

ISTVÁN MEZEI

URBAN
DEVELOPMENT
IN SLOVAKIA



Urban Development in Slovakia

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Foreword

There are areas which somehow seem to be familiar. Is it because the landscape is so spectacular: wooded ranges of mountains, valleys, hilly landscapes, meadows with meandering rivers or plains with ripening wheat? However, the Hungarian visitor can also enjoy the towns. The romantic beauty of the main squares, the size and ornaments of buildings and churches of different religions are all familiar. They may really evoke romantic memories, since what Hungarian visitors can see in the different towns of Felvidék ('Upper Hungary', today Slovakia) are the scenes they read about in the books of their youth. Wherever they go in the Carpathian Basin, they have the impression of familiarity, they feel that they have already seen or read about something similar. The long, common past is indelibly printed on their memories. It would be great to be able to read about similar experiences of Slovak, Ruthenian, Romanian, Serbian, Croatian, Austrian, German, and other travellers in their writings about the towns of the Carpathian Basin, too. After all, common experiences rest upon mutuality. This experience could also be mutual; it could be shared with others, too.

A paper on towns should be objective, because it examines the events and changes of the present age. Nevertheless, the emerging questions inevitably raise some aspects of the past. The most important question rooted in the past is how the original social, linguistic, cultural, religious and human diversity has survived so many stormy decades. It is a fact that, in the case of Slovakia, we have witnessed a successful conquest, in so far as Felvidék, the annexed area, has become a completely new state and, in accordance with the original Slovak ambition of conquest, a new urban structure and new regional units have emerged, mostly intentionally, within the borders of the new state. First, the present account compares the old and the new, describes the changed con-

ditions and then gives an account of the new fields of reviving cooperation.

My plan to write about towns along the border taking the whole of the Slovak urban structure as a starting point is not new. With long interruptions, I have been writing it for a year. Thanks are due to my sponsors, who have made it possible for me to write the present book, to my family and my colleagues for their patience.

An increasing number of books, articles, papers and writings have been published on Slovakia. Hopefully, the present publication will have its place among them.

Summer, 2008, Miskolc

1. Introduction

The settlement structure of Slovakia is the result of long historical development. The present-day settlement network and the emergence of the most important towns can be traced back to the Hungarian Middle Ages, especially to the 13th and 14th centuries. The development of the settlement network has been influenced by geographical location, the configurations of the terrain (the mountain range of the Carpathians), the raw materials deep in the earth (minerals, metals), the military and political situation (since this was an area sheltered from the conquering Tartars and Turks) and the changes in the administrative system (settlements gaining town status). The privileges granted by monarchs had a strong effect on the town network. The great migrations (the conquering Hungarians, Polish/Goral shepherds), organized settlements (Germans/Saxons), voluntary or less voluntary settlements (the Hussite Czechs and Habans fleeing from the Catholic monarchs and the Hungarians fleeing from the Turks) and the development and changes in the economy (the significance of mining changing with time) all determined the changes.

The development of the contemporary Slovak town network can be divided into two large eras and several small periods. The first main period took place in the age of historical Hungary. During this time several peoples with different languages, religions and attitudes to work (Hungarians, Germans, Ruthenians, Poles, Jews, Serbs, Croats, Czechs, Bulgarians, Romanians, Italians, French, English, etc.) coexisted there with an increasing number of Slavic peoples, who spoke a mixture of languages and dialects which were very different from each other. From the 17th and 18th centuries on, these peoples gradually started to become Slovaks. However, it was only after the foundation of Czechoslovakia that Slovak identity started to strengthen. Subsequent analyses underline the fact that, in the course of history, differences in language have

caused fewer conflicts, and less destructive ones, than differences in religion. The peoples living in Hungary did not wage war against each other because of linguistic or ethnic differences; rather, religious conflicts were the main reasons for wars, e.g. the Hussite wars or the battles fought between reformation and counter-reformation. It was in the 19th century that ethnic and language differences lead to conflicts. It is an important fact that in the 1848-49 Hungarian war of independence, the most difficult Hungarian national struggle, there were more Slovak people fighting on the revolutionist Kossuth's side than in the imperial army. This indicates that the ethnic conflict between Hungarians and Slovaks was much less bitter than, for instance, in the case of the Hungarian and the Serb or Romanian people. One of the main reasons why Hungarians and Slovaks (and all the other peoples living in that area) could coexist peacefully was the division of labour, which had developed over centuries. The order of labour division was reflected by the society of the towns in Felvidék (earlier, Upper Hungary; since 1920, Slovakia) and also by the relations these towns had with the settlements in their environs, in other parts of the country and in other countries. The coexistence of Hungarians, Slovaks, Germans, and others was replaced by isolation, exclusion and expulsion in the 20th century, but this was not because of the ethnic composition of the towns.

The area of contemporary Slovakia was not a regional, social, economic, administrative or linguistic unit; and therefore the different characters and separation of the areas populated by Slovaks were not reflected in the names of the age, either. In the old Hungarian language the northern mountainous area of Hungary was called Felföld, which stretched as far as contemporary Partium (the area between Transylvania and the Great Hungarian Plain), but did not include the northern part of the Small Hungarian Plain or the left bank of the Danube. In geography, the name Felföld (highlands) appeared as the opposite of Alföld (plain). At present, in Hungary since the Trianon Peace Treaty, the southern part of Felföld is called the Northern Mountain Range.

The name Felső-Magyarország (Upper Hungary) is used in history, but the counties near Bratislava do not belong there. The Upper Hungarian mining directorate involved Gömör, Borsod, Szepes, Abaúj and Torna Counties (their towns are *Gölnicbánya* [today: Gelnica], *Szomolnok* [today: Smolník], *Igló* [today: Spišská Nová Ves], *Rozsnyó* [today: Rožňava], *Jászó* [today: Jasov], *Rudabánya* and *Telkibánya*), and that of Lower Hungary (Alsó-Magyarország) included Nyitra, Bars, Hont and

Zólyom Counties (their towns: *Körmöcbánya* [today: Kremnica], *Besztercebánya* [today: Banská Bystrica], *Selmecbánya* [today: Banská Štiavnica], *Bélabánya* [today: Banská Belá], *Újbánya* [today: Nová Baňa], *Bakabánya* [today: Pukanec] and *Libetbánya* [today: Ľubietová]).

The name Felvidék (Upper Hungary) appeared in the 19th century, denoting the high mountains mostly inhabited by ethnic minorities close to the Polish border. After that part of the country had been torn off from Hungary in 1920, the name Felvidék took on a political and administrative meaning. Since then it has been used to mean the whole area of Slovakia, also including the part of the Small Hungarian Plain to the north of the Danube (*Paládi-Kovács* 2003).

In their analyses, the representatives of Hungarian academic life, especially those of historical geography, regard the watershed area on the left bank of the Danube and that on the right bank of the River Tisza as Felvidék (*Pinczés* 1998).

Henceforth I will mainly use the term Felvidék (Upper Hungary) regarding the historical past. Neither the standpoint of present-day Slovak public opinion nor (unfortunately) that of Slovak researchers is acceptable. In contradiction with the historical facts they refer to present-day Slovakia (together with its borders and geographical and administrative names) as a thousand-year-old province (country).

2. Towns in Felvidék (Upper Hungary) before 1918

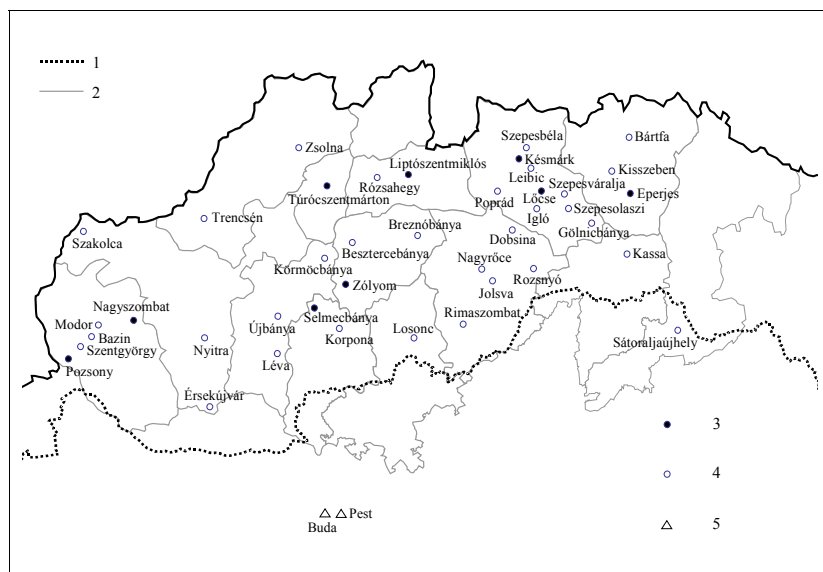
The process of the Slovak people becoming a nation started rather late. In the case of the Germans in Bohemia and Moravia or the majority Czechs and Moravians, the separation into nations was accepted by those living there. However, in present-day Slovakia this process did not reach a political level which could also have made it possible for Hungarians to accept the separation of the areas mostly populated by the Slovak ethnic group. The internal detachment of the Czech and German people led to the gradual emergence of parallel systems in the political, administrative, legal and educational institutions, as a result of which the 1905 Moravia agreement laid down that a distinction should be made between the two ethnicities in areas such as the right to vote, language and education (*Szarka* 1989, 23). Since the slow development of the Slovak nation focused first of all on creating a unified Slovak language, the only way for us to find out which towns were of the utmost importance to Slovakia is to look at the towns mentioned during the linguistic disputes.

Slovak historical mythology first mentions Nyitra (Nitra) as the second most important centre in the east of the Great Moravian Empire. In the golden age of Hungarian history until 1526, which was of European significance, Pozsony (Bratislava), Nagyszombat (Trnava), Kassa (Košice), Eperjes (Prešov), Bártfa (Bardejov) and the mining towns: Selmecebánya (Banská Štiavnica), Besztercebánya (Banská Bystrica) and Körmöcbánya (Kremnica) were regarded as towns in the area of contemporary Felvidék (Upper Hungary). Besides, we know that the privilege granted by King Louis (1381) made it possible for the Slavic people (according to present-day Slovak historiography, the Slovak people) living in Zsolna (Žilina) to have the same rights as the Germans. The charter also granted them proportional representation in the town council. According to the Slovak historical tradition, not only Zsolna (Žilina), but also Rózsashegy (Ružomberok), Trencsén (Trenčín), Vágújhegy (Nové Mesto nad Váhom),

Szabolca (Skalica) and Tapolcsány (Teplicány) had become ethnically Slovak by the 15th century (Kováč 2001, 45). This statement is made questionable by the fact that King Matthias wrote his letters to the towns and lords in Felvidék in the Czech language, which is a proof of the Slovak language not existing at that time. In 1541 Hungarians fleeing northwards from the advancing Turks moved into the Northern Hungarian towns, which resulted in disturbances in town administration. One piece of evidence for this is the decree of Ferdinand I, which ordained that the leader of the town should be changed every year and should always be of different ethnicity, rotating among German, Slavic (Slovak) and Hungarian. In the eastern part of Felvidék the centre of the Protestant church became Szepesváralja (Spišské Podhradie) with Slavic (Slovak) leaders. From the mid-17th century, besides the German language, the western Slovak dialect started to appear in the administration records of certain towns.

At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, at the time of the renewal of the Hungarian national movement, the language movement of the Slovak nation also began. Since the Slovak language movement was organized in theological colleges, Pozsony (Bratislava) and Nagyszombat (Trnava) became the centres of both the Catholic and the Lutheran Slovak ecclesiastical intelligentsia. For similar reasons, the Slovak Reading Society was established in Pest in 1826, and the first *Slovak-Czech-Latin-German-Hungarian dictionary* was also published. Church schools were starting to gain importance. Apart from Pozsony (Bratislava), Lőcse (Levoča), Késmárk (Kežmarok), Selmecbánya (Banská Štiavnica) and Eperjes (Prešov) became such secular centres. A regional centre to the Slovak national movement did not emerge until the second half of the 19th century, which can also be seen by the fact that some Lutheran priests wanted to set up the first Slovak linguistic department in Pest, according to the *Slovak Royal Memorandum* written by them in 1842.

Figure 1. Important towns of Slovak national consciousness in historical Hungary



1 – the Trianon border; 2 – boundary of the counties in the memorandum of 1861; 3 – important towns of the Slovak nation before 1918; 4 – towns of the counties marked out in the memorandum of 1861; 5 – towns beyond the border marked out in the memorandum of 1861

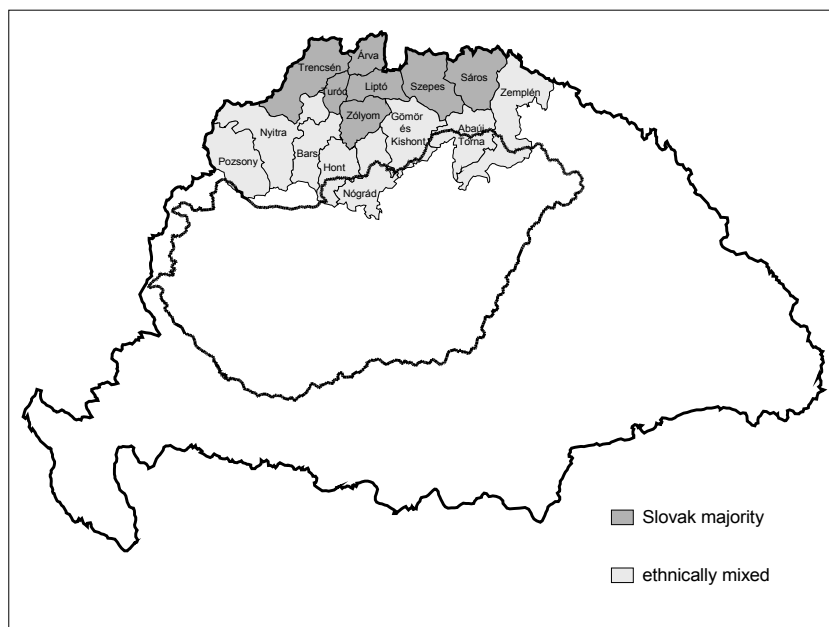
Edited by István Mezei, drawn by Máté Mády

It was the leader of the Slovak national movement, Ľudovít Štúr (1815-1856), who had the central Slovak dialect accepted by Slovak public opinion as the standard Slovak literary language. This was the first step towards national unification. Štúr became the representative of the town Zólyom (Zvolen) in the Hungarian national assembly. On May 11th 1848 the 14 points called *The Wishes of the Slovak Nation* were accepted in Liptószentmiklós (Liptovský Mikuláš). Among other things they demanded ethnic equality with the Hungarian ethnicity. The next scene was set in Turócszentmárton (Martin), where the memorandum entitled *The Wishes of the National Assembly of the Slavic (Slovak) People in Upper Hungary* (1861) was the first to mark out the Slovak national territory. It listed the counties in which they wanted to achieve the exclusive usage of the Slovak language.

This was the first document to lay down the Slovak demands and give the word Felvidék a meaning from a Slovak point of view. Henceforth we will use the word Felvidék with this meaning. This is all the more necessary because Slovak historiography and Slovak public opinion cast back the area of present-day Slovakia to the past and speak about Slovakia with regard to historical times, which is historically unacceptable. Before the Peace Treaty of 1920, there were no signs of present-day Slovakia in Hungarian history, but there were regions which were populated to different extents by various ethnicities. Therefore, in the case of the Slovak people, it is worth using their own first area definition laid down in the 1861 document, together with the name Felvidék, which is also accepted by the Hungarian people. This document is considered very important by Slovak researchers, too (*Zelenák* 2002).

