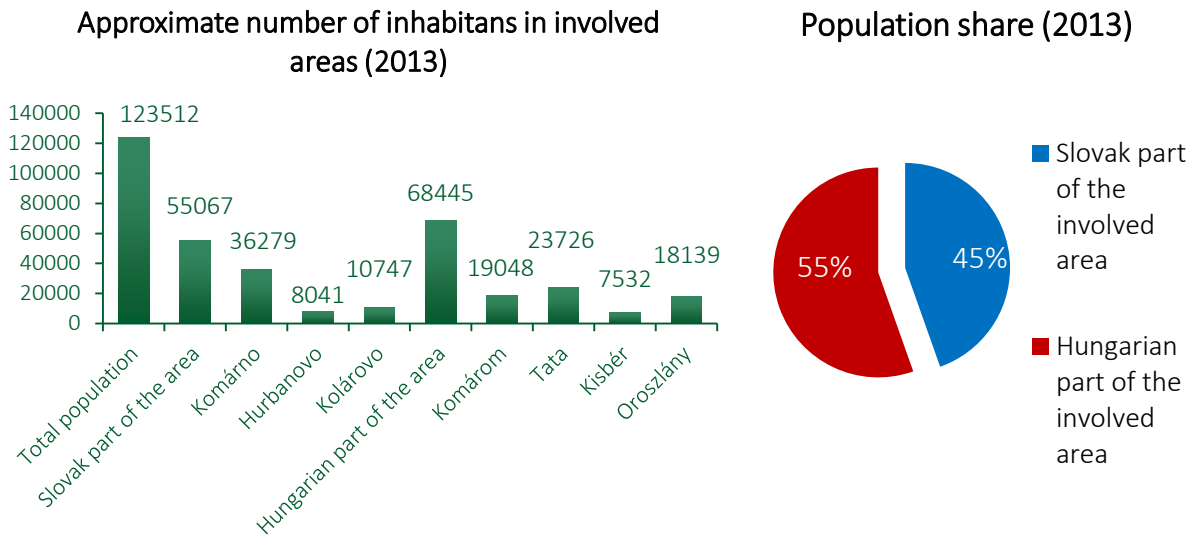


Figure 2: Overview of population

Source: Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Members. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.ponsdanubii.eu/en/members>. [Accessed: 6th December 2014]., websites of member cities and towns.

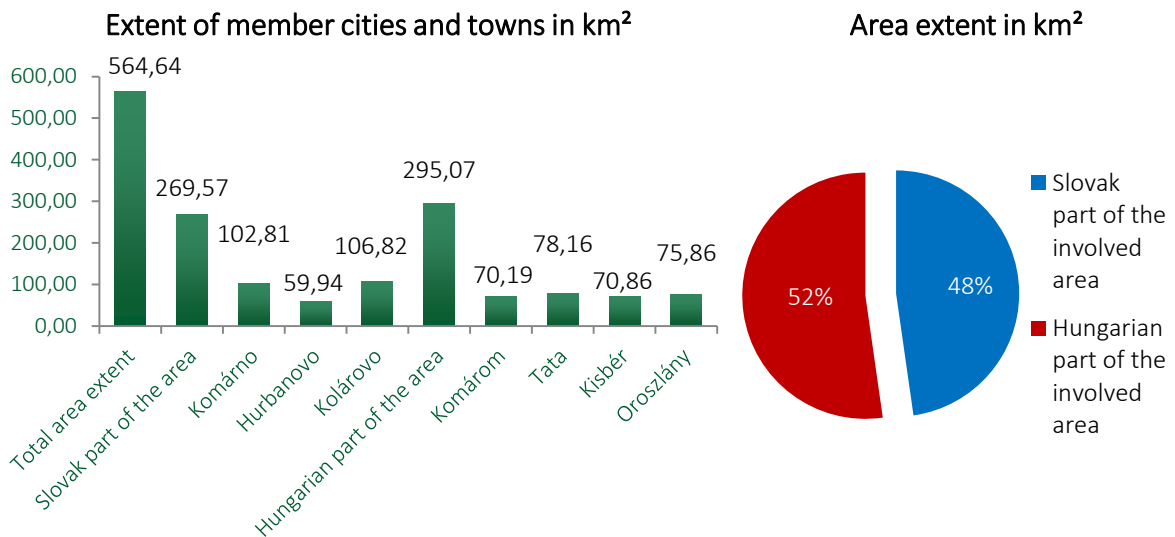


Figure 3: Overview of area extents

Source: Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Members. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.ponsdanubii.eu/en/members>. [Accessed: 6th December 2014]., websites of member cities and towns.

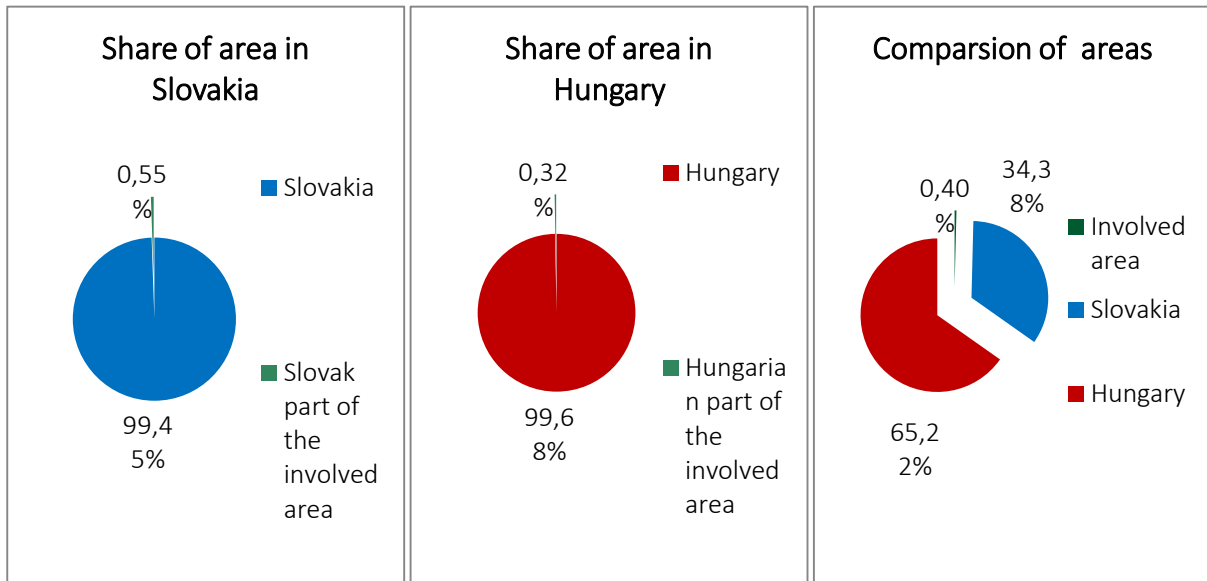


Figure 4: Overview of area shares

Source: Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Members. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.ponsdanubii.eu/en/members>. [Accessed: 6th December 2014]., websites of member cities and towns.

At present times, the Grouping does not plan to undertake any territorial expansion. The only potential city that could enter into this Grouping is Nové Zámky (Slovakia). However, due to different political opinions there is no intention of extending the current number of member cities.

