

Tourism

Tourism plays an important role in the region. The border region is rich in natural (e.g. hills, lakes, rivers, landscape and great variety of ecosystems, thermal water and spas) and common cultural heritage (e.g. castles, music, festivals). Those attractions and their combination generate tourism. Several joint cross-border actions have been taken place based on those strengths over the last decade. Tourism is based on national and nature parks and an enormous density of spas. The larger centres offer congress facilities and a great variety of cultural sights. Castles, gardens, festivals, cycling and sporting complete the tourist attractions.

In the region tourist infrastructure as well as tourist offers are rather heterogeneously developed. Although Wien accounts for only 10% of hotels and similar establishment its share in beds however is more than one third of the Austrian border region. The city is one of Europe's most important congress locations (Table 4: Number of hotels and beds). The numbers of overnight stays in Wien has increased from 40% to 43% between 2000 and 2005 (see Table 6: Number of overnight stays). From the total 20,1 million overnight stays of the border region 8,7 million was reported from Wien.

Table 4: Number of hotels and beds

NUTS III region	Number of hotels and similar establishments			Number of beds in hotels and similar establishments		
	1995	2000	2005	1995	2000	2005
Wien	341	348	-	40.132	39.995	-
Wiener Umland Südteil	138	143	150	7.423	7.901	8.096
Niederösterreich-Süd	340	284	274	9.836	8.795	8.370
Nordburgenland	276	232	219	9.565	7.922	7.683
Mittelburgenland	15	20	28	437	867	1.562
Südburgenland	98	107	116	3.699	4.017	5.574
Oststeiermark	453	413	381	14.075	14.379	14.397
Total Austrian Border Region	1.661	1.547	-	85.167	83.876	-
Győr-Moson-Sopron	42*	60*	164	4.867*	7.901*	8.594
Vas	16*	20*	86	3.725*	5.738*	6.449
Zala	53*	64*	131	7.788*	10.841*	13.114
Total Hungarian Border Region	111	144	381	16.380	24.480	28.157
Total At-HU Border Region	1.772	1.691	-	101.547	108.356	-

*in Hungary: only hotels, - no data available

Source: eurostat (2006), KSH (1996, 2005)

There are several common points of interest in tourism: significant impulses are expected from the common thermal spa network and the national and nature parks in the area (Neusiedler See-Fertő for the regions of Nordburgenland and Győr-Moson-Sopron County, Geschriebenstein-Írottkő Nature Park in middle, and Raab-Őrseg-Goričko Nature Park in the south). The rich variety of ecosystems offers a huge potential for day-trippers in the vicinity of the metropolitan areas. The following topics are important for the future of tourism in the region: spa&wellness, active and nature tourism (hills, rivers, lakes, nature- & national parks), culture and wine. Conference tourism is concentrated mainly in Wien. In a much smaller scale Sopron has good potential in this field of tourism as well. The southern part (Südburgenland, Zala County) is concentrating on expanding environmentally and socially compatible forms of tourism.

Table 5: Number of overnight stays

Regional Unit, NUTS III region	2000 (total)	2005 (total)*	Trend (%)
Wien	7.629.819	8.675.441	13,7
Wiener Umland-Südteil	1.275.370	1.391.470	9,1
Niederösterreich-Süd	1.341.709	1.146.215	-14,6
Nordburgenland	1.521.697	1.384.363	-9,0
Mittelburgenland	116.721	246.297	111,0
Südburgenland	782.251	882.483	12,8
Oststeiermark	2.785.087	2.755.200	-1,1
Total Austrian Border Region	15.452.654	16.481.469	6,7

Győr-Moson-Sopron	987.627	913.207	-7,5
Vas	805.458	867.707	7,7
Zala	1.820.661	1.809.950	-0,6
Total Hungarian Border Region	3.613.746	3.590.864	-0,6
Total AT-HU Border Region	19.066.400	20.072.333	5,3

* in Hungary 2004

Source: *Statistic Austria (2005), KSH (2001, 2005)*

Development tendencies

Projects like HEALTHREGIO⁵ or the SPA world⁶ showed already the potentials of cross-border tourism development with issues like wellness- or health services. In general tourism will stay a growing sector also in the future. Themes are culture, sports, wine and other forms of nature based activities (e.g. cycling, bird watching and hiking). Excursions to innovative forms of using renewable energy (e.g. Güssing, Bruck/Leitha, Weiz) gain growing importance. Many of the NUTS III regions doubled (Hungarian regions) or even tripled (Mittelburgenland) their number of available beds in the past 10 years. In the future the enhancement of quality and logistic infrastructure (booking possibilities and multinational public relations) as well as the extension of the duration of stays under sustainable aspects (eco-mobility as demonstrated in the Neusiedler See region) are the goals to achieve.

⁵ <http://www.healthregio.net>

⁶ <http://www.european-spa-world.com>