The list included the 'purest' Slav counties, such as **Trencsén, Árva, Turóc, Zólyom, Liptó, Szepes** and **Sáros Counties**, as well as the counties where the areas populated by Hungarian and Slovak people could be distinguished clearly. These were **Pozsony, Nyitra, Bars, Hont, Nógrád, Gömör, Torna, Abaúj and Zemplén Counties**. The latter were regarded as suitable for dividing the two ethnicities with an internal administrative boundary, either by organizing them into new counties by ethnicity, or by attaching them to the neighbouring Slav counties. However, the devisers of this plan also admit that, even in the purest Slav counties, the Hungarian and the Slav ethnicities are mingled to an extent that it is impossible for the Slav nation to have a particular Upper Hungarian Slav region (*hornouhorské slovenské okolie*) accepted (*Szöveggyűjtemény* 2003, pp. 423-430).

Figure 2. Counties with 'Slovak majority' and 'mixed ethnicities' as defined in the 1861 Turócszentmárton (Martin) memorandum



Edited by István Mezei, drawn by Máté Mály

The areas mostly populated by the Slovak people were really the 16 counties of the 19th century Felvidék (Upper Hungary) (15 after the fusion of Abaúj and Torna). The fewest Slovak people were living in Transylvania and Croatia. However, mainly during the period after the Turks had been expelled, they were present in the whole of historical Hungary. According to the census of 1880 there were 1,864,529 inhabitants whose mother tongue was Slovak registered in the whole of the Hungarian empire. Their number had increased to 2,008,744 by 1900, but then it started to decrease slightly: 1,967,970 people were registered in 1910. Of those registered, 83.62%, i.e. 1,672,228 people, lived in the counties mentioned in the memorandum, with the population of the three municipal boroughs (Pozsony [Bratislava], Kassa [Košice] and Selmecbánya [Banská Štiavnica]) included.

Table 1. The number and proportion of the Hungarian and Slovak ethnicities in the counties of Felvidék in 1910, following the classification used in the Slovak memorandum of 1861

County	Total population	Hungarian ethnicity		Slovak ethnicity		German ethnicity	
	people	people	%	People	%	people	%
Trencsény	310,437	13,204	4.25	284,770	91.73	10,993	3.5
Árva	78,745	2,000	2.54	59,096	75.05	1,518	1.9
Túróc	55,703	5,560	9.98	38,432	68.99	10,993	19.7
Liptó	86,906	4,365	5.02	78,098	89.86	2,591	3.0
Zólyom	133,653	16,509	12.35	113,294	84.77	2,124	1.6
Sáros	174,620	18,088	10.36	101,855	58.33	9,447	5.4
Szepes	172,867	18,658	10.79	97,077	56.16	38,434	22.2
Σ	1,012,931	78,384	7.74	772,622	76.28	76,100	7.5
Pozsony	311,527	131,662	42.26	154,344	49.54	21,032	6.8
Pozsony (town)	78,223	31,705	40.53	11,673	14.92	32,790	41.92
Nyitra	457,455	100,324	21.93	324,664	70.97	27,937	6.1
Bars	178,500	62,022	34.75	97,824	54.80	17,366	9.7
Hont	117,256	66,875	57.03	43,181	36.83	5,964	5.1
Selmecbánya (town)	15,185	6,340	41.75	8,341	54.93	453	2.98
Nógrád	261,517	197,670	75.59	58,337	22.31	3,143	1.2
Gömör-Kis-Hont	188,098	109,994	58.48	72,232	38.40	2,930	1.6
Abauj-Torna	158,077	123,318	78.01	29,520	18.67	3,331	2.1
Kassa (town)	44,211	33,350	75.43	6,547	14.81	3,189	7.21
Zemplén	343,194	193,794	56.47	92,943	27.08	9,749	2.8
Σ	2,153,243	1,057,054	49.09	899,606	41.78	127,884	5.94
Σ Σ	3,166,174	1,135,438	35.86	1,672,228	52.82	203,984	6.44

Source: Hungarian Statistical Publications. New series. Volume 27. The 1900 Census of the Countries of the Hungarian Holy Crown. Part 10. Summary of the Results. Budapest. Atheneum. 1909. pp. 102-103, and Volume 61. 1910. pp. 112-117.

2. 1 The towns of Felvidék (Upper Hungary) according to their population

At the point of time of the census of 1910, 35.13% of the more than three million people living in the 15 counties had Hungarian, and 54.34% had Slovak as their mother tongues. To the north of the language boundary, however, the difference was even larger: the proportion of the Slovaks was far above 50% there. In the seven counties belonging there, the 772,000 Slovak people accounted for 76.28% of the population compared to the 78,000 Hungarians, which amounted to 7.74%. In the

eight counties to the south of the Slovak language boundary in Nyitra (Nitra) the Slovak people represented a proportion of 70.97%, but in Bars (Tekov) County it was higher than 50% and in Pozsony (Bratislava) County it was just half a per cent lower than 50%. Meanwhile, this was a region with several ethnicities, because apart from the two large ethnic groups there was also a high number of Germans, Ruthenians, Polish (Gorals), Czech Moravians, Romanians, Serbs, Croatians and Gypsies, as well as English, Italians, French, Russians and others in low numbers.

The towns of this area, which had been marked out in 1861, had some specific characteristic features. The 39 towns that can be found there accounted for 28.3% of the 138 towns of the Hungarian Empire. However, only a small percentage of the urban population lived in these small towns: in 1890, 13.5% of the population of all towns, whereas in 1910, only 12.7%. It is worth examining the characteristic features of these towns in more detail, comparing them to the towns of contemporary Hungary.

Table 2. The main characteristic features of the towns in Hungary in 1910

Number of municipal boroughs:	27
Average population:	81,323 people
Excluding Budapest:	50,590 people
Population of Budapest:	880,371 people
Number of towns:	111
Average population:	13,752 people
Excluding the towns mentioned in the Slovak memorandum:	16,851 people

Source: *ibid*

The towns of historical Hungary showed a strong hierarchy. The population of Budapest, the largest city (880,371 people), was more than seven times larger than that of Szeged, a city with the second-largest population (118,328 people). There were only 10 towns with more than 50,000 inhabitants and their average population was only 77,387 people. All of the 27 municipal boroughs had more than 20,000 inhabitants, except for Selmechánya [Banská Štiavnica], the smallest one, which had a population of 15,185 people. Pozsony [Bratislava] (78,223 people) and Kassa [Košice] (44,211 people), the two largest towns of Felvidék, acted as regional centres.

The average population of other towns was 13,752 people. Considering the towns of the counties named in the 1861 Slovak memorandum, the average population was higher (16,851 people). The reason for this is that the towns of the counties with 'mixed populations', i.e. the towns of the counties with a Hungarian majority, were more densely populated than the towns in the 'purest Slav counties', i.e. those in the counties with a Slovak majority.

The classification of towns according to their population (*Figure 3*) indicates that the typical town of the Felvidék was a town with a low number of inhabitants. The municipal boroughs (Pozsony [Bratislava], Kassa [Košice] and Selmecebánya [Banská Štiavnica]) were evenly distributed among the different population categories, but other towns had as few as 20,000 (9 towns) inhabitants and 27 of them had fewer than 10,000.

Table 3. Classification of the towns in Hungary according to their population in 1910

Number of municipality boroughs:	27	In the counties included in the memorandum of 1861
Over 70,000 people, Budapest included:	6	1 (Pozsony [Bratislava])
50-70,000 people	6	--
30-50,000 people	9	1 (Kassa [Košice])
15-30,000 people	6	1 (Selmecebánya [Banská Štiavnica])
Number of towns:	111	
Between 30-60 thousand people	9	--
Between 20-30 thousand people	16	--
Between 10-20 thousand people	33	9 (including Sátorajaujhely)
Between 1-10 thousand people	53	27

Source: *ibid*

When examining the towns as classified in the 1861 memorandum (Table 4), we will find that, due to their size and low social and economic weight, the 'purest Slav counties' had no municipal boroughs; what is more, in Árva County there were no towns at all. Alsókubin [Dolný Kubín] was mentioned as a village in the statistics. The 18 small towns of the five 'purest Slav counties' had a total population of 120,880 people. The average population of these towns was 6,716 people. Among them Eperjes [Prešov], with its 16,323 inhabitants, was considered the most densely populated town. There were only four towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants and four small towns, with Poprád being the small-

est with its 2,283 inhabitants. The degree of urbanization of the five counties, or rather the survival of traditions is clearly indicated by the fact that only in Szepes County there were 9 small towns, the most in the whole country in 1910.

In the 'mixed' counties, or rather in those with Hungarian majority, there were municipal boroughs, such as Pozsony [Bratislava] and Kassa [Košice] as well as Selmezbánya [Banská Štiavnica] in Hont County. Apart from these, according to the 1861 memorandum, 18 further towns belonged there, including Sátoraljaújhely, a town remaining in Hungary after the Peace Treaty. These towns had a population of altogether 282,898 people, and the average population of the towns was 13,471 people, including the three municipal boroughs. Disregarding these, the average population was 8,071 people, which is larger than the average population of the towns in the northern counties with Slovak majority.

A change occurred in the 1861 memorandum when, according to the 1920 Peace Treaty, Komárom [Komárno] municipal borough became a town of Czechoslovakia. Komárom, with a population of 22,337 people, followed Pozsony [Bratislava] and Kassa [Košice] in size. It was a further consequence of the Peace Treaty that Beregszász [Berehove] (pop. 12,933), Munkács [Mukacseve] (17,275) and Ungvár [Uzhhorod] (16,919), Hungarian towns with a comparatively large population in 1910, also became Czechoslovakian towns. The latter three towns were attached to the Soviet Union after World War II, and to Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

2. 2 Ethnic Composition of towns in Felvidék (Upper Hungary)

The 1861 memorandum was intended to establish the Slovak language region. However, in the listed counties there was a rather complex society composed of several ethnic groups, and this was also true of the towns in these counties. Of the urban population of 403,778 living in this area in 1910, 49.6% were of Hungarian, 31.1% of Slovak and 17.2% of German ethnicity, but in addition to these groups, the censuses also registered several other ethnicities.

Towns in Felvidék (Upper Hungary) before 1918

Table 4. The population and ethnicity composition of the towns in Felvidék (Upper Hungary) and present-day Slovakia in 1910 and in 2001, following the classification used in the Slovak memorandum of 1861

	towns	1910					2001				
		population	Hungarian	Slovak	German	other	population	Hungarian	Slovak	German	other
The 'northern' towns of Felvidék (Upper Hungary) (18)	Eperjes/ Prešov	16,323	7,976	6,494	1,404	449	92,786	208	86,910	42	5,626
	Rózsashegy/ Ružomberok	12,249	1,735	8,340	1,031	1,143	30,417	41	29,394	6	976
	Besztercebánya/ Banská Bystrica	10,776	5,261	4,388	879	248	83,056	446	78,690	53	3,867
	Igló/ Spišská Nová Ves	10,525	3,494	5,103	1,786	142	39,193	65	36,924	74	2,130
	Zsolna/ Žilina	9,179	2,336	4,954	1,463	426	85,400	106	82,750	57	2,487
	Zólyom/ Zvolen	8,799	4,973	3,579	209	38	43,789	218	41,980	14	1,577
	Trencsén/ Trenčín	7,805	2,997	3,676	925	207	57,854	164	55,131	25	2,534
	Lőcse/ Levoča	7,528	2,410	3,094	1,377	647	14,366	15	12,509	8	1,834
	Bártfa/ Bardejov	6,578	2,179	2,571	1,617	211	33,247	48	30,346	3	2,850
	Késmárk/ Kežmarok	6,317	1,314	1,606	3,242	155	17,383	26	16,550	74	733
	Breznábánya/ Brezno	4,179	1,010	3,081	73	15	22,875	50	21,239	7	1,579
	Gölnicbánya/ Gelnica	3,833	606	1,098	2,095	34	6,404	6	6,143	52	203
	Kisszeben/ Sabinov	3,288	1,168	1,640	341	139	12,290	7	11,137	1	1,145
	Szepesárjány/ Spišské Podhradie	3,129	566	1,832	713	18	3,780	1	3,490	1	288
	Szepesbela/ Spišská Belá	2,894	355	1,258	1,247	34	6,136	4	5,818	16	298
	Leibice/ Lúčica	2,782	213	1,311	1,135	123	3,677	1	3,443	2	231
	Szepesolaszi/ Spišské Vlachy	2,413	340	1,613	440	20	3,518	2	3,441	0	75
	Poprád/ Poprad	2,283	689	758	818	18	56,157	131	52,868	119	3,039
	Total:	120,880	39,622	56,396	20,795	4,067	612,328	1,539	578,763	554	31,472
	%	32.8	46.7	17.2	3.4			0.3	94.5	0.1	5.1
Changes compared with 1910, %							506.6	3.9	1,026.2	2.7	773.8
The 'southern' towns of the Felvidék (Upper Hungary) (21)	Pozsony/ Bratislava	78,223	31,705	11,673	32,790	2,055	428,672	16,451	391,761	1,200	19,260
	Kassa/ Košice	44,211	33,350	6,547	3,189	1,125	236,093	8,940	210,340	398	16,415
	Sátorajújhely	19,940	18,965	478	273	224	18,335	17,638	220	183	294
	Nyitra/ Nitra	16,419	9,754	4,929	1,636	100	87,285	1,489	83,285	47	2,464
	Érsekújvár/ Nové Zámky	16,228	14,838	964	377	49	42,262	11,632	29,446	13	1,171
	Selmecbánya/ Banská Štiavnica	15,185	6,340	8,341	453	51	10,874	43	10,213	12	606
	Nagyszombat/ Trnava	15,163	4,593	8,032	2,280	258	70,286	148	68,099	37	2,002
	Losonc/ Lučenec	12,939	10,634	1,675	428	202	28,332	3,713	23,127	8	1,484
	Léva/ Levice	9,675	8,752	688	199	36	36,538	4,469	30,997	7	1,065
	Rimaszombat/ Rimavská Sobota	6,912	6,199	468	91	154	25,088	8,846	14,873	13	1,356
	Rozsnyó/ Rožnava	6,565	5,886	406	159	114	19,261	5,162	13,343	12	744
	Dobsina/ Dobšiná	5,029	1,739	1,503	1,688	99	4,896	31	4,337	16	512
	Szokolca/ Skalica	5,018	505	4,155	259	99	15,013	19	14,239	5	750
	Modor/ Modra	5,009	347	4,124	525	13	8,536	35	8,315	14	172
	Újhánya/ Nová Baňa	4,813	470	4,256	79	8	7,505	7	7,318	3	177
	Bazin/ Pezinok	4,809	575	2,642	1,558	34	21,082	110	20,347	21	604
	Körmöcbánya/ Kremnica	4,515	1,501	1,482	1,514	18	5,822	19	5,575	69	159
	Korpona/ Krupina	4,016	484	3,460	24	48	7,991	27	7,802	4	158
	Szentgyörgy/ Svätý Jur	3,458	641	1,897	916	4	4,614	18	4,499	10	87
	Jolsva/ Jelšava	2,846	2,289	449	42	66	3,287	81	2,774	1	431
	Nagyroce/ Revúca	1,925	1,000	884	37	4	13,466	291	12,405	7	763
	Total	282,898	160,567	69,053	48,517	4,761	1,095,238	79,169	963,315	2,080	50,674
	%		56.8	24.4	17.1	1.7		7.2	88.0	0.2	4.6
Changes compared with 1910, %							387.1	49.3	1,395.0	4.3	1,064.4
Combined total		403,778	200,189	125,449	69,312	8,828	1,707,566	80,708	1,542,078	2,634	82,146
%			49.6	31.1	17.2	2.2		4.7	90.3	0.2	4.8
Changes compared with 1910, %							422.9	40.3	1,229.2	3.8	930.5

Source: Hungarian Statistical Publications. New series. Volume 27. The 1900 Census of the Countries of the Hungarian Holy Crown. Part 10. Summary of the Results. Budapest. Atheneum. 1909. pp. 102-103, and Volume 64. 1910. pp. 130-133. The figures of the 2001 census are from the Slovak Central Statistical Office.

