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### Managing Uneven Development in a Cross-border Region: Tourism-based Good Practices from the Komárom–Komárno Twin Cities

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### Abstract

The presentation draws on the results of a three-year Horizon 2020 international project, SPOT, implemented by a consortium of 14 European countries and Israel. The aim of the research project was to explore the potential for developing cultural tourism in touristically problematic (disadvantaged or suffering from over-tourism) areas in each partner country. The Hungarian research team examined the characteristics of cultural tourism development in the Komárom-Komárno cross-border area. The town of Komárom lies along the Hungarian-Slovakian border, 100 kilometres from the Hungarian capital, Budapest; it was divided by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920 and became "forgotten" during the decades of socialism, despite its significant cultural heritage dating back to ancient times.

Despite shared history, language, and culture, the two towns have distinct identities due to their different historical trajectories. Despite efforts, the area cannot be considered a single tourist destination. In the long term, there is little or no development cooperation; however, Hungary's and Slovakia's membership of the European Union enhanced both territorial and cross-border cooperation, which was used to foster connectivity and Europeanisation. Recently, considerable

developments were achieved in the Komárom-Komárno area related to cultural tourism and transport, e.g., significant building reconstructions were undertaken for tourism purposes, bicycle routes and a cross-border public bicycle rental system were developed, and cultural playgrounds were constructed in a cross-border context. These main recent cultural tourism development projects were studied in depth through interviews and field trips; as a result, good practices were identified and described. According to our findings, the attractions of the two sides should be organised into a unified offer to transform the current national/regional attractiveness into a European-level offering.

*The presentation is based on the following, previously published full paper (open access)*

Hardi, Tamás – Smahó, Melinda – Barsi, Boglárka (2025): Good practices and integration opportunities in heritage tourism for the Hungarian-Slovakian city pair of Komárom-Komárno. *Romanian Review of Regional Studies*, Vol. XIX, No 1, pp. 25-39.

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