2.3 Settlement Structure and Human Resources

There is a natural decrease of the population in the territory of Komárom-Komárno CDR on both sides of the border. In the Slovakian part, a fast outmigration process has been strengthening the decrease of the population, while in the Hungarian part of the CDR, there is solid immigration in the last years.

The demographic situation on both parts of the region is unfavourable. Significant changes in the evolution of the structure of demography, which are reflection of economic and social situation of the region, have been remarked. The long term tendencies are: deceleration of the population reproduction, decrease of natural increase of population.

Settlement structure is a result of the effects of natural as well as civilization conditions. The settlements are spread across the lowland and modest upland, with dominant agriculture. The particular settlements are distributed evenly around core settlement centres. The basic conditions for settlement structure development in the Slovakian part of the CDR determined by the natural conditions were affected by civilization conditions – mainly agriculture,

development of transport infrastructure (roads and railways) and industrialization. The development of the county was originally based on prime resources, e.g. coal or bauxite.

The educational structure and the level of education in different social groups in the two sides of the CDR are similar. In the Slovakian side, significant share of the population either have only elementary education or they are without educational degree, while only a small part of the population have university degree. In comparison with average figures of the Slovak Republic, the region is worse mainly in share of inhabitants with secondary school and university education. The Hungarian part of the CDR has higher average values of educational structure among Hungarian Danube regions. Moreover, the education system of the region has been transforming towards the needs of labour market. The region has two institutes of higher education; there are one non-state college in Tatabánya (Edutus College) and a state university for Hungarian minority in Komárno (Selye János University). Both institutions are launching new technical and IT educational programmes according to the needs of local companies.

Agriculture, industry and service sector are also important in the CDR's labour market. Important industrial parks operate in Komárom and Tatabánya, where more than thousands of employees work for international companies from Hungary and also from Slovakia. Services sector, financial institutions, retail chains and other service providers give job opportunities for the local citizens. Nevertheless, economic crisis has deeply influenced the employment rate of the region and it has profoundly affected the cross-border labour migration. Several industrial companies in the region, and also in the Hungarian part, e. g. NOKIA, dismissed and limited their activity, hence they ceased to provide job opportunities for the local citizens. Subsequently, the level of unemployment in the Slovakian part of the region reached 20 % in 2011, while the level of unemployment reached 7 % in the Hungarian part. That significant difference in the rates of unemployment between the regions is influenced by the industrial background in Tatabánya which seems to be more "crisis-proof" even in the harder years of the economic depression.

2.4 Economy

Regional Gross Domestic Product in purchasing power parity during the monitoring period showed a positive increase by 60,7 % (2008/2001). Economic active population is important potential and value-creating factor of economic development of the area. During the period between 2001 and 2008, the number of economic active population recorded a slight increase. In 2008, most employees worked in the tertiary sector, specifically 56% (SK) and 45% (HU), especially in commerce and market oriented services. During the monitoring period, significant increase of employment in the sector public administration and defence, building industry and financial businesses was recorded. After the beginning of economic crisis in 2008, the economic performance of the CDR region dropped rapidly, in year 2009 the regional GDP indicator

diminished, the unemployment started to increase, especially in the Northern, Slovakian part of the CDR.

The best expression of the activity structure is the indicator of gross added value by branches based on statistical and administrative data sources. We analysed this indicator during the period from 2001 to 2007 within particular region. In the Slovakian part of the CDR, the highest share of gross value added in 2007, reached the sector of industry (21,4%), electricity, gas and water supply (17,6%) and wholesale and retail trade (16,9%). The main increase was reported in sector wholesale and retail trade and electricity, gas and water supply. In the Southern part of the CDR Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods, hotels and restaurants, transport, storage and communication, financial intermediation, real estate, renting and business activities are the second most important categories of employment with 30 % of total employees. Among the Hungarian Danube Regions, this rate is a relatively low proportion. The sectors of Public administration and defence, compulsory social security; education; health and social work; other community, social and personal service activities; private households have a share of 17%, the lowest proportion among Hungarian Danube regions.

According to NACE classification, the largest Average Monthly Salary has been achieved in the following sectors: financial intermediation, electricity, gas and water supply and retail trade. There is a significant difference between level of wages in the region of Bratislava and rest of the Slovakian regions. The income level of the cross-border region is relatively similar: an average gross nominal monthly salary was 690,23 € in the region of Nitra in 2008, which is the third lowest value in comparison with other regions in the Slovak Republic, while average gross nominal monthly salary in was approximately 600 € in the region of Komárom-Esztergom in 2008. This value is much above the average in comparison to other regions in Hungary, and it is the second largest, if we compare it to the Hungarian Danube Regions. Furthermore, the economic crisis has substantially affected the incomes of the households, causing rise of unemployment, wage-rationalization by the companies.

The CDR's dominant agricultural potential can be found in the Northern part. The agricultural land area takes over 70 % of the Northern (Slovakian) part of the CDR. The region is one of the leading producers of agricultural crops such as wheat, barley, corn, peas, sugar, tobacco, sunflower seeds and it is the largest producer of cereals, sugar beet and grapes. Animal production is focused on rearing of poultry and pigs. The Southern region of the CDR is originally a highly industrialised region, 26 % of its area is being covered by forests, while the mountainous area is rich in primary resources (e. g. brown coal). Mainly limestone and dolomite are being exploited at the present times. The former bauxite and coal (100 million tons) occurrences are still being exploited, but their utilization is not economic and environmentally hazardous.



Turning to the question of unemployment, there is considerable difference in the change of unemployment rates in Slovakian and Hungarian part of the CDR. The unemployment rate indicator in the Slovakian part decreased from 23,1 (2001) to 8,8 % (2008), however, after the economic crisis this ratio reached again 20 % in 2010. The unemployment rate indicator in the Hungarian part reported no change from 2001 to 2008. In 2008, the employees worked mainly in the tertiary sectors, especially in retail trade and real estate business. The significant portion of workforce was employed in the industry sector as well.

3. The development of the cross-border cooperation

3.1 History and the process of its establishment

This part of the case study attempts to give a brief and quick insight into the development of the cross-border cooperation in the selected region. Pons Danubii, as an EGTC, was officially registered on 16th of December 2010 and it was the 15th EGTC in the European Union. The decision to establish the Pons Danubii EGTC was a bottom up initiative and it was made as a joint agreement of all the members. The main initiator of the cross-border cooperation establishment was the Mayor of Tata, namely, József Michl, who was the most active participant during the whole formation process.

The aim of the grouping is to facilitate non-discrimination and to provide equal opportunities for all the local institutions on both sides of the cross-border region, to enable and support the development of economic and social cohesion in the municipal territory of the settlements. It aims to reach this goal through implementation of programmes in the form of territorial cooperation co-financed by the European Union.

Actual members of the Pons Danubii EGTC are the following cities from Hungary and Slovakia: Komárom (HU), Tata (HU), Kisbér (HU), Oroszlány (HU) and Komárno (SK), Hurbanovo (SK), Kolárovo (SK). However, an important regional city, Nové Zámky (SK), has decided not to join to the Pons Danubii EGTC because of the initial dilemmas about the questions: which city will be the leader of the grouping and where will be the office of the EGTC.