* Sátorajújhely is listed in the memorandum of 1861 as a town belonging to a county with mixed ethnicities.

On the basis of the classification of the memorandum we can point out further peculiarities. In the towns of the counties considered as counties with mixed populations from an ethnic point of view, there were more Slovak inhabitants than in the towns of the purely Slav counties. The 1910 census registered a total of 56,396 Slovak inhabitants in the towns of the 'purest' Slav counties, whereas in the towns of the counties with 'mixed' populations, i.e. counties with a Hungarian majority, there were 69,053 people registered. Still, this meant that there was a higher percentage of Slovak inhabitants in northern towns, at 46.7%, compared with 24.2% for the towns in the south.

Mention must be made of the fact that there were five towns in the north where over 50% of the population was Slovak, adding up to 19,820 people, and there was only one town with a considerable majority at 73.7% (Brezinobánya [Brezno] with 3,081 people), whereas in the southern counties, which were considered 'mixed', there were eight towns with a percentage of Slovaks higher than 50%, in four of which the rate was over 80%. In these towns there were 36,907 people.

In the north, due to the lower population of the towns, there was an actual Slovak majority. Compared to the 32.8% of Hungarian inhabitants, the percentage of the Slovaks was 46.7%, which meant an average of 3,133 people, i.e. a Slovak population of 47% in these small towns. This can be compared to the counties in the south, with a Hungarian majority, where the number of the Slovak inhabitants was 3,288 people on average, representing 37.3%. It is a fact that in the north, in every town, the percentage of Slovak inhabitants was over 25%, while in the more southern counties nine towns had a percentage of lower than 16%.

For Hungarian people in the north this meant that there was only one town with over 50% of Hungarian ethnicity (Zólyom [Zvolen], 56.5%, 4,973 people), while in the south there were ten such towns (111,667 people).

As for the German ethnicity, there were two towns in the northern counties with over 50% (Gölnicbánya [Gelnica] 54.7% and Késmárk [Kežmarok] 51.3%). In the southern counties their proportion was lower than 50%. However, in Pozsony [Bratislava], where they accounted for 41.9%, the Germans were the most populous ethnicity (32,970 people).

Comparing the ethnicity composition of the counties named in the memorandum (*Table 1*) with the ethnicity composition of the towns (*Table 4*), we find that there was a much larger Slovak population in the countryside, however, in the towns the Hungarian population was higher (*Table 5*).

Table 5. The ethnicity proportions in the counties and towns named in the 1861 memorandum in 1910

	Ethnicity	The proportions of ethnicities in towns	The proportions of ethnicities in counties
The northern part of Felvidék	Hungarian	32.8	7.7
	Slovak	46.7	76.3
	German	17.2	7.5
The southern part of Felvidék	Hungarian	56.8	49.1
	Slovak	24.4	41.8
	German	17.1	5.9

Source: *ibid*

The internal division of ethnicity proportions shows that, apart from the comparatively homogeneous areas inhabited by Slovak people (Trencsén [Trenčín], Árva [Orava] and certain parts of Liptó), contemporary Felvidék was an area with rather mixed ethnicities (*Bajmóczy* 2004).

After long decades of continuous increase in the Slovak population, the 1910 census was the first to indicate an increase in the Hungarian population. The reason for this was the considerable development of the economy, culture, health care, etc. in the Hungarian bourgeois era (1867-1914), which resulted partly in an increase in the population and partly in a change in the direction of the assimilation processes. Apart from natural assimilation, the Magyarization* enforced by the Hungarian government was not really effective (*Kocsis* 1998).

This historical situation would have made it possible for a new state, one breaking away from Hungary, to accept the fact that many languages are spoken and to not set the goal of homogeneity when organizing the

* In the second half of the 19th century it was the main ambition of the successive governments in Hungary to Magyarize the ethnicities living in the country. The 1868 act on public education ordained that education should be available for all the children in their own mother tongues. In 1875 it was ordained by law that the Hungarian language should be taught in every school. This was explained by stating that it was useful for every citizen to be able to speak the official language of the state. In 1907 a new act was passed (lex Apponyi), which provided that, after completing the fourth form, children with mother tongues other than Hungarian should be able to express their thoughts in Hungarian both orally and in writing in an understandable way. In the same year, the act on railway service made Hungarian language proficiency for railway employees compulsory. Similarly, the governments tried to make the Hungarian language first widely used then compulsory in all walks of public life (first of all in administration). As opposed to the Magyarization ambitions, ethnicities wanted to achieve independence and the status of a politically equal nation.

state. However, it can already be seen in the text of the memorandum that the most important political actors were those who, while seeking political solutions, had language homogeneity in mind. They wrote about the purest Slav counties and called the counties with a Hungarian majority 'mixed' ethnicity counties. The question of the individual and collective protection of the language and cultural rights of all the Slovaks living in the territory of historical Hungary did not arise later, either, because their ambition was to establish a monolingual state in an acquirable area, which eventually was ensured by the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920.

The 1910 data and the figures of the 2001 census regarding the same towns prove that the Slovaks managed to achieve their goal and established a state that, from the point of view of ethnic composition, has a new national structure (*Table 4*). The first remarkable factor to be seen is the considerable increase in the population.

The population of the towns formerly called 'northern' increased by over five times (there was an increase of 506.6%), whereas that of the towns in the south rose by nearly four times. However, the targeted and artificial results of changes enforced by political means are even more striking. In the north, the percentage of the population of Hungarian ethnicity decreased to only 0.3% and that of the Germans to 0.1%, while that of the Slovak ethnicity increased to 94.5%, meaning that it became more than ten times higher during this period.

In the south, not only was the increase in the population more modest (387.1%), but also the proportion of Hungarians (7.2%) and Germans (0.2%) remained higher than in the north, leading to a Slovak proportion of 'only' 88.0%, although the proportion of the Slovak ethnicity grew more than twelve times (1229.2%).

Apart from the dominance of the Slovak nation, the increase in the proportion of the ethnicities listed in the 'others' category by seven times in the north and by ten times in the south (773.8% and 1064.4%, respectively) indicates that this is a version of multiculturalism that rejects a thousand-year-old tradition and denies Hungarians' and Germans' inclusion since the new state has formed its ethnic composition in a way that would serve its own interests. We must remember that all this also concerns the 'indigenous' Ruthenian population, whose former territorial integrity, which can clearly be seen in statistics, has completely ceased by now. The only exception is the gypsy population, whose population explosion is not revealed in the official statistics. According to the Slovak statistical office,

their national proportion is 1.7%. However, in 2001 Slovak demographers estimated their actual number at 379,000, which accounted for 7% of the whole population (*Kocsis-Bottlik-Tátrai* 2006).

2. 3 Occupational composition of towns in Felvidék (Upper Hungary)

The special features of the towns of Felvidék (Upper Hungary), i.e. the short distances between them, their 'density' per one unit of area and their small size, are all in close connection with the opportunities for employment and subsistence. The utilization of the resources provided by the mountains boosted opportunities for mining, industry and forestry, and as a result, transport and trade were also strengthened. Even today the term Felvidék is often associated with the mining and industry of the time. According to statistical figures, this sector was still of utmost importance in the 1910s, in spite of the fact that the mineral resources of the mountains and the gold and silver had mostly been extracted by that time.

It is a well-known fact that the Hungarian bourgeois period was the period of economic prosperity in Hungary, and especially the degree of industrialization changed at a very quick pace year by year. It was a typical of the time to judge the importance of a town by its degree of industrialization. Felvidék could meet this criterion in every respect. In the area around Zólyom [Zvolen] County industry played an important role at a national level, too. In Zólyom [Zvolen] County 38.4% of the population was employed in industry, and in Szepes [Spiš], Liptó [Liptov], Gömör-Kishont [Gemer-Malo-Hont], Turóc [Turiec] and Nógrád [Novohrad] Counties, which surround Zólyom [Zvolen] County, this proportion was also higher than 30%.

There were three towns in historical Hungary where the proportion of those employed in the industry exceeded 40%; one of them was Pozsony [Bratislava]. The degree of industrialization is also indicated by the percentage of the people employed in industrial workplaces. The national average was that 100 independent craftsmen employed 225 people. The average for the countryside was 174 employed and the average in towns was 401 employees. In the whole country the percentage of those employed was the highest in Selmecbánya [Banská Štiavnica], where 100 craftsmen employed 695 people and in Pozsony [Bratislava] (the third on a country-wide scale) it was 528.

The changes in industry were indicated by the increase in the proportion of large-scale industrial works, which meant factories with more than 20 employees. Liptó [Liptov] County, where 1.43% of all factories were large-scale works belonging to this group, was outstanding from this point of view in the whole country. The counties following it were also in Felvidék (Upper Hungary): Zólyom [Zvolen] (1.4%) and Szepes [Spiš] (1.3%). There were such factories in the textile and paper industries. We can also find examples of factories employing more than a thousand people in Felvidék (Upper Hungary), including the counties Zólyom [Zvolen] (1.4%) and Szepes [Spiš] (1.3%), but, for the sake of completeness, we also have to mention the villages that had such large-scale factories: Ruttká (Vrútky), Lopér (Podbrezová), Nagysurány (Šurany) and Korompa (Krompachy).

In Liptó County the number of the people working in the construction industry increased particularly rapidly. The reason for this was that a lot of people worked in Budapest.

The transformation of the economic structure is indicated by the fact that the number of those employed in mining decreased in the whole country. An example for this is Selmecebánya (Banská Štiavnica), where the percentage of the people working in mining decreased from 35.5% to 25.8%, i.e. from 5,808 to 3,919 people, between 1900 and 1910. Miners either moved away or found jobs in industry. This process was one reason for the decrease in the population of Selmecebánya (Banská Štiavnica).

The important role that towns in Felvidék (Upper Hungary) played in industry and trade can be seen in *Table 6*, which shows that, with their higher proportions, these towns are different from the national average for Hungary at that time.

Table 6. Proportions of people employed in mining and industry, transportation and trade, out of all workers in the towns of Hungary in 1910, %

	Mining and industry	Transportation and trade	Σ
Municipal boroughs	37.7	16.3	54.0
<i>Excluding Budapest:</i>	<i>3.6</i>	<i>13.6</i>	<i>45.2</i>
Towns	29.2	10.2	39.4
'Northern' Felvidék towns	38.2	12.2	50.4
'Southern' Felvidék towns	37.9	12.9	50.8

Source: *ibid*

The geographical conditions that were favourable from the point of view of mining and industry, wooded mountains, were unfavourable for agriculture. Nevertheless, to be able to supply the mining and industrial population, agriculture developed to a high level in the northern counties of Felvidék. There was not only highly developed cattle-breeding but also a considerable number of sheep. The productivity of plant-growing was also higher than the national average. That was the reason why food imports were less than would have been expected considering the natural conditions. The agriculture in Árva and Trencsén Counties was not at anywhere near such a high level (Nagy 2004).

Granting credit was also a typical feature of these five counties. It indicated the liberalism of Hungary of the time that the individual ethnic groups could establish their own banks, in order to be able to support their own people with low-interest loans. Such banks in Slovak ownership could also be found in the small towns in Felvidék.

It was a sign of a high level of modernization in the towns of Felvidék that, on the basis of different indicators, Pozsony County was ranked to be in the stage of 'advanced modernization', each of the five counties of Felvidék with Slovak majority was classified as 'a region under modernization', while Nyitra, Bars, Hont and Nógrád Counties were categorized as 'moderately modernized'. Compared to them, Árva and Trencsén, as well as Sáros and Zemplén were regions that had 'hardly joined the modernization process' (Beluszky-Győri 2005, pp. 71-88).

Mention must be made of the fact that the nationwide strengthening of industry was also based on a significant transformation of the economic structure, which also had some regional consequences, seriously affecting also Felvidék. On the one hand, the importance of mining decreased and, instead of the former mining of rare ores, the mining of iron ore and coal increased. On the other hand, the processing industry (the textile industry, the food processing industry) started to produce consumption goods. As a result of the introduction of new technologies, heavy industry also appeared. However, these new processes were typical of other regions. Light industry and the food processing industry were present with their quality goods in the northern towns, but they mostly satisfied internal demands. Heavy industry, the important sector of the era, could be found first of all in the zone of the towns Salgótarján, Ózd and Diósgyőr (Vuics 1998). As a result of the same processes, and due to Vienna and Budapest gaining more prominence, Pozsony (Bratislava) started to lose its central role. Compared to Kassa (Košice), Miskolc

was becoming increasingly important as a commercial and financial centre (Gál 1998).

Béla Bulla and Tibor Mendöl already wrote after World War II in their joint work, which was published in 1947, that Felvidék towns had lost importance and had been left out of the 19th century modernization process (1999, pp. 257-263). Since the buildings of a town show the signs of the lifestyle and living standard of the age in which they were built, it can be stated that, in the majority of the towns in Felvidék, historic buildings and squares cherish the material and intellectual memories of the ages between the 14th and 18th centuries. The Baroque architectural elements appear only in the southern towns, where, after the Turks had been expelled, there was economic and intellectual prosperity, which was also expressed in the buildings, which met the needs of the age. Bulla and Mendöl classified most Felvidék towns into the category of towns *on the downgrade* (Szakolca [Skalica], Korpona [Krupina], Holics [Holíč], Miava [Myjava], Kisszeben [Sabinov], and Bártfa [Bardejov]). However, the towns of Szepesség (Késmárk [Kežmarok], Leibic [Lubica], Szepesbela [Spišská Belá], Podolin [Podolíneč], Lubló [Stará Ľubovňa], Szepesolaszi [Spišské Vlachy], Szepesvárálja [Spišské Podhradie], and Lőcse [Levoča]) also belonged there, except for Poprád [Poprad], which, due to its railway junction, began to flourish. None of the many small towns in a small area developed into a prominent centre. Lőcse [Levoča] became more important only because it was also a county town. The prosperity of these towns was mostly due to trade with Silesia (Szakolca, Holics) and Poland.

Most mining towns were classified as *stagnating* (Újbánya [Nová Baňa], Gölnicbánya [Gelnica], Szomolnok [Smolník], Breznóbánya [Brezno], Dobsina [Dobšiná], Körmöcbánya [Kremnica], Rozsnyó [Rožňava] and Igló [Spišská Nová Ves]). Libetbánya [Ľubietová] and Bakabánya [Pukanec] reverted to villages. Apart from the exhaustion of ore, another reason for the decline of Selmezbánya [Banská Štiavnica] was also that the academy of mining and forestry was moved to Sopron after the Czechoslovak state had been founded.

Only one town, Pöstyén [Piešťany], owed its existence to thermal baths and bathing. The mountain air of the High Tatras called tourist spots and health resorts around Tátrafüred [Starý Smokovec] into being, but no towns.

Small centres with a less important historical past and minor architectural relics, such as Liptószentmiklós [Liptovský Mikuláš], Turócszent-

márton [Martin], Trencsén [Trenčín], Rimaszombat [Rimavská Sobota], Ipolyság [Šahy], Nagytapolcsány [Topoľčany], Privigye [Prievdza], Németpróna [Nitrianske Pravno], Nyitrabánya [Handlová], Alsókubin [Dolný Kubín], Námesztó [Námestovo], Tresztana [Trstená] and Csaca [Čadca] were categorized as towns with *some urban role*. The towns Vágújhely [Nové Mesto nad Váhom], Aranyosmarót [Zlaté Moravce] and Pelsőc [Plešivec], as well as Fülek [Fíľakovo], which could be listed in either of the latter categories, were called *a kind of market town*. Rózsahegy [Ružomberok], Zólyom [Zvolen] and Losonc [Lučenec] were *basin centres* and Zsolna [Žilina] *a town at the foot of the mountain pass*.

Besztercebánya [Banská Bystrica] and Eperjes [Prešov] represented a higher level of *varied urban life*. There was only one town in Felvidék that could be called an *actual town* and it was Kassa [Košice], because at the time they were writing their book Pozsony [Bratislava] had seemed to lose importance compared with Vienna. Besides, it had belonged to the Small Hungarian Plain for centuries rather than to Felvidék. Apart from Kassa [Košice], Nyitra [Nitra] and Léva [Levice] were *real market towns* in the area that belongs to Slovakia today, but Homonna [Humenné], Varannó [Vranov nad Topľou] and Nagymihály [Michalovce], which had not really obtained the status of a market town, were also included in this category. The two authors look upon the latter three towns as parts of Northeastern Felvidék, rather than Northwestern Felvidék, which has been dealt with so far.

Consequently, the large-scale changes of the era of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy affected Felvidék (Upper Hungary) negatively, but discovering and taking opportunities and adjusting to the new conditions had become tasks for the new state to solve after the collapse of historical Hungary.

3. The settlement structure of Slovakia

The Hungarian settlements that were mostly inhabited by Slovaks became an important factor in a political sense when, following Pan-Slav ambitions, Czech politicians began to work at endowing the Slovak people with equal rights so as to strengthen their own ambitions. This policy was justified by the 1920 Peace Treaty. It was Masaryk who proposed that they should claim territories for the Czech and Slovak people (important economic living space and militarily defensible borders) with great power politics, rather than the Austro-Slav equality idea propagated by Palacký. The great powers that dictated peace were open to these claims, because it was the reflection of their own logic in acquiring new territories.

With the foundation of Czechoslovakia, it became obvious that the process of the Slovak people becoming a nation was so slow that the issue of Slovak autonomy did not even come up when the new state organization was established. Slovakia was at the level of an annexed territory with all its constitutional conclusions. (*Zelenák 2002*).

The emerging system of settlements, among them that of towns, was formed to meet the general needs of the new, unified state, and not the Slovak people's own local needs. Slovak interests were subordinated to the uniform Czechoslovak interests. Self-governance could not be enforced in the democratic, legislative and administrative operation of the new state, which, by acting on the principle of majority vote, suppressed minority needs, and thus Slovak claims too, by simply voting them down. The asymmetric system manifested itself in the fact that the political division of Czechoslovakia took place on a national basis, in the form of national parties, which involved the possibility of the new state breaking up. The effect that this phenomenon had on administration has been analysed in literature written on the subject (*Kocsis 2002*).

3. 1 Factors forming settlements in Slovakia

The settlement structure of a country depends on several factors, some of the most important being its geographical location, natural conditions, his-

torical development and demographic conditions. In Slovakia, due to the special features of the terrain, the natural conditions and geographical location exert a profound influence on the settlement structure of the country. Modern-day Slovakia is located at the watershed of continental Europe in the Northwestern Carpathians, in the northern part of the Pannon Basin. This has a far-reaching effect on its geopolitical situation, too.

The terrain of Slovakia is quite varied and there are considerable height differences. Its lowest-lying region is Bodrogköz, which is located at a height of 94 m above sea level; while the highest is the High Tatras, with the Gerlachov peak standing as high as 2,655 m. Since 71.7% of the area of the country is occupied by the Carpathians and the remaining 28.3% is covered by plains, it can be stated that the most characteristic element of the terrain is its mountains. This determines the location of the different settlements, their size, internal structure, ways of construction and the means of subsistence of the population.

The large and deep valleys fulfill the function of plains and are therefore of the utmost importance. Economic activities, including agriculture, industry and transport, are concentrated in large valleys of the mountains and in plain areas. Residential areas can also be found there. The most important communication channels and town zones are in the valleys of the rivers Váh and Hornád and in other valleys of Southern Slovakia. These towns, together with the branch of the Hron area, connect the two big cities, Pozsony (Bratislava) and Kassa (Košice). The mountain ranges pose formidable obstacles for traffic. This was especially typical in the past, when, owing to isolation, separate ethnic and cultural regions emerged. These regions are dealt with by ethnography. The three main dialects of the Slovak language can also be connected to the three main regions in Felvidék. The Slovak movements aiming to unify the nation wanted to reconcile the large differences between them. This was made difficult by the fact that at the beginning they regarded the Czech language as a standard cultured language, the sophisticated basic language of the Slovak language. Within the three main dialects, 33 dialects can be distinguished, which demonstrates the connection between the structures of geography and language (*Stolc* 1968).

Human activities are still determined by the features of the terrain, the mountains. In higher mountains tourism is the most important activity today. Most national parks can also be found there.

According to the calculations of Slovak researchers, 33.2% (1,022) of all the settlements (3,080) of the country can be found in the plains. In

the plains there is an overwhelming majority of settlements with a high population, which also means that settlement density is rather low (17.4/100 km²). The settlements adjusted to the terrain in their location. The structure of the settlements is especially characteristic at the meeting point of the hilly and the plain areas, on the alluvial cone of rivers, on the edge of the plains and at the foot of the mountains. This can also be seen in the areas to the east of the Little Carpathians, in the valley of the lower reaches of the rivers Váh and Nitra, in Žitný ostrov and in Szigetköz.

The overwhelming majority (2,058 or 66.8%) of all settlements can be found in the Carpathians, and 58% of the whole population lives there. This indicates the importance of small settlements. The varied terrain is decisive in this area. The region of the Carpathians can be divided into two geographical and settlement units. One of them is the area of large valleys, which accounts for 16.5% of the area of the country. Thirty per cent, i.e. 924, of all settlements can be found there. The density of typically small settlements is higher (11.4 settlements/100 km²). The number of towns is also high in these valleys: 38% of all towns, with 41% of the urban population. The large valley of the river Váh, at middle height, is the most densely populated. The other geographical unit is the mountainous area, which covers the largest area of the Carpathians (55.1%), but compared with the size of the area the high number of settlements (1,134, or 36.8% of all settlements) gives an extremely low population density (4.2 inhabitants/100 km²) in the high-lying valleys (Očovský– Bezák– Podolák 1996).

Table 7. The main characteristic features of the Slovak settlement system

	Geographical composition of the area of the country (%)	Number of settlements	Proportion of settlements (%)	Settlement density number/100 km ²	Proportion of the population (%)
Lowlands	28.3	1022	33.2	7.36	42
The Carpathians	71.7	2058	66.8	5.85	58
large valleys	16.5	924	30.0	11.4	35
mountains	55.1	1134	36.8	4.2	23

Source: Očovský– Bezák– Podolák 1996

3. 2 The settlement system of Slovakia

The main characteristic feature of the settlement system of Slovakia is that there are many settlements within its borders, especially small villages. This is mostly due to the geographical surface, because the

indented terrain is favourable for the emergence of a high number of small villages. (*Table 8*)

Besides villages with a low number of inhabitants, there are also sporadic settlements. According to researchers of the settlement geography of Slovakia, a settlement can be defined as a dwelling community which consists of a group of houses, is at least 200 meters from the neighbouring dwelling community, and where there is open space dividing it from the next community. Lukniš, a Slovak researcher, has been engaged in the issue of sporadic settlements. This is the settlement form that most often breaks the rule involved in the definition. According to his calculations, there are about 7,000 sporadic settlements in the country. If they are also taken into account, there are altogether 10,100 settlements in Slovakia (*Očovský– Bezák– Podolák* 1996) The following discussion focuses on the settlements reflected by official Slovak statistics.

Compared to the figures of 1950, the number of settlements decreased for the next 40 years. In the 1950 census 3,344 independent settlements were registered. This number had dropped to 2,725 by 1980. The proportions show that the population became concentrated in settlements with an increasing number of inhabitants. While the number and proportion of the settlements with low populations was decreasing decade by decade, the number of larger settlements was increasing. According to the figures in *Table 8*, settlements with a population between 5,000 and 10,000 (mostly towns) tend to remain around 50 in number. This stagnation is due to the fact that the number of settlements is in turn growing in the next-higher-population settlement groups of the table. Simultaneously, since small villages had become independent again their number began to rise from the 1980s.

During the decades of socialism the number of settlements with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants decreased at an extremely quick pace, which was first of all due to the fact that settlements merged and small settlements were attached to larger ones. Their proportion decreased from 74.9% in 1950 to 64.6% in 1980, and their number from 2,506 to 1,759. The forced unification of settlements took place after 1950, when 346 settlements with fewer than 500 inhabitants were attached to larger settlements. This was the reason why the number of settlements with more than 500 inhabitants increased by 239. In the 1960s there were only half as many settlement mergers, and these did not result in such a large increase in the population of the central settlement, therefore the number of large settlements hardly increased. It was in the

1970s that the settlement structure was subject to the largest intervention, because in this decade the number of settlements fell by 366. According to the figures shown in the table, this change was probably the result of people moving from small to large settlements, because the number of towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants rose by 20.

Table 8. The number of settlements in Slovakia, according to settlement group

Settlement groups according to population	1950	1961	difference	1970	difference	1980	difference	1991	difference	2001	difference
-199	304	220	-84	200	-20	236	36	340	104	367	27
200-499	1,200	938	-262	863	-75	727	-136	822	95	805	-17
500-999	1,002	1,019	17	968	-51	796	-172	780	-16	786	6
Number of settlements with fewer than 1000 inhabitants	2,506	2,177	-329	2,031	-146	1,759	-272	1,942	183	1,958	16
Proportion of settlements with fewer than 1000 inhabitants	74.9	67.3		65.7		64.6		68.8		67.9	
1,000-1,999	562	651	89	644	-7	568	-76	522	-46	547	25
2,000-4,999	209	321	112	316	-5	280	-36	237	-43	253	16
5,000-9,999	42	56	14	57	1	55	-2	50	-5	53	3
10,000-19,999	17	21	4	24	3	36	12	32	-4	32	0
20,000-49,000	6	9	3	17	8	19	2	29	10	29	0
50,000-9,9999	1	1	0	0	-1	6	6	9	3	9	0
100,000-	1	1	0	2	1	2	0	2	0	2	0
Total:	3,344	3,237	-107	3,091	-146	2,725	-366	2,823	98	2,883	60

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

Table 9. Changes in the proportion of settlements compared with the previous census in Slovakia, according to settlement groups, %

Settlement groups	1961	1970	1980	1991	2001
-199	72.4	90.9	118.0	144.1	107.9
200-499	78.2	92.0	84.2	113.1	97.9
500-999	101.7	95.0	82.2	98.0	100.8
1,000-1,999	115.8	98.9	88.2	91.9	104.8
2,000-4,999	153.6	98.4	88.6	84.6	106.8
5,000-9,999	133.3	101.8	96.5	90.9	106.0
10,000-19,999	123.5	114.3	150.0	88.9	100.0
20,000-49,000	150.0	188.9	111.8	152.6	100.0
50,000-99,999	100.0	-	600.0	150.0	100.0
100,000-	100.0	200.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number of settlements	96.8	95.5	88.2	139.3	102.1

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

When the political practice of seeking to achieve a higher level of centralization and the fusion of settlements lost its dominating role, a high number of formerly independent settlements separated from central settlements. This was encouraged by the first administrative measure of the new bourgeois era to restore the independence of settlements. The settlements grasped the opportunity, so they restored their former independence and broke away from the larger settlement, mostly from towns. This was the reason for the increase in the number of settlements in 1991 (by 98 settlements). As a consequence of the withdrawal of communities, several settlements lost a part of their population, and in this way fell into a lower settlement category. The figures of the 2001 census already indicate the new conditions. The changes in the number of settlements that could get rid of the central instructions may be due to the new social and economic conditions. The unchanged number of towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants and the increased number of those with a population of between 500 and 10,000 could be a reaction to the real spatial movements of the society. *Table 10*, which includes population numbers, explains this phenomenon.

Table 10. Population of settlements in Slovakia according to settlement groups (people)

Settlement group	1950	1961	%	1970	%	1980	%	1991	%	2001	%
-199	44,722	32,205	72.0	27,892	86.6	31,393	112.6	43,729	139.3	45,808	104.8
200-499	413,118	331,450	80.2	303,003	91.4	251,267	82.9	284,966	113.4	276,280	97.0
500-999	697,182	727,463	104.3	697,357	95.9	570,284	81.8	554,632	97.3	556,289	100.3
1,000-1,999	768,663	910,762	118.5	904,961	99.4	804,291	88.9	737,614	91.7	767,561	104.1
2,000-4,999	615,768	930,887	151.2	926,372	99.5	830,734	89.7	695,873	83.8	743,307	106.8
5,000-9,999	283,104	382,836	135.2	391,705	102.3	374,260	95.5	346,229	92.5	368,623	106.5
10,000-19,999	222,827	290,098	130.2	317,722	109.5	545,659	171.7	456,958	83.7	460,574	100.8
20,000-49,999	141,572	247,201	174.6	517,896	209.5	589,822	113.9	836,960	141.9	850,194	101.6
50,000-99,999	62,465	79,352	127.0	—	—	417,831	—	640,017	153.2	646,054	100.9
100,000-	192,896	241,796	125.4	450,377	186.3	582,627	129.4	677,357	116.3	664,765	98.1
Total number of settlements	3,442,317	4,174,050	121.3	4,537,285	108.7	4,998,168	110.2	5,274,335	105.5	5,379,455	102.0

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Pozsony

The reasons for the changes in the number of the inhabitants of settlements were different in each era. Due to the settlement policy of the 1950s, there was a decrease in the number of inhabitants of villages with a population of fewer than 500, but in all other types of settlement a considerable increase could be seen. In the 1960s it was only the settlements with more than 5,000 inhabitants where the number of inhabitants increased, which was the first sign of population concentration. According to the 1961 census, the number of inhabitants of the towns with a popu-

lation of 20,000-50,000 increased by 174.6% and, according to the 1970 census, it increased by 209.5%. This was obviously due to the fact that the population was urged to move to larger towns, which was the consequence of industrialization. Apparently, the population of towns with under 20,000 inhabitants increased to an extent where they exceeded the category threshold. There was a decrease in the population of the settlements with between 200 and 10,000 people in the 1970s, whereas in those with more than 10,000 inhabitants the population increased. As a matter of fact, this trend continues, as the 1991 figures indicate that the number of inhabitants in settlements with more than 20,000 people increased considerably, while the population of small villages with fewer than 500 inhabitants also showed signs of revival.

The figures for 2001 actually refer to the new phenomenon, because they show that in all but two settlement types there was an increase in the population. The fact that it was the number of the inhabitants of the settlements with a population of between 2,000 and 5,000 people that increased to the largest extent shows that wealthier people had started to move out of big cities. This is also confirmed by the fact that there was a decrease in the population number of the cities with more than 100,000 people. Both Bratislava and Košice became cities with decreasing populations. Moving out of the towns and cities to the country for a better quality of life is a sign of economic dynamism.

Table 11. Settlements in Slovakia with population below and above the thresholds of 1,000 and 10,000 in Slovakia

		1921	1930	1950	1961	1970	1980	1991	2001
total		2,998,239	3,330,885	3,442,317	4,174,050	4,537,285	4,998,168	5,274,335	5,379,455
under 1,000	people			1,155,022	1,091,118	1,028,252	852,944	883,327	878,377
over 1,000				2,287,295	3,082,932	3,509,033	4,145,224	4,391,008	4,501,078
under 1,000	%			33.6	26.1	22.7	17.1	16.7	16.3
over 1,000				66.4	73.9	77.3	82.9	83.3	83.7
under 10,000	people	2,615,200	2,845,561	2,822,557	3,315,603	3,251,290	2,862,229	2,663,043	2,757,868
over 10,000		383,039	485,324	619,760	858,447	1,285,995	2,135,939	2,611,292	2,621,587
under 10,000	%	87.2	85.4	82.0	79.4	71.7	57.3	50.49	51.3
over 10,000		12.8	14.6	18.0	20.6	28.3	42.7	49.51	48.7

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

In spite of there being so many small villages in Slovakia, the majority of the population lives in settlements with more than 1,000 inhabitants (Table 11). Although the number of people living in small villages increased compared with the previous years, their proportion within the whole of the population kept decreasing (Slavík 1997). The table shows

two processes that have the same trend. One of them is the increase of the population from 2,998,239 people at the time of the 1921 census to 5,379,455 people according to the 2001 census. At 179.4% this increase is considerable. The other process is that an increasing proportion of the population lives in ever bigger settlements. It is an obvious sign of urbanization that the number of inhabitants of settlements with fewer than 1,000 people decreased from more than one million (1,155,022 people) to much fewer than one million (878,377) between 1950 and 2001. This is a decrease of 76.0%. According to the 1950 census, 33.6% of the more than 3,400,000 people lived in settlements with populations of fewer than 1,000 people, whereas this was only 16.3% of the population of 5,000,000 in 2001. The statement can also be justified by the fact that while in 1921 87.2% of the population lived in settlements with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, in 2001 it was only 51.3%.