4. Organizational and institutional structure, operation

4.1 Structure and description of organizational units

The organizational structure of the cooperation consists of:

- **General Assembly** - consists of Mayors of member cities and towns
- **President** – nowadays it is the Mayor of Komárno
- **Vice President** – (s)he is elected by the General Assembly
- **Supervisory board** – it is elected by the General Assembly
- **Director** – it is Zoltán Barra
- **Secretariat** – it is responsible to the Director

In following paragraphs is each organisational unit of the Grouping briefly described. All information about competences of each organs of the Pons Danubii EGTC is taken from its Statutes. The Statutes were obtained via email request.

General Assembly is the highest organisational unit of the Grouping. It consists of all member cities and towns and it elects the President and the Vice President. Among its main competences belongs the ability that it approves Statutes and Conventions of the Grouping, which are the most important documents for the EGTC. Another significant competences rest in following tasks: it approves budget, long term program, every year operation plan and the annual report of the activities and management, it decides on the use of profits and payment of losses. It also decides on the cancellation, fusion or splitting of the Grouping and it decides on proposals to change the facts entered in the register. Furthermore it elects the President and the Vice President of the Assembly, it elects and dismisses the Director and determines the conditions of his employment, it votes and dismisses members of the Supervisory board and it elects and removes the auditor on the proposal of the Supervisory board.

President convenes meetings of the General Assembly where proposes The Rules of Procedure. (S) He represents the Grouping in relation to third parties in matters of the EGTC. Among his/her most important rights and obligations also belongs: (s)he takes care of the proper settlement of funds provided by members of the Grouping or third parties, controls their management and use, controls expenditure accounts, issues the authorization to conduct financial operations, approves proposals of conceptual, strategic contracts with third parties and their conclusion prior to signature by the Director, cooperates in the implementation of the decisions of the Assembly, monitors the performance of the orders as well as activities of the Director and the Vice President, cooperates with the Director on behalf of the Assembly, submits employers rights and controls activities to the Director. In addition the President performs other tasks entrusted by the Assembly or the Statutes.

Vice President substitutes the President in his/her absence. Vice Presidents rights and obligations are: (s) he cooperates with the President in relation to the management of the general activities of the Assembly, initiates and maintains contact with various organizations and institutions, develops international professional relations to deepen the professional activities of the Grouping, initiates parallel proposals for the Director and moreover, (s)he provides other tasks set by the Assembly or the Statutes.

Supervisory board is a control unit of the Grouping. Its main activities are: it reviews the annual accounts, annual report and the concept of the budget and it also submits its opinion to the Assembly. Moreover it controls the accounting and processing of other documents, warns the Assembly on the identified shortcomings and makes suggestions for their removal and submits to the Assembly a proposal for the removal of the Director. In addition it participates through its members at the meeting of the General Assembly with an advisory capacity and warns the Assembly on violated legislation, Articles of the Statutes of the EGTC.

Director is statutory authority who acts on behalf of the Grouping. Among his/her main rights and obligations belong: (s) he coordinates the implementation of the objectives of the EGTC, represents comprehensive legal, contractual, ethical, financial and administrative management of the Grouping. The Director also coordinates enlargement of the EGTC, develops and prepares necessary documents, is responsible for bookkeeping of the Grouping in accordance with the legislation and prepares decisions in exclusive competence of the Assembly. Furthermore (s)he develops and implements the monitoring and controlling of the Grouping, monitors the degree of indicators performance contained in the projects, depending on their objectives. In addition the Director represents the cooperation within the acceptance of contractual rights and obligations in accordance with the Statutes and legislation, builds partnership, business interests in favour of the Grouping, manages personnel affairs, process agreements related to the admission process, negotiates employment contracts and agreements on work performance and related acts. (S)He also provides other tasks set by the Assembly, the Statutes or the legislation.

Secretariat ensures smoothness operation of the Grouping and provides tasks in accordance with the guidelines of the Director. Among significant tasks and responsibilities of the Secretariat belongs: it assembles budget of the cooperation, ensures compliance with legislation in the financial sector and in the field of accounting, it processes whole financial management of the EGTC and handles administration of the Grouping. Moreover it keeps a register of members and other relevant records, prepares meetings of the Assembly, provides technical and financial plans approved by the Assembly, performs financial and accounting operations of the Grouping and keeps records. In addition it oversees the cooperation economy in accordance with its budget, ensures the use of funds in accordance with the law and keeps records, provides substantive and administrative activities of the Grouping and registers a resolution approved by the authorities of the EGTC and methods of their implementation.



Since the establishment of the Grouping, the organizational structure has not been changed. The Director of the Pons Danubii EGTC is Zoltán Bara. He lives in Komárno, Slovakia. The working language of the Grouping is Hungarian. Use of the Hungarian language as the primary working language of the Grouping is determined by historical aspect of the cross-border region, specifically its linguistic and ethnic structure is dominantly Hungarian. Nevertheless, all the documents and brochures are published and printed in three languages – Hungarian, Slovak and English. Also the website of the Grouping is available in three languages.

5. Composition of the working organs

5.1 Description of employees

The total number of employees depends on the number of projects. It has 4 employees for full time job: three employees work in Komárno and one works in Tata. All of them are citizens of the involved cities. Moreover, the Grouping may hire additional professional experts in order to manage specific parts of the project.

6. Main activity areas/profile

6.1 Current projects and associated areas

The EGTCs is active in various types of projects that are created on the basis of members' needs and possibilities to gain financial contributions. The aim of the Grouping is to enable and support the development of economic and social cohesion of the territory. Furthermore, the aim of the Grouping is to follow a non-distinction policy: local actors must have equal opportunities on national and cross-border level, thus it works with the issues like unemployment, mobility, information exchange and promotion of attractiveness of the involved territory.

The cooperation is involved in several activities:

- establishment of a regional web portal and e-Content development;
- production and broadcasting of general and thematic television programmes covering cross-border issues;
- ensuring bilingual flow, design and distribution of special publications;
- establishment of a Media Office supporting information flow, establishment of an information transmission system;
- delivery of marketing campaigns promoting ICT use with special attention paid to the disadvantaged population.

There are three substantial projects which were managed by the Pons Danubii EGTC. The next part of the paper analyses these projects, namely WORKMARKET, media project and information leaflets.

6.1.1 Workmarket

One of the principal projects of the Pons Danubii EGTC is the Labour Market Project: **WORKMARKET** (HUSK/1101/1.6.2)¹. It was launched at the beginning of 2014 in Komárno (SK)/Komárom (HU) region. The project was implemented by the Pons Danubii EGTC on both sides of the border. The partner institutions are the following institutions: J. Selye University and the Labour Office in Komárno.

The initiative received funds from the Hungary-Slovakia Cross-Border Co-operation Programme (2007-2013). The total budget of the project was € 201 360 and it was divided in the following

¹ Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Work. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.ponsdanubii.eu/en/work/>. [Accessed: 6th December 2014].

way: 5% own contribution, 10% state contribution and 85% ERDF contribution. The finances were divided into three parts. The Labour Office in Komárno received € 60 000; J. Selye University get € 74,000 and the Pons Danubii EGTC covered the costs of the project from the remaining funding of € 67 000.