Table 12. Changes in the population in the three most typical settlement groups, 1921-2001

	1921	1930	1950	1961	1970	1980	1991	2001
-1,999	1,802,204	1,942,408	1,923,680	2,001,880	1,933,213	1,657,235	1,620,941	1,645,938
2,000-9,999	812,996	903,153	898,872	1,313,723	1,318,077	1,204,994	1,042,102	1,111,930
10,000-	383,039	485,324	619,760	858,447	1,285,995	2,135,939	2,611,292	2,621,587
Total population	2,998,239	3,330,885	3,442,312	4,174,050	4,537,285	4,998,168	5,274,335	5,379,455
Rate of change, %		111.1	103.3	121.3	108.7	110.2	105.5	102.0

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

The distribution of the population in both *Table 12* and *Figure 3* is based on the result of another settlement categorisation. From the detailed data we can see that the population movement of three settlement groups shows the most typical values. According to the table, the population of settlements with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants had been around two million until the 1970s, and then it started to decrease dramatically. The population of settlements with more than 2,000 but fewer than 10,000 inhabitants increased slowly till their total population became more than one million. Meanwhile, in the settlements with more than 10,000 people (all of them towns) there was steady and later accelerating growth.

The changes are even more emphasized by proportional changes, because they also demonstrate the effect of the increase in the total population (*Table 13*, *Figure 4*).

Figure 3. Changes in the population in the three most typical settlement groups, 1921-2001

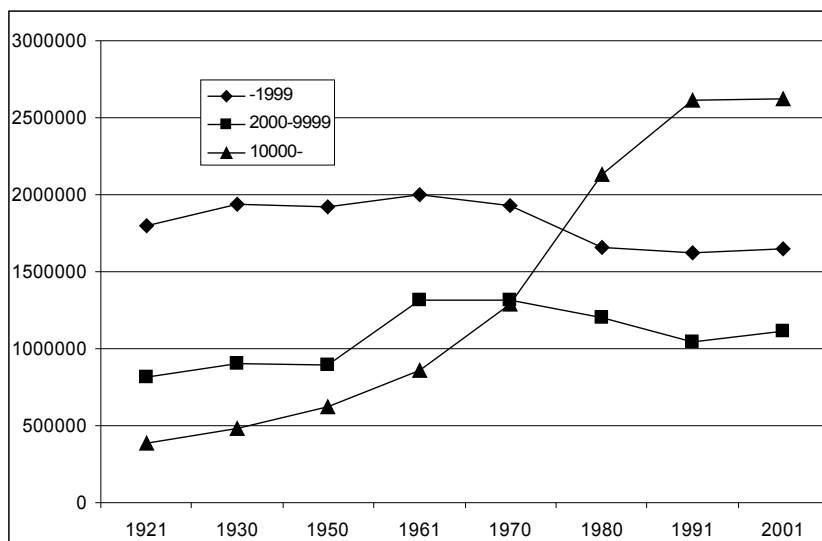


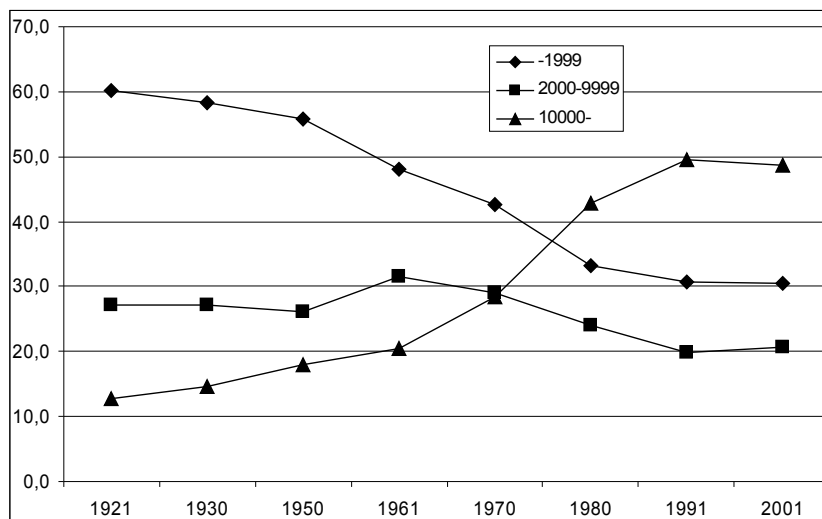
Table 13. Changes in population proportions in the three most typical settlement groups, 1921-2001

	1921	1930	1950	1961	1970	1980	1991	2001
-1,999	60.1	58.3	55.9	48.0	42.6	33.2	30.7	30.6
2,000-9,999	27.1	27.1	26.1	31.5	29.0	24.1	19.8	20.7
10,000-	12.8	14.6	18.0	20.6	28.3	42.7	49.5	48.7
Total population	2,998,239	3,330,885	3,442,312	4,174,050	4,537,285	4,998,168	5,274,335	5,379,455

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

The proportion of the people living in settlements with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants was halved in eight decades. In settlements with a population of between 2,000 and 10,000 people, the number of the inhabitants showed a tendency to decline; however, it was below 10%. The largest changes occurred in settlements with a population number higher than 10,000 people, because the proportion increased from 12.8% to 48.7%, while the total population rose from 2,998,239 to 5,379,455 people in the same period of time, which is an increase of 179.4%.

Figure 4. Changes in population proportion in the three most typical settlement groups, 1921-2001



Any comparison that we may make shows that the 20th century was one of the most decisive periods of the history of Slovakia, and this can also be observed from the aspect of the settlement structure. The settlement structure of small settlements, which had been typical for centuries, was replaced by an urban settlement structure complemented by the surviving small village environment. *Table 14* shows its geographical prevalence.

At a county (*kraj*) level the geographical location of the settlements shows that most settlements with a low number of inhabitants and small villages can be found in Prešov and Banská Bystrica Counties. This statement is true even if we do not take the eight county towns, among them Bratislava and Košice, the two big cities, into account, because in this case the average population of settlements is as high as 2,366 people, although the population of Bratislava County is considerably smaller. Compared with the Slovak average, Bratislava County turns out to be a densely populated area with several towns. In the case of Košice County the average population of settlements is only 1,208 people, but the averages in the settlements of both Banská Bystrica and Prešov Counties are even lower.

Table 14. Average population of settlements in the particular counties, 2005

County	Number of settlements	Population in the county	Average population of settlements	Population of the county town	Population in the county excluding the county town	Average population of settlements excluding the county town (people)
Bratislava	73	59,9053	8,206	428,672	170,381	2,366
Trnava	251	55,0982	2,195	70,286	480,696	1,923
Trenčín	276	605,503	2,194	57,854	547,649	1,991
Nitra	354	713,237	2,015	87,285	625,952	1,773
Žilina	315	692,343	2,198	85,400	606,943	1,933
Banská Bystrica	516	662,128	1,283	83,056	579,072	1,124
Prešov	666	790,321	1,187	92,786	697,535	1,049
Košice	440	766,213	1,741	236,093	530,120	1,208
Slovakia total:	2,891	5,379,780	1,861	1,141,432	4,238,348	1,470

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

3. 3 Urban structure in Slovakia

The urban structure of present-day Slovakia emerged between the two World Wars. Compared with 1910, the number of towns had almost doubled by 1930. However, this change did not take place over twenty years, since it was the result of a quick decision of the new state, rather than a process of gradual development. The new state power wanted to express its own power by changing the administrative system. The number of the towns specified in this way continued to grow, although at a slower pace. It had not doubled even by 2001, compared with the 77 towns in 1930.

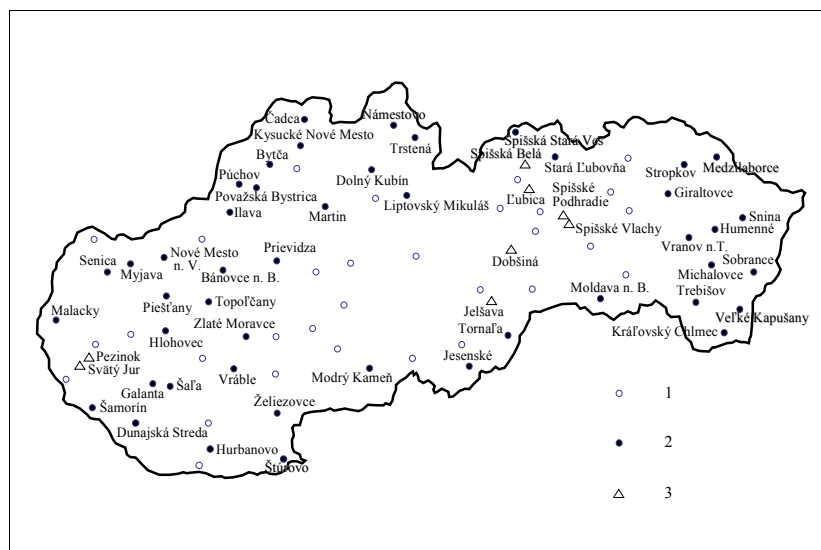
Table 15. Changes in the number and population of towns between 1910 and 2001

	1910	1930	1950 ^a	1980	1991	2001
Number of towns	39	77	91	84	136	136
Population of towns	481,184	902,953	1,048,219	2,205,711	2,933,088	3,010,162
Rate of population increase, %	-	187.6	116.1	210.4	133.0	102.6
Average population of towns	12,713	13,506	13,464	25,671	22,008	21,987

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

The dramatic changes made in the number and population of towns reflected the state-creating aims of the new political power. The new state intended to set up new central places based on its own ideas rather than on traditions.

Figure 5. Towns in Slovakia in 1930



1 – a town in 1910, too; 2 – a town in 1930; 3 – no longer a town in 1930

Source: Statistisches Handbuch (1932)

Edited by István Mezei, drawn by Máté Mády

The economic changes which modified the urban structure that had developed for long centuries in historical Felvidék took place as early as in the 19th century. With the depletion of silver and gold ore, former min-

ing towns began to decline. The coal and ore layers in the Gömör [Gemer] Mountains were also gradually being depleted. As a result, mining became a typical activity further in the south, in the vicinity of Salgótarján, Ózd and Putnok. This also attracted the processing industry to the area. Between 1867 and 1918 the dualistic state began to reform the administrative system in Felvidék. Of the 186 market towns, 40 became district towns. Of the 24 royal free boroughs, 19 were deprived of their rank and 16 towns in Szepes had to give up their privileges (Kocsis 1995).

The new Czechoslovak power did not respect historical tradition. In the eastern part of the new country six towns were deprived of their town status, whereas in the east, along the boundary of Sub-Carpathia, 11 settlements were declared towns.

Most settlements that have been declared towns can be found along an imaginary axis to the northeast of Bratislava. Twenty settlements were declared towns in this zone. This region had been rather short of towns. On the other hand, most new towns were originally 'ancient' Slovak towns: Liptószentmiklós (Liptovský Mikuláš), Turócszentmárton (Martin), Vágbeszterce (Považská Bystrica), Pöstyén (Piešťany), just to mention the most famous members of some town groups. Besides, there were the towns created from agricultural villages with a high number of inhabitants in the Kisalföld (Small Plain) region, like Dunaszerdahely (Dunajská Streda), Galánta (Galanta), Vágsellye (Šaľa), Somorja (Šamorín), etc. One important aspect of planning the town network was that there should be towns along the borders. This can be seen from Szenice (Senica) to Csaca (Čadca) (along the Czech language border), from Námeszto (Námestovo) to the far-away Mezőlaborc (Medzilaborce) (along the Polish border), and from Somorja (Šamorín) through Párkány (Štúrovo) and Kékkő (Modrý Kameň) to Királyhelmece (Kráľovský Chlmec) (along the Hungarian border).

By setting up the administrative units of the new state power and by establishing this new network of towns, the Czecho(slovak) power showed explicitly that then and there a 20th century conquest had taken place. It was a part of the conquest when, after marking out the state borders, the administrative districts were set up. Conquest was also seen in the political content of the following decades from the point of view of the changes affecting towns and villages. However, the number of towns and, more importantly, their functions, underwent severe changes.

The world-famous Tomáš Baťa, shoe manufacturer, is still generally known in Slovakia. Besides having been an excellent businessman, as a humanitarian he also had the ambition to ensure the best possible conditions for his workers and employees. Therefore he had houses built around the factories he established. In 1934, he founded the town Svit*, so that the workers of the factory could live close to it. There is another town with a similar story. The only difference is that the factory and the houses around it were built within the administrative boundary of the town Simony. In 1948, in commemoration of the founder shoe manufacturer, the name of the town was changed and it became Baťovany. The old Simony could not keep this name after 1949, since the new communist power replaced the bourgeois capitalist name and named it Partizánske as a reward for the Slovak residents of Simony for their participation in the national uprising. The town has been called Partizánske ever since.

3. 4 The most important steps in the (Czecho)Slovak conquest

3. 4. 1 Census as a means of statistical Slovakization

‘Bohemia was typically the land of language conflicts. Nowhere in Europe were there so bitter struggles for the language of an office or a street sign, and nowhere else was more intelligence wasted to make laws to solve the issue of languages than here.’
Flachbarth (1935)

The most important task between the two World Wars was the Slovakization of towns. In historical Hungary the social composition, i.e. the complementary character of civil occupations and cultural characteristics were much more important than language or ethnicity. The towns in Felvidék were mostly founded by residents of German ethnicity, who had been settled there by Hungarian kings. For centuries, though, especially from the age of the Reformation, religion played the primary role

* The word ‘Svit’ is the abbreviation for *Slovenské vizkózové továrne* (Slovak Viscose Factory). It is also a pun, since the abbreviation means ‘light’, ‘beam of light’ in the Slovak language.

rather than language. Simultaneously with the appearance of linguistic nationalism in the 18th century, or, even more typically, in the 19th century, the structure of the economy changed. Small-scale production was replaced by large factories. Meanwhile, economic dynamism accelerated and the economy prospered in the period of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Consequently, the Hungarian-speaking residents of the Hungarian state were an overwhelming majority in the towns of Felvidék, too. This was how these towns became towns with a Hungarian ethnic majority, but they preserved the multinational character of their long historical past. In Felvidék, multilingualism meant that Hungarian, German and Slovak languages were used to different extents in the individual regions. Besides, further ethnic groups and language communities also had their own places (Czechs, Polish, Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Russians, Jews, etc.). In modern terms, towns in Felvidék were really multicultural. Multilingualism, the existence of many different cultures, many different working cultures, ways of living and the many and ever-changing occupations were all signs of multiculturalism. This was what the new Czech, in a wider sense the new Czechoslovak power, wanted to alter in order to establish a homogeneous, monolingual and one-ethnicity state as well as monolingual towns, by means of state administration.

As a result of multilingualism, the ethnicity status of those living in Felvidék was rather uncertain. Czech and Slovak publicists were the ones to complain most at the time of the censuses about Slovak consciousness not being strong enough. Therefore they suggested asking about people's mother tongues, since a part of the population being questioned for the censuses had no sufficiently explicit national consciousness. Antonín Boháč, the head of department of the National Statistical Office and the best-known authority on national statistics, also shared the same opinion both in 1921 and 1930. 'In former Hungarian Felvidék, i.e. in Slovakia and Sub-Carpathia, there are villages that still show absolute indifference concerning ethnicity' (Cited in *Popély* 1991, pp. 52, 75). Especially in areas with mixed ethnicities, the mixed or bilingual population had no explicitly developed national consciousness. Due to their dual identity, most people could not even decide what ethnicity they really were. What is more, they could not even name their actual mother tongue.

However, the same held true of the Hungarian population, too, particularly in settlements with mixed ethnicities, on the edge of the Hungarian ethnic block, and in sporadic settlements. Prior to the cen-

suses, long debates and publicity campaigns took place so as to persuade inhabitants to declare themselves Hungarian or German. By that time the state power had already introduced laws that resulted in the deprivation of civil rights. According to the 1920 language act, the language of the ethnicity could not be used officially in a settlement if its proportion within the settlement's population was lower than 20%. After that each census became decisive for ethnic minorities, because this was what determined what the official language(s) of a village or a town would be. In everyday debates and newspapers words and expressions like 'manly strength of character', 'faith till death' or 'cowardly retreat' were opposed to each other (Cited in *Popély* 1991, p. 54).

It was just as decisive for the Czechoslovak power, too, because they wanted to win and to demonstrate their power. That is why they did not even shrink back from distortion and abuse. The most criticised point was the practice of ethnicity data survey. The census-takers abused their authority in that only they were entitled to fill in the forms, whereas in the Czech part of the country, the people had the right to write their answers on the sheets. The census-takers themselves had been selected so as to make sure that they would behave in a militant way. Their arguments served the national goal when they tried to force Hungarian people to declare themselves Slovak: 'Slovak officials will come here, and we are going to throw out Hungarian priests, cantors, teachers and notaries.' (Cited in *Popély* 1991, p. 56).

The census changed from an impartial means of demographic data collection into a political manoeuvre serving political purposes, i.e. it became a means of 'statistical Slovakization' between the two World Wars. The Czechoslovak state power wanted to prove the majority presence of the Czechoslovak national ethnicity in the new state at all costs. Meanwhile, the politicians representing minorities emphasized that they could gain or lose language usage rights if they kept or gave up their national identity. All this contradicts the idealized image that Slovak academics cherish about the first Czechoslovak republic. The above facts do not support the statement that Czechoslovakia was a model of tolerant coexistence of different kinds of urban population (speaking different languages and belonging to different religions) between the two World Wars (*Bitusiková* 2003).

Table 16. Number and proportion of the three main ethnicities according to censuses in the area of present-day Slovakia

	total	Slovak	%	Hungarian	%	German	%	other	%
1910	2,926,824	1,686,712	57.6	896,271	30.6	196,958	6.7	146,883	5.0
1921	2,998,244	1,941,942	64.8	634,827	21.2	139,800	4.7	281,675	9.4
1930	3,329,793	2,224,983	66.8	571,988	17.2	147,507	4.4	385,315	11.6
1950	3,442,317	2,982,524	86.6	354,532	10.3	5,179	0.2	100,082	2.9
1961	4,174,046	3,560,216	85.3	518,782	12.4	6,259	0.1	88,789	2.1
1970	4,537,290	3,878,904	85.5	552,006	12.2	4,760	0.1	101,620	2.2
1980	4,987,853	4,321,139	86.6	559,801	11.2	5,121	0.1	101,792	2.0
1991	5,274,335	4,519,328	85.7	567,296	10.8	no data	no data	187,711	3.6
2001	5,379,455	4,614,854	85.8	520,528	9.7	5,405	0.1	238,668	4.4

Source: the author's own calculations on the basis of *Popély (1991)* and Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

During the war the ethnic composition continued to change. As a result of the 1938 Vienna Award, the southern areas populated by an overwhelming majority of Hungarian people was returned to Hungary. The Czech and Slovak people who had moved there and occupied the leading positions in the towns or worked as farmers in fields confiscated from Hungarians started to move back to Czechia and Slovakia. In the remaining Slovak area they declared the new Slovak Republic. The new state started Slovakization immediately. They resettled the people with Czech citizenship from Bratislava to Czechia and sent the Jews to concentration camps. Within the German alliance system, they could not take hostile steps against the Hungarians, although the removal of the Hungarian population was the subject of political common talk and opinions published in newspapers.

After the war the Czechoslovak state interfered with the ethnic composition in the most aggressive way. The new Czechoslovak government had sided with the winners and thought it was time to create an ethnically homogeneous national state. This was included in the infamous 1945 government programme of Košice. Giving the false arguments of Hungarian and German people having been the reason for the collapse of Czechoslovakia, they did all in their power to expel Germans and Hungarians from the country. Since the victorious powers did not allow the method of mass removal of the population, they tried to achieve their goal by population exchange, deportation and different means of intimidation. How 'successful' this was is proved by the census figures. While the proportion of the population of Slovak ethnicity increased from

57.6% in 1910 to 66.8% in 1930, and to 86.6% in 1950, the proportion of citizens of Hungarian ethnicity fell from 30.6% to 10.3%. The personal tragedies behind these changes have not been spoken about openly up to the present day.

Mention must be made of the fact that all policies that the Slovak National Council and its organs carried out against the Hungarian people in the new Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1948 already existed in embryonic form in the activity and methods of Alexander Mach, the extreme right-wing Interior Minister of the Slovak State. Mach, besides being anti-Semitic, was also extremely anti-Hungarian. It was he who came up with and announced the idea of Slovak and Hungarian population exchange in the newspapers, i.e. that the Hungarian people should be expelled from their homeland right in the middle of the war (*Szalatnai* 1993, p. 270).

Table 17. Number and proportion of the three main ethnicities compared to the data of the previous census in the area of present-day Slovakia

	total	%	Slovak	%	Hungarian	%	German	%	other	%
1910	2,926,824	-	1,686,712	-	896,271	-	196,958	-	146,883	-
1921	2,998,244	102.4	1,941,942	115.1	634,827	70.8	139,800	71.0	281,675	191.8
1930	3,329,793	111.1	2,224,983	114.6	571,988	90.1	147,507	105.5	385,315	136.8
1950	3,442,317	103.4	2,982,524	134.0	354,532	62.0	5,179	3.5	100,082	26.0
1961	4,174,046	121.3	3,560,216	119.4	518,782	146.3	6,259	120.9	88,789	88.7
1970	4,537,290	108.7	3,878,904	109.0	552,006	106.4	4,760	76.1	101,620	114.5
1980	4,987,853	109.9	4,321,139	111.4	559,801	101.4	5,121	107.6	101,792	100.2
1991	5,274,335	105.7	4,519,328	104.6	567,296	101.3	-	-	187,711	184.4
2001	5,379,455	107.9	4,614,854	106.8	520,528	93.0	5,405	105.5	238,668	127.1

Source: the author's own calculations on the basis of *Popély (1991)* and Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

During the decades between the censuses the population of Czechoslovakia, and, since 1993 that of Slovakia, has been increasing steadily. Meanwhile, the percentage of the population of Slovak ethnicity increased, and very often at a higher rate than the national average. The proportion of people of Hungarian ethnicity fell dramatically up to the 1950 census. It was only in 1961 that it seemed to level off, but by 2001 this proportion had further decreased.

It must also be emphasized that the 'other' category of the tables including census figures was defined differently over the years. In the beginning, it was a manipulative tool of the censuses in that Hungarians who had not been granted Czechoslovak citizenship were taken account

of in this category. After 1950, however, it consisted of small ethnic groups. After 1990, new phenomena emerged within the population of Slovakia. A higher number of the Gypsy population dared to declare themselves an independent ethnicity, amounting to almost 90,000 people in 2001. Actually, the percentage of Gypsy people in Slovakia is thought to be much higher. Also, the number of the people of other and unknown ethnicities increased and over 65,000 people were registered in these two categories.

3. 4. 2 Towns as the centres of Slovakization

The new state regarded it as its major task to change the urban Hungarian majority to a Slovak majority. That was the reason why so many settlements were declared towns. Both in existing and new towns it was their ambition to achieve the dominance and exclusive majority of employees with Slovak national ethnicity in administration, the state institutional system and public institutions, as soon as possible. They were therefore eager to prove Slovak predominance by censuses, which produced numerous abuses as a consequence. The Czechoslovak power did not react to the thousands of reports on the aggressive behaviour of census-takers. According to the records, the census-takers refused to register Hungarian ethnicity, saying, for instance, 'those who were born in Košice and are Košice residents cannot be Hungarian.' (Cited in *Popély*, 1991, p. 95).

As the figures of *Table 18* show, both in 1910 and in 2001 there were about 200,000 people of Hungarian ethnicity in the towns of Felvidék, i.e. of present-day Slovakia. However, there was a huge difference between the two figures, since in 1910 the 200,000 Hungarians lived in 39 towns, whereas in 2001 they lived in as many as 136 towns! This figure refers to a high number of tragic events, because the number of the people of Hungarian ethnicity living in the nation decreased from 935,000 to 319,000. If we also take into consideration that the rural population was chased into towns (after their lands and houses had been confiscated), which was typical of all the socialist countries in the 1950s, then we can see that the figures regarding deportation, removal and exchange of the population, executions and expatriations show actual ethnic cleansing.

The 31.1% proportion of the urban Slovak population in 1910 rose to 88.5% in 2001. During those 90 years the number and population of

towns increased considerably. In 1910 there were altogether 403,000 town-dwellers in contemporary Felvidék, and in 2001 there were more than 3 million of them in Slovakia. Regarding ethnicity proportions, the urban population with almost 50% Hungarian majority, which actually meant the coexistence of several ethnicities, had become a population of almost 90% Slovak ethnicity by 2001. All in all, the earlier figure of over 50% of different ethnicities fell to scarcely 10% in towns. More exactly, the Hungarian-dominated population, which was willing to accept other ethnicities, was replaced by a discriminative Slovak hegemony, which demanded assimilation.

Table 18. Changes in the proportion of ethnicities in Slovakia between 1910 and 2001

		population		Slovak		Hungarian		German	
		people	%	people	%	people	%	people	%
1910	urban settlements (39)	403,778	12.8	125,449	31.1	200,189	49.6	69,312	17.17
	rural settlements	2,762,396	87.2	1,546,779	56.0	935,249	33.9	134,672	4.88
	total	3,166,174	100.0	1,672,228	52.8	1,135,438	35.9	203,984	6.44
2001	urban settlements(136)	3,022,106	56.2	2,674,072	88.5	200,611	6.6	3,674	0.12
	rural settlements	2,357,349	43.8	1,940,782	82.3	319,917	13.6	1,731	0.07
	total	5,379,455	100.0	4,614,854	85.8	520,528	9.7	5,405	0.10

Source: KSH Budapest, Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

Note:

1910: the territory of the 1861 memorandum

2001: the territory of present-day Slovakia

Owing to the statistical tricks of Czechoslovak censuses, the number of the population of Hungarian ethnicity decreased dramatically in the new state compared to 1910, in contrast with the dominant, so-called 'Czechoslovak' ethnicity. The reason why the figure referring to ethnicity in statistical surveys or censuses was different from that indicating mother tongue in these years was fear (*Table 19*). Being afraid of the consequences, many people did not dare to admit the ethnicity corresponding to their mother tongue, so they marked that of the dominant nation, i.e. Slovak ethnicity. The difference between the two series of data is still rather striking. It is especially large between those who give Ruthenian as their mother tongue and those, half as many, who have declared themselves belonging to the Ruthenian ethnicity.

Table 19. The difference between 2001 census responses for ethnicity and for mother tongue in towns

	Ethnicity	Mother tongue	%
Ruthenian	12,052	23,804	197.51
no answer given	39,280	47,924	122.01
German	3,673	4,405	119.93
Hungarian	200,617	226,837	113.07
Croatian	829	911	109.89
Czech	34,377	37,257	108.38
Polish	1,845	1,896	102.76
Total ethnicities	3,022,106	3,022,106	100.00
Slovak	2,674,069	2,629,657	98.34
Gypsy	38,532	37,258	96.69
Serb	379	359	94.72
Ukrainian	7,178	5,398	75.20
other	9,275	6,400	69.00

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

The towns, as administrative centres, became both victims and scenes of language conflict. Former municipal boroughs, such as Komárno and Banská Štiavnica, were first degraded to villages, then declared towns again, but now without any privileges or development plans.

The frequent reorganization of administration was mainly for the purpose of influencing language and ethnicity proportions. Instead of the former county towns, other towns became the centres of administration. In the so-called region system, which was set up in 1923, only 6 towns were made county towns: Bratislava and Košice, as well as Nitra, Martin, Zvolen (instead of Banská Bystrica) and Liptovský Mikuláš.

The first results of the struggle for language and national ethnicity could be seen as early as in the decades of communism (1948-1989). The proportion of the people of Hungarian ethnicity fell to about 10% within the whole of the population. At the time of the 2001 census, only 9.7% of the population of Slovakia declared themselves Hungarian. Their proportion in towns was even lower, 6.6%.

The towns can be categorized, as well. If we take large cities according to size, we can see that there are a rather low number of Hungarian inhabitants in them (*Table 20*). This is all the more so in the case of district towns (shown in bold in the table). The Hungarian population in Bratislava decreased from 31,000 to 16,000 and in Košice, where the number of the Hungarian inhabitants used to be 33,000, it is now 8,940. Nitra and Trnava became the centres of Matúšova zem, which had been divided into two parts for administrative purposes, so the pro-

portion of the Hungarian people, who were in the majority in the southern part of the district, was only 1.71% and 0.21% in the two towns, respectively. The population of Komárno, a former large city, hardly increased in the past decades. It was 19,391 people in 1910, and it rose to 37,366 inhabitants in 2001. However, geographic location is a much more important factor in the division of towns, because, besides Komárno, Košice and Bratislava can also be categorized as towns along the southern, Hungarian and Slovak borders. On the other hand, Levice and Nové Zámky are towns close to the Hungarian and Slovak language boundary.

Table 20. Slovak and Hungarian people in towns with more than 30,000 inhabitants, 2001

District towns other towns	Slovak people	Hungarian people	Total people	Hungarian %	Other %
Bratislava	391,761	16,451	428,672	3.84	4.77
Košice	210,340	8,940	236,093	3.79	7.12
Prešov	86,910	208	92,786	0.22	6.11
Nitra	83,285	1,489	87,285	1.71	2.88
Žilina	82,750	106	85,400	0.12	2.98
Banská Bystrica	78,690	446	83,056	0.54	4.72
Trnava	68,099	148	70,286	0.21	2.90
Martin	57,072	144	60,133	0.24	4.85
Trenčín	55,131	164	57,854	0.28	4.42
Poprad	52,868	131	56,157	0.23	5.62
Prievidza	51,319	255	53,097	0.48	2.87
Zvolen	41,980	218	43,789	0.50	3.63
Považská Bystrica	41,796	40	42,773	0.09	2.19
Nové Zámky	29,446	11,632	42,262	27.52	2.80
Michalovce	37,777	132	39,948	0.33	5.10
Spišská Nová Ves	36,924	65	39,193	0.17	5.62
Komárno	12,960	22,452	37,366	60.09	5.23
Levice	30,997	4,469	36,538	12.23	2.93
Humenné	30,867	69	35,157	0.20	12.01
Bardejov	30,346	48	33,247	0.14	8.58
Liptovský Mikuláš	31,049	91	33,007	0.28	5.66
Piešťany	29,475	84	30,606	0.27	3.42
Ružomberok	29,394	41	30,417	0.13	3.23
Σ	1,60,236	67,823	1,755,122	3.86	4.90
average	69,619	2,949	76,310	4.94	4.77

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

The high rate of the 'other' ethnicity category is especially striking. Whereas the large cities included in *Table 20* have a Hungarian population of 3.86%, the proportion of other populations in the same towns is

4.90%. Among them, the number of the Czech people is the highest (23,298), followed by Gypsies with 15,685 people and, with 5,879 people, Ruthenians. In the cities an especially high number of people simply did not answer this question (24,847).