Table 2: Expenses for project WORKMARKET

	Budget of the Pons Danubii EGTC (EUR)	Budget of J. Selye University (EUR)	Budget of Labour Office in Komárno (EUR)
Total budget (100%)	67360	74000	59700
ERDF contribution (85%)	57256	63155	50754
State contribution (10%)	6736	7430	8955
Own contribution (5%)	3368	3715	0

Source: Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Work. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.ponsdanubii.eu/en/work/>. [Accessed: 6th December 2014].

The Director of Pons Danubii pointed out that the labour market in the region faces challenges and the implemented project has had a significant importance to the region. He also added that surveys will be conducted as well as databases and statistics are to be prepared in order to provide help for investors, employers and jobseekers. The training courses were designed on the basis of the current challenges and needs. Two job forums took place in autumn, one in Hungary and one in Slovakia. Mrs. Mária Poláčková, the Director of the local Labour Office, pointed out that they were happy to join the initiative since unemployment is one of the biggest problems in the region. The office was involved in the project in the following ways: offering requalification and training courses in order to help jobseekers to find new jobs. General courses will also be available in the framework of the project. The J. Selye University will focus on monitoring the first phase of the project. An online survey is also being conducted and 1300 entrepreneurs are to be surveyed from Hungary and Slovakia. These surveys will find out the needs of businesses/jobseekers and the training programmes will be designed in accordance with those needs.

Facts and figures about the Workmarket project:

- 1 website designed for job seekers and employers
- 2 studies in Hungarian and Slovak languages on the current state of the labour market and development opportunities
- getting in touch with 400 businesses
- informing 250 000 people
- training programmes for 200 jobseekers
- 2 job forums organised in Hungary and Slovakia
- organization of 10 study trips
- total budget of the project is €201 360

The project is a new opportunity for the partners to establish cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. It will help them to reach their common goals in the field of cross-border labour-market cooperation. The projects' aim is to follow a non-discrimination policy so that employers and employees have equal opportunities in their own country and on both sides of the border.

6.1.2 The Media Project²

Implementation of the media project started on 1st January 2013 and it lasted for 22 months. The project facilitated cultural development and the development of tourism. The reason for this is that the e-Content created the framework of the project which is available not only for people in the cross-border region but also for anyone else in the world. The main idea behind the project (HUSK/1001/2.5.2/0019) was to provide more information for the residents about the region. This was reached by the means of an online television channel. In other words, a large number of interesting events took place in the regions which were worth to be presented to the partner citizens, thus the Media Office ran by the Pons Danubii EGTC helped people to get to know and be aware about the importance and significance of the cross-border region and cross-border cooperation.

The project associate the local TV channels and it reinforced information and news exchange on a joint platform. This exciting initiative was launched by seven members of the grouping (Komárno, Komárom, Hurbanovo, Kolárovo, Tata, Oroszlány and Kisbér) in cooperation with the town of Nové Zámky (Slovakia) and the village of Svodín (Slovakia). Komárno became headquarter of this project. This decision was influenced by the fact that the city lays in the centre of the region and because of its bilingual character, consequently, Komárno proved to be an ideal location for the production of bilingual video content. The Media Office was set up during the first weeks of the implementation in the Media House in Komárno. The equipment and the amenities of the Media House provided ideal conditions for editorial work and for the completion of related tasks. The meetings were held on the premises. The presence of other editorial offices in the Media House guaranteed that the PDTV had an access to the latest news in the region. The staff of the PDTV consisted of four full-time employees: a project manager, a Hungarian and a Slovak editor, and a system administrator and coordinator. There were three other people who took part in the completion of the tasks, to be specific, one in Nové Zámky and two in Svodín. The project managers had regular meetings 43 times.

At the first stage, a web platform was set up. The video contents were uploaded to this website. All project partners could broadcast equal slots on the main page. The sequence of video

² Bara, Z. (2013). *Brochure*. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC. Obtained via email request.

contents changed randomly. Most of the contents were subtitled so that they were available in Slovak and in Hungarian alike and some of them were even dubbed.

The staff of the PDTV produced five bilingual videos each week, which amounted to a total of 440 videos in 22 months. The total length of the videos content was around 4,000 minutes. Reportages produced by local television channels were also broadcasted by the PDTV. These local TV channels produced two videos a week, hence 176 videos were produced in total with a combined length of 1,700 minutes. All videos were uploaded to a central server. This central server played a major role, because it was not only a storage space for the PDTV programmes, but the participating local TV channels could download and broadcast the videos produced in other towns.

As a result, the project contributed to the increased permeability of the former borders. The short programmes on the channel, available both in Hungarian and Slovak language, covered a variety of local events. They were mostly news reports about cultural and other social events, but they also dealt with renewable energy sources as well as with the impacts of climate change.

The project drew people's attention to the importance of environmental consciousness and to the need to preserve natural beauties of the region. The online television channel is available on the following website, <http://www.ponsdanubii.eu/webtv/hu/>. In order to keep a long-term contact with the viewers, the web portal can be followed on Facebook ([facebook.com/PonsDanubiiWebtv](https://www.facebook.com/PonsDanubiiWebtv)) also.

After the termination of the project, the Pons Danubii EGTC will attempt to maintain the existence of the website for further 5 years.

Table 3: Expenses for THE MEDIA PROJECT

	Description
Code number	HUSK/1001/2.5.2/0019
Title of the project	Crossing borders by information in the Pons Danubii border project
Total project budget	270 980,64 EUR, with and ERDF contribution of 230 333,54 EUR
Budget of the Pons Danubii	209 090,64 EUR, with and ERDF contribution of 177 727,04 EUR
Budget of the town Nové Zámky	28 940 EUR, with and ERDF contribution of 24 599 EUR
Budget of the town Svodín	32 950 EUR, with and ERDF contribution of 28 007,50 EUR

Source: Bara, Z. (2013). Brochure. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC. Obtained via email request.

Facts and figures about the media project:

- cooperation of the Pons Danubii EGTC with 9 local TV channels from 9 settlements;
- 1 central editorial office with 7 employees;
- 616 bilingual programmes with a combined length of 5.700 minutes;
- around 650.000 website visits were registered during the project;
- 3 new web portals and e-content development;
- 1 regional database, 1 audio and video recordings;
- 1 annual multimedia reports.

Media project workshops and roadshows³:

The project was officially launched on 18th of April 2012, in Tata. Several municipal representatives and members of the local media teams also attended the event. There were 61 guests who represented 33 institutions. The opening ceremony took place at the municipal hall of Tata.

Six workshops were organized in the framework of the project. The first one was held on 8 and 9th of November 2012 in Nové Zámky. Another workshop took place in Svodín on 26th of April 2013. The number of attendants was around 20 and 27. The remaining 4 workshops were organized by the Pons Danubii EGTC. The third one took place in Komárno on 29 and 30th of April 2013 with 22 attendants and in October 2013 the media representatives met three times.