Table 21 shows the connection between geographical situation and the size and ethnic composition of the urban population.

Table 21. Towns with over 10% of inhabitants of Hungarian ethnicity, 2001

	Slovak people	Hungarian people	Total people	Hungarian %	Other %
Veľký Meder	1,226	7,705	9,113	84.55	2.00
Kolárovo	1,890	8,742	10,823	80.77	1.76
Dunajská Streda	3,588	18,756	23,519	79.75	5.00
Kráľovský Chlmec	1,515	6,179	8,031	76.94	4.20
Štúrovo	3,294	8,048	11,708	68.74	3.13
Šamorín	3,760	8,091	12,143	66.63	2.40
Fiľakovo	3,079	6,568	10,198	64.40	5.40
Šahy	2,787	5,015	8,061	62.21	3.21
Tornaľa	2,432	5,076	8,169	62.14	8.09
Čierna nad Tisou	1,554	2,792	4,645	60.11	6.44
Komárno	12,960	22,452	37,366	60.09	5.23
Veľké Kapušany	3,506	5,561	9,760	56.98	7.10
Želiezovce	3,543	3,855	7,522	51.25	1.65
Hurbanovo	3,711	4,092	8,153	50.19	4.29
Moldava nad Bodvou	4,847	4,158	9,525	43.65	5.46
Sládkovičovo	3,614	2,340	6,078	38.50	2.04
Galanta	9,877	6,022	16,365	36.80	2.85
Rimavská Sobota	14,873	8,846	25,088	35.26	5.46
Nové Zámky	29,446	11,632	42,262	27.52	2.80
Rožnava	13,343	5,162	19,261	26.80	3.93
Senec	10,970	3,246	14,673	22.12	3.11
Šaľa	19,583	4,392	24,564	17.88	2.40
Lučenec	23,127	3,713	28,332	13.11	5.27
Levice	30,997	4,469	36,538	12.23	2.93
Total	209,522	166,912	391,897	42.59	3.95
Average:	8,730	6,955	16,329	49.94	4.01

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

Table 21, the most typical proof of Slovakization, includes all of the towns where the proportion of Hungarian people exceeds 10% of the population. These towns can all be found in the south of Slovakia. All of them are close to or within the Hungarian language border and most of them belong to the Hungarian and Slovak borderland. While the most populous settlement groups of Slovakia include the towns with a population of 20-50,000 people, only seven out of the towns with a Hungarian

population of more than 10 % belong to this category; 17 belong to the category of much less significant towns with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants. Although these are the towns in which most urban Hungarians live, and besides, they are the towns of the southern zone, which is mostly populated by the Hungarian ethnic minority, the proportion of Slovak ethnicity there is 63.46%, compared with the 42.59% proportion of Hungarian ethnicity.

In these towns the percentage of people with 'other' ethnicities is also rather high, the highest of them being the Gypsy population (6,032 people), followed by those of Czech (2,841) and Ukrainian (296) ethnicity. The number of the people refusing to answer is high in these towns, too.

Tables 20 and 21 are of utmost importance because they prove that the Slovak conquest has been accomplished successfully. The most significant towns of the new country and those of Felvidék in the Hungary of former times show a completely different pattern. The geographical deviation covers deviation of content: the towns that play a central role in the new state can be found in the middle and northern valleys of the rivers flowing southwards. The towns that were subject to intended development after 1918 make up the new town structure of the new country. In the first period (1918-1945), the towns to be developed were selected according to political points of view, in the second period (1945-1989) for the purposes of industrial development. In the current period (1989-), towns with a high number of professionals have been established by setting up service-providing offices and plants representing modernization, by planned development. This new kind of town network exerts gravitation on the much less developed, more remote towns with much less important economic weight, mostly along the long southern border, and also on the settlements in the backward central and eastern parts of the country. This geographical separation and this town structural separation are proof of regional separation. Developed and backward regions have appeared in the country, and these regional differences have emerged in the new country, on the basis of the new town structure. The most important towns of the present exert gravitation and determine the direction of the migration of people, labour force and capital. Bratislava and Košice, the two largest cities, can be found at either end of this new town-structural arch. They are not only the initiators, organizers and gravitation centres of the new town structure; they also have their own gravitation towards other countries.

The country has successfully been developed into a region.

3. 4. 3 Subordination of the economy to Czech interests

Due to the change in the state, i.e. the establishment of Czechoslovakia, Felvidék lost its economic relations. The new power urged the Slovak economy to turn to new markets, the parts of the country beyond the river Morava. However, it did nothing to protect the underdeveloped Slovak economy and its peripheral position, which goes back to the 19th century, from competition with the strong Czech economy. Therefore, the Slovak and Sub-Carpathian parts of the country lagged behind the strong Czech, Moravian and Silesian economies. This subordinated situation was severely criticised by both contemporary Hungarian historians (*Polyánszky* 1939, pp. 151-166), and, later, by Marxian Czechoslovak economic history (*Kazimour* 1981, pp. 55-60).

In the 19th century, when coke started to provide fuel for the steel industry, the brown coal mines in Gömör [Gemer] lost their importance. This was when the crude iron that was mined in Tiszolc [Tisovec] began to be transported to Lopér [Podbrezová] in the valley of the Upper river Hron, where the largest iron-rolling mill of contemporary Hungary was built, after the Besztercebánya [Banská Bystrica]-Breznóbánya [Brezno] railway line had been completed. By closing down most factories, the Czech capital did away with the Central Slovak industrial area in the 1920s. When the workers' strike in Korompa [Krompachy] broke out, this was where Czech soldiers fired at Slovak iron workers for the first time. In Slovakia, 200 factories were liquidated. However, the number of those employed decreased on an even larger scale.

At the time of the 1910 census, 83,596 companies in Felvidék were registered, with 160,256 employees. In the Slovak part of the new state, however, production and the employment rate declined dramatically and only rarely were the factories operating at full capacity. There were sectors where the utilized capacity was as low as 10%. Slovak iron ore production fell to two-thirds and manganese ore mining to one-third. Four out of the five blast-furnaces that were in operation in 1921 stopped working in the following year. The timber industry, the most highly developed industry, was ruined; the only activity was timber transportation abroad. In 1923 the number of those employed in industry fell to half of the rate before the war. In 1930 it rose to 92,200. The number of emigrants increased again. At the time of bourgeois Czechoslovakia 220,000 people left the Slovakian province.

After the war years the state-controlled economy that had been introduced during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was maintained. Grain

offices were organized and the members of cooperatives were forced to join the Czechoslovak central cooperative with Bratislava as its seat, which gradually took over the right to control the cooperatives. Only the cooperatives belonging to the central organisation could take advantage of duty and tax allowances.

The railway tariff system was regulated so that transportation from the Czech part of the country to the eastern parts should be cheaper, whereas transportation from the Slovak part of the country to the Czech part was 50% more expensive. Slovak shops were no match for Czech department stores in the competition. Czech large-scale industry set up large stores in each centre. In the Czech part there was an interest of 8% on loans, while in the Slovak part the interest rate was 10-14%. Most Slovak banks were taken over by Czech banks or merged with them. Only seven out of 30 Hungarian financial institutions remained. In 1934 a grain monopoly was introduced, which fixed the maximum prices. Credit terms were set so that the Slovak farmers should run into debt.

Table 22 demonstrates the backward situation of the Slovak part of the country. By indicating the numbers of industrial factories of different categories it shows the regional differences in contemporary Czechoslovakia. The vast majority of all factories, 84.3%, could be found in the Czech, Moravian and Silesian parts. The Slovak and Sub-Carpathian factories accounted only for the remaining 15.7%. This difference demonstrates the economic differences between the Czech and Moravian parts and the new Slovak part of the country. The figures also make it clear that in the Czech region the number and percentage of factories, especially factories with a high number of employees, were large and thus it had considerable economic power.

Table 22. Number of factories in the different provinces of Czechoslovakia in 1930 according to the number of employees

Size of factory employees	Czechia	Moravia and Silesia	Slovakia	Sub-Carpathia
1-5	59.3	24.7	13.6	2.4
6-19	62.3	24.2	12.0	1.6
20-49	67.0	23.8	8.4	0.7
50-199	65.8	25.1	8.0	1.1
200-	63.4	27.3	8.5	0.8
<i>total</i>	<i>59.6</i>	<i>24.7</i>	<i>13.4</i>	<i>2.3</i>
	<i>84.3</i>		<i>15.7</i>	

Source: Statistisches Handbuch (1932)

The north-south transportation line, which had been rejected in the Czechoslovak literature as a structure serving Hungarian interests, was not changed between the two World Wars. The railway network was lengthened by 49 km (to 3,403 km) between 1926 and 1935, and public roads by 271 km (to 14,577 km).

The structure of industry was modified after 1936, because industrial companies were ranked into the munitions industry. From then on, the construction of factories served military purposes. Giving defensibility as a pretext, the new factories started to be built in the valley of the river Vah.

Consequently, we may state that, in the Slovak province of bourgeois Czechoslovakia, it was the intention to achieve the Slovak national goal rather than economic factors that resulted in the birth of new towns and the development of old ones.

3. 5 The role of the first independent Slovak state in town planning

War-time conditions contributed to the sudden prosperity of Slovak economy, which had an important political reason. With the example of the new state, Germany wanted to prove that small nations also had good prospects in a German Europe. Therefore, Germany supported the revival of the economy, as a result of which industrial production and, consequently, the rate of employment increased. In 1944 there were already 174,000 people working in industry, however, mainly for exports, i.e. for military purposes. Public investment also increased. Construction was begun on six water-power stations and hundreds of villages were supplied with electricity. Gradually, German capitalists took over industrial companies and banks from Czech capitalists. This was when Bratislava first became a capital city with full powers.

3. 5. 1 Bratislava, the old-new capital city

After only a short period of indecision, the capital city of (Czecho)Slovakia became Bratislava. This had several reasons.

Bratislava was an important town in historical Hungary in an economic sense, because it was built not far from Vienna, the capital city of the Hapsburg Empire. Transportation of goods was possible on the River Danube, which was navigable and therefore provided favourable conditions for trading. With the extending Turkish conquest, its significance

increased, since the Hungarian national assembly moved to Pozsony [Bratislava] in 1536 due to the threatened position of Buda, the capital city in the middle of the country. It was the temporary capital city for 300 years, until 1848, which also meant that the administrative centres of national importance were also built there. The wealthy members of the Diet had their mansions built in this city so that they could stay there during the politically active periods. The city became the centre for the social life of the aristocracy, and a cultural centre, too. The buildings and the quality of the services provided in the town were developed to such a high level in the course of centuries that it was an obvious choice for the capital city of the new Czechoslovak power.

If the new power had really intended to develop a city with national Slovak traditions into a capital city, then it would have chosen another town. Considering Slovak historical memory, they could have found a more suitable town for this purpose among the settlements not far from the Tatras. Besides Nyitra [Nitra], the first princely seat, the towns Liptószentmiklós [Liptovský Mikuláš] and Turócszentmárton [Martin] also came up, but Besztercebánya [Banská Bystrica] could have been suitable for the purpose, as well, especially if it had merged with Zólyom [Zvolen]. Apart from being important central towns of the Slovak national past, Slovak politics and culture, they were located in the geographical centre of the country (with the exception of Nyitra [Nitra]), so these towns would have been much more suitable for playing the role of a centre for the whole country than Bratislava, which has an eccentric location on the western edge of the country, in the 'corner' close to the Austrian border. Mention must be made of the fact that there was one more centre of the new Slovak national consciousness, its strengthening and literary and political manifestation in historical Hungary, and this was the city of Buda. The new victorious power, however, wanted to grasp the opportunity to take over and occupy the former, though temporary, capital city of the enemy, with its royal castle and coronation church, for administrative purposes.

In this way, since it was neither a cultural nor actual political centre of Slovakia, Bratislava became its capital city purely for political reasons. It did not even have an accepted Slovak name. They mostly used the name Prešporok, derived from the German word Pressburg. After October 1918 the Slovak press proposed the name Wilsonovo mesto (Wilson Town). In March 1919 the Czechoslovak power named it Bratislava*. Though the largest town of the part of the country which had been torn away from Hungary was indeed Bratislava, neither its size nor its politi-

cal and administrative role made it a real capital town. Compared with Vienna, Budapest and Prague or even with Brno, it could not be regarded as a big city, either (*Miháliková* 2006).

Like Bratislava, Vienna is also a city with an eccentric location. The political role that the Hapsburg dynasty played in the Holy Roman Empire and in Hungary made Vienna great. It gradually became an imperial centre of European significance. After the disintegration of Austria in 1918, its geographical location became unfavourable, because it is too far to the east. After World War II, the iron curtain was drawn close to it. After 1990 and especially after Austria joined the European Union in 1995 and many of the ex-communist countries became EU members in 2004, this disadvantage may become an advantage, in so far as it will have economic and political relations with the east again. The eccentric location of Vienna is not so disadvantageous for Austria, because the country itself stretches westwards, in the direction of highly developed German, Italian and Swiss areas. On the other hand, for Bratislava, although its location in the western part of the country may be said to be favourable, it is unfavourable that the country itself stretches to the east, towards less dynamic areas. There is no favourable eastward gravitation for Bratislava.

Apart from the symbols of supremacy expressed in the buildings of the royal town, the new Czechoslovak power did not take over the characteristic identity of the town; in fact, it rejected it. Multilingualism and, what

* The 9th century Slav earthwork on the Castle Hill of Bratislava became the property of *Breszlav* (*Braszlav*), the eastern Frankish vassal Pannonian Slav prince. The German name Pressburg (the composition of the Slav name *Braslav* and the German word *burg* [=castle]) and the Slovak name Prešporok, which was used until 1919, can be traced back to his name. The first Magyar settlers of Hungary occupied the town in about 902. In the battle of 907 under its castle called *Braslavespruch* or *Brezalauspruch*, they completely defeated the Bavarian army, which wanted to reoccupy Pannonia again. This is where Pozsony (Bratislava) was first mentioned. It probably got its Hungarian and Latin name from its castle governor called *Poson*. Its present official name comes from the year 1837, when P.J.Šafárik, a Slovak historian and archeologist, incorrectly reconstructed the old name of the town and thought that it had originated from the name *Bratislav*, instead of *Braslav*. (Lajos Kiss: *Földrajzi nevek etimológiai szótára. [Etymological Dictionary of Geographical Names.]* Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980)
From 1536 it was the capital of Hapsburg-Hungary. The national assemblies were held there until 1848.

Between 1563 and 1830 the Hungarian kings were crowned in St. Martin Cathedral. Between 1552 and 1783 the Holy Crown was preserved in the southwestern tower of the castle. (*Magyar Nagylexikon*. Budapest, 2002. Volume 15)

is even more important, the coexistence of several cultures were its essential components. The towns in historical Felvidék were inhabited by people of many different ethnicities and languages. Most of them achieved their independence with equivalent urban regulations and customs in the Middle Ages, which they had been developing and improving continuously. Consequently, they also had their own urban regulations and conventions. Local identity was of the utmost importance in these towns. Being a Carpathian German of Szepesség [Spiš], a citizen of Kassa [Košice] or Pozsony [Bratislava] meant completely different things, because the rules of social coexistence were not constituted according to what language these people spoke. In other words, in the towns of Felvidék, social and political rights and duties did not depend on the proportions of the people speaking the same language until 1918.

Changing the name Pozsony to Bratislava between the two World Wars was a symbolic occupation.