Moreover, PDTV organized three roadshows in order to promote the channel among people. These took place at popular festivals so that a large number of people could see them. The stand of the Pons Danubii EGTC could be visited at the Komárno-Komárom Days Festival in April in 2012 and 2013 too, where the PDTV was promoted with videos, printed PR materials and free gifts. The third Media Roadshow was held on 17th of October 2013 at the national Tourist Destination Management Conference in Tata. What is more, PDTV newsletters were sent out to local media in order to draw attention to the project. Brief information in three languages was also designed, in which the participants and the main aims of the project were described. The project was also promoted with a roll-up as well as in TV commercials and radio advertisements. Moreover, there were numerous printed media appearances. All partners made free gifts, which were distributed at a number of events in order to promote the project.

The closing conference of the project took place on 30th of October 2013 in Komárno in the great hall of the Officers's Pavilion.

³ Bara, Z. (2013). *Brochure*. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC. Obtained via email request.

How the media project can be linked to other initiatives?

While producing video materials, special attention was paid to the production of content that can also be used in the long run. These are videos that do not necessarily cover the latest events but introduce and promote the values of the region. Several films focusing on gastronomy and tourism were produced, which were later used in the framework of other initiatives as well.

Furthermore, QR map of a town was designed for the first time in the region which involved information about the local space. With the help of this new tool, the town centre of Komárno is promoted and introduced in a new and modern way. 22 QR codes help the visitors to receive more valuable, fast and useful information about the town's sights. The codes can be easily scanned with smart phones. After scanning the specific QR code, information, pictures and videos are displayed on the screen about the specific sight/place in three languages. Visitors can scan the codes right on the spot and get useful information, including the PDTV videos.

Another interesting project of the Pons Danubii EGTC was Komárom-Komárno-Kolárovo Cycle Path.⁴

The application for grant to finance the construction of cycle path between Komárno and Kolárovo was submitted by the Pons Danubii EGTC in partnership with the Fort Monostor Non-Profit Ltd. in Komárom, Hungary. According to the plans the new section will be built between the river Váh and the town of Kolárovo. It will be 17.324 kilometres long. Another 2.2-kilometre-long new section will be constructed around the forts in the neighbouring Komárom, Hungary. 85% of the investment, around €2.6 million, will be covered from the EU funds in the framework of the cross-border cooperation programme. 10% will be financed from state subsidies and the municipalities will have to provide 5% in the form of own contribution.

Table 4: Expenses for project KOMÁROM-KOMÁRNO-KOLÁROVO CYCLE PATH

	Pons Danubii (Lead partner)	Monostori Erőd (Project partner)	Komárno	Kolárovo
Total budget (100%)	2110432,08	360355		
ERDF contribution (85%)	1793867,25	306301,75		
State contribution (10%)	211043,20	36035,50		
Own contribution (5%)	105521,62	18017,75	80460,22	25061,38

Source: Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Pons Danubii Projects. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.ponsdanubii.eu/en/pons-danubii-projects/>. [Accessed: 6th December 2014].

In the framework of the project, new sections of cycle path will be built both in Komárno and Komárom, which means that the paths will be connected to the Vienna-Budapest section of the

⁴ Bara, Z. (2013). Brochure. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC. Obtained via email request.

Atlantic-Black Sea EuroVelo 6 route that is the main aim of the project. The project was elaborated in accordance with the development plans of three towns and in line with the cycle path development plan.

It is also aimed at the reconstruction and further improvement of the existing cycle paths. The reason for this is that the low quality of some of the existing routes hinders dynamic tourism development in the region. The quality of the routes must be improved in order to generate appropriate tourist environment for bicycle tourism. The beauty of the nature along the Váh and the Danube rivers provides a unique cycling experience for all.

6.1.3 Information leaflets

Specific type of project was implemented with the aim to promote and inform through leaflets. Leaflets were made in three languages – English, Slovak and Hungarian, thus every citizen of the region can have an easy access to information. Most leaflets contain QR codes, which can be used by smartphone or tablet and they provide complete information about various attractions, interesting places and objects in the area. During the next few pages, three leaflets are presented to the readers about the local wineries; about local cultural and tourist attractions in Komárno; and about tourist cycle routes of the region.

This leaflet gives information about tasty and savoury wines that are produced in the region bounded by the cities of Komárno, Štúrovo and Strekov village. Unique soil composition and the traditional methods, which are used in the production process, originate a unique quality and taste of these wines. The leaflet gives brief information about the most important wine cellars of the region. This information is important because local wine production has its centuries old tradition and history, thus local wineries may generate capacity for tourism.



Vinárstva komárňanskeho regiónu

PIVNICE HENGERICS
Péter Hengerics je komárňanským vinárom, jeho majetok sa nachádza v Komárnici, vzdalenej na 3 km od Hurburova. Región, disponuje vynikajúcimi ekologickými podmienkami, hlinná správa pôdy poskytuje výborne podmienky k pestovaniu hrozna. Vinárstvo sa venovali už aj jeho predkovia – starí rodáci i rodina – príchom majetku rozprestretým na na 8 hektároch sa začal pisať v roku 1925.
+421 905 765 989 • www.hengerics.sk

STREKOV 1075
Vinárstvo založil Tibor Melecsky a Zoltán Sinič v roku 2002, od roku 2012 prevzal vedenie vinárstva v plnej miere Zoltán Sinič. Z úrody získanej zo svojich 12-hektárových záhonov obhlievaných formou ekologického vinohradníctva pripravujú autentické vína bez akýchkoľvek prísad. Tíhajú percent výsadby pestujú na kopcoch, v ich názvoch zachovali tradičné, staré mená stekovských záhonov.
+421 905 649 615 • www.strekov1075.sk

PIVNICE MÁTYÁS
Komárňanský vína, jeho vinohrady sa nachádzajú na kopcoch pri Novej Vieske, v pahorkatine ťahajúcej sa medzi Sítařevom a Komárnom. Jeho základná filozofia pestovania révy a prípravy vína je založená na návrate k prírode, ovocie vína je obohaté a vína pripravuje tradičným spôsobom.
+421 905 329 887 • www.matyasvinec.sk

VINTOP KARKÓ
Vinárstvo vedel Jánosom Karkóom bolo založené v roku 1992. V súčasnosti má 18 hektárov révy, ročne vyrobí 100 000 litrov vína. Pod záštitou na spracovanie hrozna sa nachádza rejno klenutá pivnica o celkovej dĺžke 120 m, v ktorej dozrieva uskladnené víno.
+421 905 275 262 • www.vintop-karko.sk

RODINNÉ VINÁRSTVO GEORGINA
Pivnica Gejza Nagyja sa nachádza v Kolárove, vinohrady zas v stekovskej oblasti. Pevnosť a hĺbkata pŕda je hĺbkovata, s vysokým obsahom vitamínu. Vďaka jej dĺžkate a miestnemu mikroklímu sa ich vína charakteristické typickým obsahom kyselín. Cieľom vinára je výroba jedinečných vín modernými i tradičnými metódami. Svoje vína charakteristické pre daný región pripravujú bez akýchkoľvek prísad.
+421 905 386 706 • www.georginafarma.sk

VINÁRSTVO PRIGYESA BOTLA
So svojou rodinou típa v Novej Sítaři, v mestskej časti Komárno. Jeho vinohrady sa nachádzajú pri Sítařevu, na južných svahoch maďarských kopcov. Viera Prigyesa Botta v silu prirodzenej prípravy vína trvalá už v pondavovatej révy, obohatá na silných kyselínach a mávny začiatkom. Osvetlil poznosť venuje výsadbe starých, tradičných odrôd regiónu.
+421 905 222 995 • www.botrigyes.sk

TAMÁS A GÁBOR KASNYIK
Za výdatnej pomoci otcej matky pracujú v centre maďarskej vinnej oblasti na rodinnom majetku nachádzajúcom na kopcoch medzi obcami Strekov a Sárkán. Filozofia tohto vinárstva je založená na prirodých danostiach stekovských vinohradov, prídavnosom obrábaní révy a výsadbe tradičnej výsadby vína.
+421 903 251 950 • www.kasnyikvinec.sk

Kvalita vína palperomerech z révy pastovinej v regióne obrábanosom mestami Komárno, Sítařev a obcami Strekov, pivnicec coras viac: milovníkov vína o tom, že jedinečné dĺžkate najvyšej pŕdy dĺžkate vína nímadorajú prichut. Coras vína vlnosť sa pripravujú k tradičným metódami spracovania hroznaého mŕoska, a vďaka tomu je ovocia a čistú prírodných vína ešte výraznejšia. Mŕosť najvyššieho maďarskeho vlnosťvína vína vína a pomie dĺžkate, z výsadby sem má v tomto regióne stáročie vlnosť. Ochutnajte tak nímame podkŕy!

 Európa pre občanov


Komárno: Komárno je mesto, ktoré sa nachádza v maďarskej oblasti. Táto stránka obsahuje iba informácie o Komárne a nie je zodpovedná za akékoľvek iné informácie, ktoré môžu byť uvedené.

Figure 5: Winery in the Komárno region (Leaflet)
Source: Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Winery in the Komárno region. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC.



Figure 6: Information about tourist attractions in Komárno (Leaflet)
Source: Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Information about tourist attractions in Komárno.
Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC.

The second leaflet provides an overview of 22 attractions, cultural sites and places of interest for visitors of Komárno. All these places are clearly marked on the map, which is a simple and transparent way of orientation in the streets of Komárno. Among the most significant attractions are the New fortress, the Old fortress, European courtyard, the Evangelical Church, the Danube museum, the Statue of Franz Lehár, the Elisabeth Bridge and the Jókai Theatre.



TURISTICKE CYKLOTRASY

Komárno okolie

Objavte región na dvoch kolesách!

5 finančnou podporou Európskej únie v rámci programu Európa pre ľudí

www.ponsdanubii.eu

Širšie okolie Komárna, od Taty až po Kolárovo ponúka množstvo vzrušujúcich dobrodružstiev pre cyklistov. Môžete si vybrať z trás vhodných pre celé rodiny i takých, ktoré sú pre cyklistov výšovou výzvou. Miestami si môžete vychutnať krásy prírody, nachádza sa tu však aj mnoho ďalších atrakcií.

Európska komisia poskytuje podporu projektovým náhľadov. Táto publikácia odráža iba názory autora a komisia nemôže byť zodpovedná za tu uvedených informácií pre akékoľvek použitie.

01. Komárno – Nová Osada – Kolárovo – Vrbová nad Váhom – Kava – Lándor – Komárno (štrková hradza, starý asfalt)
Zaujímavosti: Vodný mlyn v Kolárove, hlavné námestie, samoty medzi Kolárovom a Kavou, Martovce – Fesztyho park
Občerstvenie: Vodný mlyn v Kolárove, reštaurácie a cukrárne v centre mesta
mtb / cross / hobby / profesionálne + 30 km

02. Komárno – Nová Osada – Kolárovo – Vrbová nad Váhom – Hliník – Martovce – Lándor – Komárno (štrková hradza, starý asfalt, miestami betón, hradza, asfalt)
Zaujímavosti: Vodný mlyn v Kolárove, hlavné námestie, samoty medzi Kolárovom a Kavou, Martovce – Fesztyho park
Občerstvenie: Vodný mlyn v Kolárove, reštaurácie a cukrárne v centre mesta, Martovce – hosťinec: Patka, Lándor – penzión Divá kačica
mtb / cross / hobby / profesionálne + 60 km

03. Komárno – Kava – Hliník – Martovce – Vék – Hurbanovo – Svätý Peter – Chotín – Komárno (asfalt, miestami betón)
Zaujímavosti: Martovce – Fesztyho park, Hurbanovo – hviezdaren, Zámok Fesztyovcov, Svätý Peter – hlavné námestie
Občerstvenie: Martovce – hosťinec: Patka, Hurbanovo – viac reštaurácií, Chotín – vinárstvo a penzión Sault, Bociana čarda
cross / pretekárske / hobby / profesionálne + 45 km

04. Komárno – Kelemenntia (Leányvár) – Iža – Patince – Patince kúpele (hradza, miestami štrková, od Iže možnosť výberu medzi asfaltovou cestou alebo možnosť pokračovať po hradze)
Zaujímavosti: Kelemenntia (Leányvár), kúpele Patince
Občerstvenie: reštaurácie vo všetkých osadách
mtb / cross / začiatčník / hobby + 15 km

05. Komárno – Kelemenntia (Leányvár) – Iža – Patince – Zitava – Marcelová – Chotín – Komárno (hradza, asfalt)
Zaujímavosti: Kelemenntia (Leányvár), kúpele Patince, zitaavský pomník
Občerstvenie: reštaurácie vo všetkých osadách
mtb / cross / hobby + 43 km

06. Komárno – Iža – Patince – Vrt – Marcelová – Srobarová – Mudroňovo – Svätý Peter – Chotín – Komárno (asfalt po celej trase)
Zaujímavosti: Kelemenntia (Leányvár), kúpele Patince, Svätý Peter
Občerstvenie: Iža – viac reštaurácií, Patince – hosťinec: Patka, Patince kúpele – viac možností, Marcelová – reštaurácia Lipa, Chotín – vinárstvo a penzión Sault, Bociana čarda
cross / pretekárske / hobby / profesionálne + 50 km

07. Komárno – Svätý Peter – Dulovca – Pribeta – Hurbanovo – Vék – Martovce – Hliník – Kava – Lándor – Komárno (asfalt, miestami betón)
Občerstvenie: Martovce – Patka, Hurbanovo – viac reštaurácií, Svätý Peter
cross / pretekárske / hobby / profesionálne + 60 km

08. Komárno – Svätý Peter – Dulovca – Pribeta – Hurbanovo – Svätý Peter – Chotín – Komárno (asfalt po celej trase)
Občerstvenie: Reštaurácie v každej osade
cross / pretekárske / hobby / profesionálne + 60 km

09. Komárno – Lándor – po brehu rieky Stará Nitra až do Martoviec, potom na východný breh Zitava, späť do Komárna cez Lándor (asfalt, hradza)
Zaujímavosti: príroda v okolí riek Nitra a Zitava, Martovce – Fesztyho park
Občerstvenie: Reštaurácie v každej osade
mtb + hobby + 35 km

10. Komárno – Iža – Patince – Zitava – Radvaň n. Dunajom – Moča – Búč (asfalt)
Občerstvenie: Reštaurácie v každej osade
cross / pretekárske / začiatčník / hobby + 30 km

11. Komárno – hradza pri Dunaji – Čičov (hradza, miestami asfalt alebo štrka)
Zaujímavosti: ostrov pri Veľkom Leli, Čičovský kaštieľ, pamätné drevené stĺpy, chránená prírodná oblasť
Občerstvenie: Isten v Čičove
mtb + hobby / profesionálne + 53 km

12. Komárno – Kameničná – Calovec – Violín – Stórová – Okolická na Ostrove – Zlatná na Ostrove – Nová Stráž – Komárno (asfalt, betón)
Zaujímavosti: príroda
Občerstvenie: Kameničná, Okolická na Ostrove, Zlatná na Ostrove – reštaurácie, Nová Stráž – cukrárna, zmrzlina
cross / pretekárske / hobby + 44 km

13. Kolárovo – Zemianska Oľza – Tóň – Čičov (asfalt)
Zaujímavosti: kaštieľ v Čičove, pamätné drevené stĺpy, chránená prírodná oblasť
Občerstvenie: Zemianska Oľza, Tóň, Trávnik, Čičov – reštaurácie
cross / pretekárske / začiatčník / hobby + 30 km

14. Monoštorská pevnosť – Igmánska pevnosť – Hviezdna pevnosť – Bratislavská brána – baľty I-VI – pri baľte VII na cyklotrase, až k hradu (asfalt, štrk, macácie hlavy)
Zaujímavosti: Komárňanský pevnostný syst., baľta VI – rímske lapidárium
mtb / cross / pretekárske / výstroj / začiatčník / hobby + 15 km

15. Komárom – Mocs – Kocs – Tata – späť do Komáru po starej ceste (asfalt, miestami výmoly)
Zaujímavosti: Kocs – múzeum kočiarov, krajinný dom, Tata – kúpalisko, Vodný hrad
Občerstvenie: Reštaurácie v každej osade
pretekárske / cross / začiatčník / hobby + 31 km

16. Tata – Szomód – Dunaszentmiklós – Vinárstvo Hilltop – Neszmély – Dunaalmás – Tata (asfalt, miestami výmoly)
Zaujímavosti: Vinárstvo Hilltop
Občerstvenie: Reštaurácie v každej osade
pretekárske / cross / začiatčník / hobby + 28 km

17. Tata – Vértesszőlös – Tardos – Bikol puzista – Sütő – Dunaszentmiklós – Szomód – Tata (asfalt, miestami kaľuže)
Zaujímavosti: Vértesszőlös – múzeum pračloveka z doby kamennej, Sütő – Rákócziho lipa, kaštieľ Reviczkyovcov, park Svätého Štefana
Občerstvenie: reštaurácie vo všetkých osadách
mtb / cross / hobby / profesionálne + 53 km



Figure 7: Cycle paths in Komárno and its surroundings (Leaflet)

Source: Pons Danubii EGTC. (2014). Cycle paths in Komárno and its surroundings. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC.

The last leaflet published by the Pons Danubii EGTC provides information about tourist cycling routes in Komárno and its wider surroundings. 17 cycle paths are marked on the map with their brief description. Each route is identified by its unique number, level of difficulty, place of its beginning/end, overall length and a list of attractions and objects of interest that are located on the route. Therefore, this leaflet provides a complete overview for all bicycle lovers.

7. Management, budget (incomes/expenses)

7.1 The cross-border cooperation's economy

In the Pons Danubiis Statutes is stated that the cooperation is a legal person under the law of EGTC. It can acquire rights, assume obligation, acquire movable and immovable property and be a party to proceedings before courts and other authorities. Therefore, the cooperation has its own budget and own budget plan.

Individual projects are financed through own contribution and from the taken loans. After completing the project, funds are reimbursed by the European Union. The time gap between the outlay and reimbursement usually takes one year which might cause some financial problems, nevertheless, the organization has managed to operate with surplus which helps to overcome the gap between own contribution and reimbursement.

Incomes of the cooperation consist from:

- deposits and membership fees (membership fee is 0.50 EUR per capita);
- incomes from economic and business activities after taxation (incomes from events, advertising activities and own activities);
- donations or contributions from individuals and legal entities;
- heritage;
- financial support from the State;
- funds received through grants;
- contribution of funds;
- other incomes.

8. SWOT-analysis

This chapter aims to summarize the research and investigation of the case study. The recapitulation of the acquired and obtained information is done through SWOT analysis, where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are enumerated.

Strengths (S)

- Functional organization of the grouping, the Pons Danubii EGTC is active in several areas of interests what is reflected in developed and future projects.
- Ability to find a consensus among member cities. It is an enormous advantage of this EGTC because of its low number of members, hence communication and exchange of information and/or interests between the stakeholders is faster, clearer and easier.
- Flexibility in additional employment, use of managers and experts on individual projects. The organization is able to quickly hire specialists for unique project parts.
- Agreed scheme by individual members is € 0,50 per capita. This amount provides significant part of the budget and it secures the organizations performance without difficulties.
- All employees have university degree and years of experiences. Employees of the organization are well educated professionals and specialists.
- Historical, cultural, ethnic and linguistic relations in involved cities and towns. Common historical feature makes the communication and negotiations between partners much easier.
- All information materials about the EGTC outputs, like brochures, leaflets and articles on the website are written in three languages (English, Slovak and Hungarian). It is thoughtful for both nationalities and potential tourists to provide them with the same quality and amount of information.

Weaknesses (W)

- Different conditions and opportunities in individual cities. Each city and town that is a member of the Pons Danubii EGTC has its own investment plan and development visions.
- Political influence on the performance of the organization. It is natural that every voted representative wants for his settlement the highest possible investments.
- Dependence on external financial sources. The development depends on contribution from European funds and other sources.
- Problematic perception of the grouping's name by the citizens. The name of the Grouping, Pons Danubii, is in Latin language and it means 'bridge over the Danube'.

Nevertheless, it would be much easier and more understandable for the local citizens, if the name of the Grouping was in English or in Hungarian language.

- Problematic perception of the groupings by the Slovak authorities. According to the Director of the EGTC, perception of the EGTC is different in Slovakia and in Hungary. The problem lays in the fact, that the Slovak authorities have fewer experiences with these kinds of co-operations than the Hungarian ones.

Opportunities (O)

- New project calls for EU funds for the period 2014-2020. New investment period will bring new possibilities for new development projects.
- The possibility to apply for subsidies from the regional development agencies in Slovakia.
- Potential expansion of the Grouping by the city of Nové Zámky. With membership of Nové Zámky, the Grouping's budget will be profoundly extended.

Threats (T)

- Different approaches of state administration in Slovakia and Hungary. Their future non-cooperation would bring unnecessary obstacles for the EGTC.
- Competition from a large number of similar cross-border groupings in the region which can reduce the success of project calls. The number of EGTCs and other forms of cooperation on Slovak and Hungarian cross-border region is high.
- Higher number of members can lower the flexibility of the decision making process. Actual number of members is convenient. In case of its progressive expansion, the cooperation and communication will be more and more difficult because more voices have to be heard.
- Future negative economic prognosis of members can limit either the cross-border cooperation or the financial possibilities of the Grouping. Thanks to the persistent world economic crisis and negative demographic trends, the amount of membership fees will progressively decrease.

9. Future plans and goals of the cooperation

This chapter attempts to inform the reader about the future plans and goals of the Grouping. The Pons Danubii EGTC plans to undertake several future plans and projects in the area of tourism. These ambitions are the following, construction of cycle path between the city of Komárno and the village of Číčov, it will expand the existing cycle path network in the area. The new cycle road will provide new possibilities for relaxation and recreation either for the local residents or for other visitors and tourists. The next plan is the cycle paths across Komárno, Dunajská Streda, Topoľníky and Kolárovo. Building cycle route between Komárno, Dunajská Streda, Topoľníky and Kolárovo will extend the existing cycle network. Importance of this project is that the implementation of this project will link all the large Slovak cities of the region with cycle routes. The third future cycle plan is the promotion and development of tourism in the whole area. One of the main goals of the Grouping is to be engaged in tourism, i.e. to make the region attractive and to attract tourists. One possibility for achieving this goal is the establishment of a tourist organization, which would present attractions and interesting sights in each member city and town for all potential tourists.

10. Unique, regionally specific features of the cooperation

Unique feature of this Grouping lays in common history. This aspect is reflected in common culture, traditions, language, shared values and mutual understanding. That's the reason why the Pons Danubii EGTC works properly and can achieve agreements despite of different political opinions.

11. Summary

The object of this case study was the cross-border cooperation between Slovakia and Hungary. Specifically, the Pons Danubii EGTC was chosen as a valuable example of cross-border cooperation which needs to be profoundly investigated as a valuable source for important information about cross-border cooperation, cross-border projects/programs/activities. The aim of the case study was to offer knowledge through SWOT approach.

Unique feature of this Grouping is determined through the common history of the region, and it substantially contributes to its effective functioning and management. This aspect is reflected in common culture, traditions, language, shared values and mutual understanding. The aim of the grouping is to facilitate non-discrimination and to provide equal opportunities for all local institutions on both sides of the border region. Their further goal is to enable and support the development of economic and social cohesion in the municipal territory of the settlements.

Pons Danubii EGTC is one of the most active Groupings and it has organized and initiated several successful cross-border projects. The most important projects are the following: workmarket with the aim to reduce unemployment and help to people to find suitable employment, budget was 201 360 EUR; media project with the aim to link the local medias and TV Channels and it established a Pons Danubii TV, the budget of this project was 270 980.64 EUR; Komárom-Komárno-Kolárovo cycle path with the aim to construct a cycle route and to incorporate this region into a wider cycle network, the budget of the project was 2 595 486.84 EUR; publishing of information leaflets with the aim to inform the local people and tourists about local wineries, cycle routes and tourist attractions in Komárno and its surroundings.

Projects for the nearest future are: a cycle path between Komárno and Číčov; Cycle paths across Komárno, Dunajská Streda, Topoľníky and Kolárovo; Promotion and development of tourism in the whole area.

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13. Annex

SZERVEZETI FELÉPÍTÉS ORGANIZAČNÁ ŠTRUKTÚRA ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

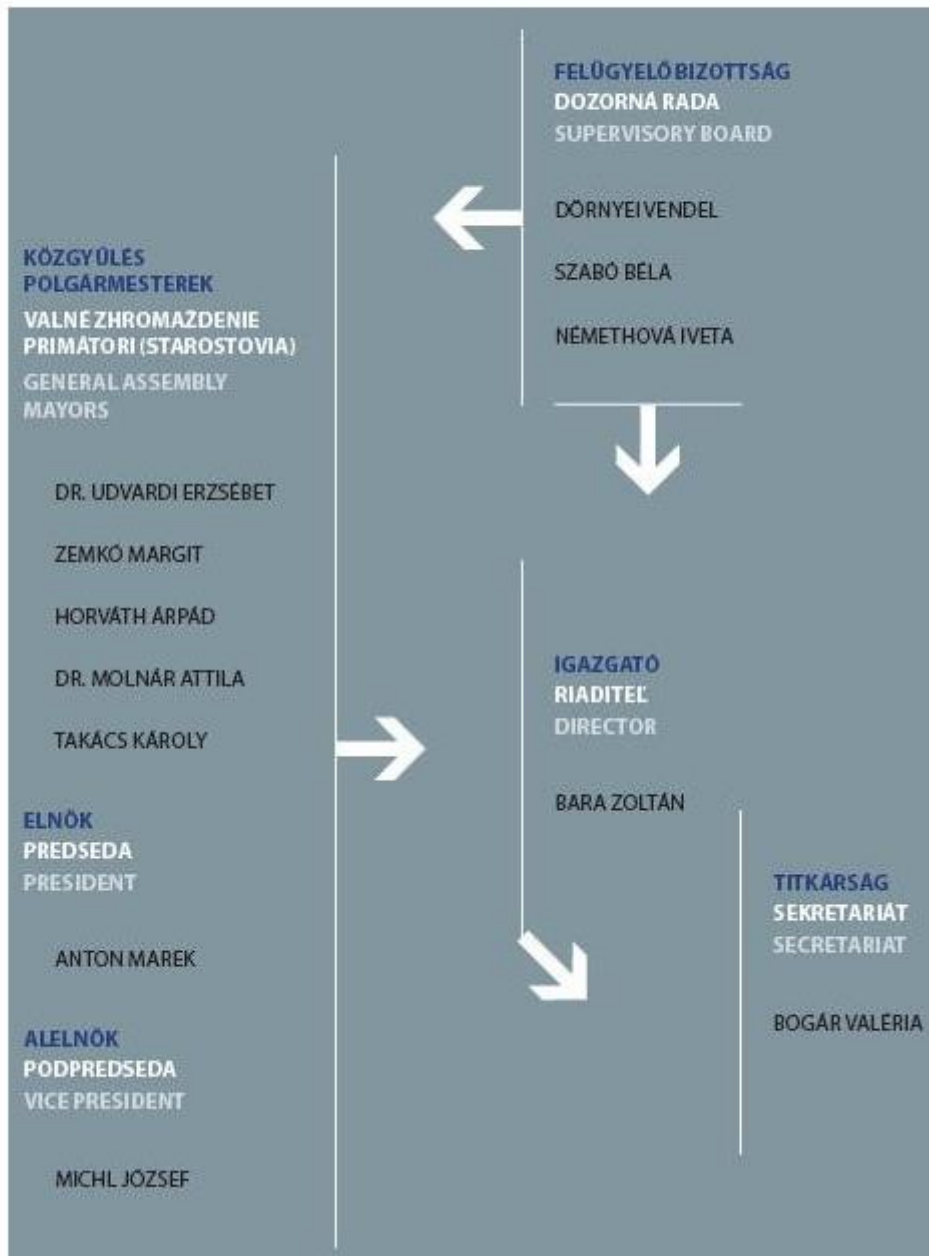


Figure 8: Pons Danubii EGTC organization structure

Source: Bara, Z. (2013). Brochure. Published by the Pons Danubii EGTC. Obtained via email request.

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