The change in the ethnicities of Bratislava took place in two ways. On the one hand, the Czech officials and Slovak village people moving into the town increased the number of Slavs, or in contemporary terminology, the Czechoslovak people. On the other hand, the abuses of the censuses were intended to prove a decrease in the proportion of non-Slav people. That was how, according to the 1930 census, the percentage of the Hungarian ethnicity in Bratislava fell to less than 20%, as a result of which the representative body of the town made the decision to abolish the right of Hungarian people to use their language with a majority vote at an extraordinary session in 1933. Thereupon, the Slovak youth in the gallery started to shout with joy and, in their happiness about the denial of the right of the Hungarian minority to use their language, organized a loud anti-Hungarian demonstration in the streets of Bratislava. The great Slovak dream came true: in Pozsony [Bratislava], a city of traditionally German and Hungarian character, the Czechoslovak people gained an overwhelming majority at last (*Popély* 1991, p. 109).

The Slovak State, which was established in 1939, started aggressive changing of the linguistic and ethnicity proportions immediately. First they expelled the Czech inhabitants, and then they liquidated the large Jewish community of the town. It was between 1939 and 1945, during the first independent Slovak State, that Bratislava was the capital city of Slovakia with the full sphere of authority for the first time. This was where they set up the headquarters of the president, the government, the parliament, the Slovak National Bank and the foreign representations. It was only during a

‘politically extremely problematic’ era (to put it in the correct Slovak term) that Slovak people became aware of the fact that Bratislava was their capital city, their actual centre. After the fall of the satellite regime the city preserved the imaginary role of a capital city, and only waited for the suitable historical moment for its re-emergence as a capital.

After 1945 the Czechoslovak power, which had suddenly emerged on the victorious side and regarded itself as bourgeois, declared the principle of collective responsibility, making the German and the Hungarian people responsible for the collapse of Czechoslovakia. Referring to the Beneš decrees, they expelled them from the city, and, by deportation and exchange of the population, from the state, too. After the communists took over control in 1948, they expelled the people and families that they considered ‘bourgeois’ from the city, after depriving them of their property. While they were ousting people of other ethnicities, there was a continuous inflow of Slovak people, who settled down in the city and gradually took over the leading administrative and managerial posts (from Hungarian people), and economic units, shops and factories (from Jewish and German people).

The power of the city, its status of a capital city and its legal, administrative and political weight were rather ambiguous, since the capital city of Czechoslovakia was actually Prague. The establishment and organization of the new state was carried out under Czech control, and centralization was necessary to be able to plan and perform the tasks. This, however, meant pushing Bratislava into the background. True, when the new state was established, Bratislava was regarded as the capital of Slovakia, and this was where they set up the headquarters of the Slovak minister with full powers, who was in fact the government commissioner of Prague. However, its authority was gradually reduced, as a result of which it had become a mere district centre by 1927. This did not change after the war, either. Although in the 1960s certain offices were set up in Bratislava, they did not have actual political influence or any decision-making power. The federation established in 1968 also had Bratislava as its Slovak capital. The Slovak government, ministries and parliament were located there, but in the course of the next three years, which were called the years of ‘normalization’, they were deprived of their actual authority and Bratislava again became a simple mediator of Prague’s instructions.

The 40 years of communism were from several aspects disadvantageous for Bratislava as a city, too. Like the capital cities of all the other ex-communist countries, Bratislava showed the signs of decline, both func-

tionally and physically. Its traditional quarters, especially its historical city-centre, were neglected and doomed to destruction. With industrialization, its economic life became rather one-sided. It is also due to the exaggerated industrialization that the largest oil-refinery plant of the country was set up close to the capital city. By building huge, 'socialist' housing estates, which looked the same from Berlin to Vladivostok, they severely damaged the specific character of the city. Bratislava became a typical socialist city.

3. 6 Town planning in (Czecho)Slovakia

3. 6. 1 Towns as industrial centres

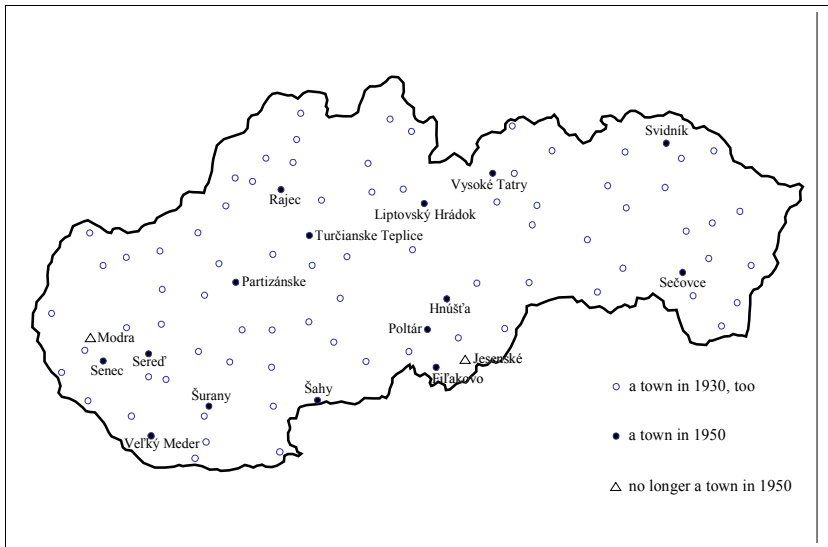
Like in all the other countries occupied by the Soviets or belonging to the Soviet sphere of interest, in Czechoslovakia a new political system was introduced from 1948. From a Soviet point of view, the geopolitical role of these countries was to defend the Soviet Union from possible imperialist attacks, and to be the starting points of Soviet aspiration for world hegemony, which was concealed by the slogan 'Proletarians of the world unite!'. Therefore, every country under communist party control was forced to prepare for the Third World War; consequently, of all the sectors of economy industry was the focal point of development. The enforced development of the industry carried out by the means of state power changed the structure of economic sectors and had a fundamental influence on the role of settlements, i.e. that of towns.

Industry, industrial production and the setting-up of industrial plants became primary factors in building towns. First of all, the existing towns were industrialized, because, according to the new ideology, it was perfection of the functions of towns to set up industries that could employ crowds of people. In this way, industrialization was determined by political goals, and the elimination of regional differences was also subject to political intentions. The propagated ideology always served the aim of strengthening the working class through the regional division of industrial plants. The development of towns was intertwined with the development of the working class and that of industry; infrastructure and housing or other central functions were subordinated to it. This ideology concealed reality; actual development decisions were made in the centres of the power. The central political power in Prague delegated the right to implement the particular plans for town development to central executive organs that they forwarded to the regional centres concerned, from where the decision-making possibilities were again forwarded to the local political and executive organs. To be able

to belong to such a development chain, a town had to strengthen its own local and central role of power. For the development of a town, power and competence had to be acquired and strengthened. Only in this way could towns acquire industries, and then housing estates and supplementary establishments, from the political and official centres above them.

Since industrial development took precedence over all other activities, mention must be made of the town-forming force of industry first, and housing and supply facilities, the actual town development, afterwards.

Figure 6. Towns in Slovakia in 1950



Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

Edited by István Mezei, drawn by Máté Mády

According to *Mariot* (1988), the percentage of industry in Slovakia's economic life increased from 39.9% to 68% between 1948 and 1985, whereas that of agriculture decreased from 32.3% to 6.6%. Going by the percentage of the employed workers, the leading industries were the machine industry (23.8%), electrical industry (15.04%), food industry (8.4%), chemical and rubber industry (8%), steel industry (5.79%) and fuel industry (3.76%). These industries employed 64.8% of the industrial working class, produced 71.4% of all industrial products, and accounted for 59.95% of the industrial means. Naturally, this does not reduce

the importance of the energy industry, building material industry, timber industry, textile industry, etc., which employed the remaining 35.18% of the workers, accounted for 28.59% of industrial products and possessed 40.05% of the industrial means.

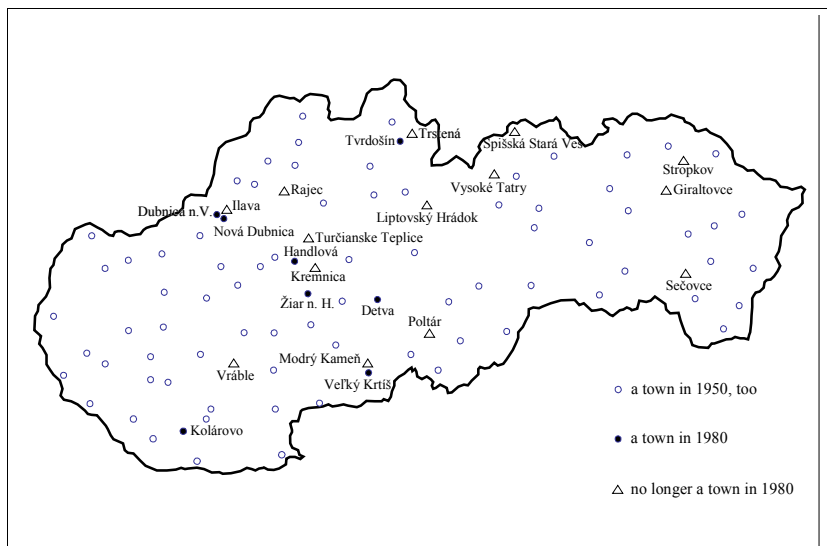
The most important change in the relationship between the individual industries was in the food industry, which lost its leading position of 1950. The proportion of the value produced by it decreased from 37.5% to 13.90%. In spite of this it retained an important role because it had to produce the most essential food for the population of the country. It was the function of the southern, agricultural regions of Slovakia to supply the country with food. The largest centre of the food industry was Nové Zámky.

There were some changes regarding the proportions between the industrial sectors, because, due to the development of information technology and computer industry from the mid-1970s, the electro-technical industry began to develop more rapidly than the other sectors. The oil processing industry was also extremely successful in the plants of Slovnaft, in spite of the small amount of available Slovak raw material, since they were based on Soviet crude oil imports.

Centrally controlled industrialization called forth the conscious choice of factories. When making a decision, it was also taken into consideration whether the necessary raw materials were available or not, and also if the particular industry would improve the backward situation of the particular area. It was a political decision, rather than market demand, that played a decisive role in choosing the place for industrial activities. This led to an industrial investment boom, which was typical of the whole of (Czecho)Slovakia, just like all the other communist countries, in the decades of communism.

What are the main characteristic features of the location of industries?

Mariot (1988) has elaborated a calculation method that makes it possible to show the concentration of industry in Slovakia. He considered the five largest factories of the particular industrial sectors according to the gross production values and named their locations. His calculations resulted in four main groups.

Figure 7. Towns in Slovakia in 1980

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

Edited by István Mezei, drawn by Máté Mády

1) The highest number of factories could be found in the construction industry (179) and in the food industry (166), although with very low production values, because a rather low number of people were employed (but at least 15 people, since only factories of that size were taken into account). The five largest factories of the construction industry were in Lubeník, Lovinobaňa, Jelšava, Rohožník and Košice, where there were sand pits, gravel pits, quarries, and brick making. The largest factories of the food industry were in the largest cities (Bratislava, Nitra, Košice and Trnava), but Nové Zámky was the most important of all.

(2) There were numerous factories in the timber industry (89), the electrical industry (57), in the machine industry (96) and also in the textile industry (38), however, still with low production values. The vast wooded area provided favourable conditions for the timber industry, but the many factories employed few people. Easily available raw materials were important, so the new plants of the timber industry and furniture factories were built in the mountains or close to them: in Zvolen, Turany, Prešov, Banská Bystrica and Žarnovica.

In accordance with the technical level of the age, the factories of the electrical and metal industries always employed a high number of people. The small settlements where the factories were set up and these industries had no traditions became the centres of regional development. Employment prospects attracted labour and a new economic culture emerged in this backward region. The five largest centres became Bratislava, Kysucké Nové Mesto, Nižná (where Orava TV sets were produced), Nové Zámky (the Tesla factory) and Zlaté Moravce.

The new investments of the machine industry were made in the old centres, but several factories were purposely established in economically underdeveloped areas. The five largest factories were located in Dubnica nad Váhom, Martin, Považská Bystrica, Bánovce nad Bebravou and Detva. In the decades of socialism, the textile industry had large factories, mostly employing more than 500 people. The five largest factories were in the towns of Levice, Ružomberok, Trenčín, Banská Štiavnica and Svit.

(3) This category includes the factories with high production values. The power stations were concentrated first of all in large cities (Bratislava, Košice and Žilina). A nuclear power station was built in Jaslovské Bohunice to the north of Nitra. A power station (coal) was also built in Vojany, close to the Soviet border, so as to shorten the transportation route for the raw materials. In a section of the river Vah, waterfalls and cascades made the building of small hydropower stations possible. The textile industry was concentrated in two areas in Eastern and Western Slovakia. The five largest factories were in Prešov, Trenčín, Púchov, Topoľčany and Bánovce nad Bebravou.

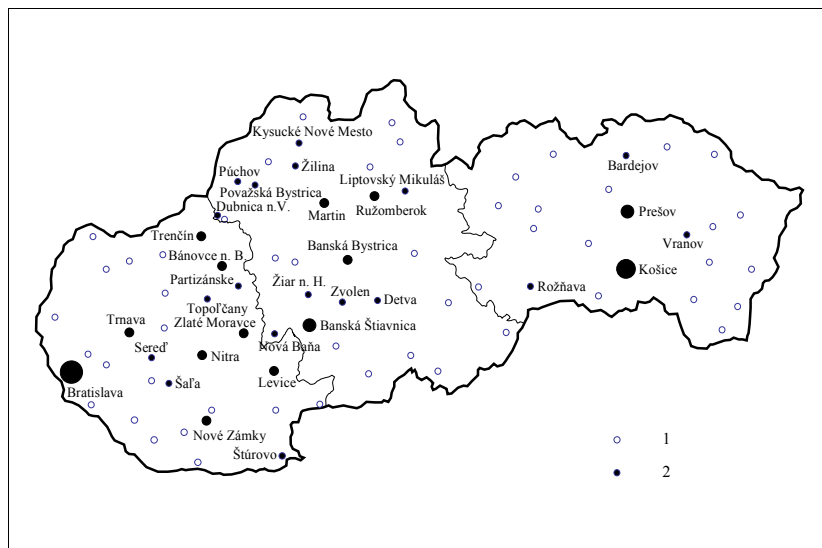
While industrial investments were often located in villages, the printing industry proved to be typical of large cities. The five most important centres were Bratislava, Martin, Košice, Prešov and Banská Bystrica. The chemical and rubber industries were also concentrated in large factories and produced special, individual products. The five largest factories were in Šaľa (Duslo Chemical Works), Bratislava, Nováky (the largest thermal plant of the country was also located there), Humenné and Strážske. The tobacco and refrigeration industries and the production of mineral waters could also be found in small towns. The main centres of these sectors were Spišská Belá, Banská Štiavnica, Nitra, Levice and Bratislava.

(4) In 1985 the factories with the highest production values also included the oil industry (fuel industry). Since crude oil was piped in from

the Soviet Union, the largest factories were built along the pipeline. That was why there are oil refineries in Bratislava, Vojany and Nemecká. There are more processing plants in the villages of Cigeľ and Plavecký Štvrtok. The leather industry developed mostly after the war. The five largest factories are in Partizánske, Bošany, Liptovský Mikuláš, Bardejov and Zlaté Moravce. The glass and porcelain industries and potter's craft were located in Trnava, Nemšová, Bratislava, Nová Baňa and Lednické Rovne. The centres for the non-ferrous metal industry were Žiar nad Hronom (aluminium industry), Krompachy (copper factory), Sered' (nickel processing), Banská Štiavnica and Kremnica. The development of the steel industry was supported by the countries of Comecon, first of all with the iron ore from the Soviet Union. On this basis the Eastern Slovak Iron Works were established in Košice, which produced 90% of the production value of the sector, and which gave jobs to 55% of those employed in the city. Besides these, there were small factories in Podbrezová, Istebné, Rudňany and Rožňava, too. The cellulose and paper industries were present in villages with the fewest factories. The five largest factories were to be found in Ružomberok, Štúrovo, Slavošovce, Harmanec and Vranov nad Topľou.

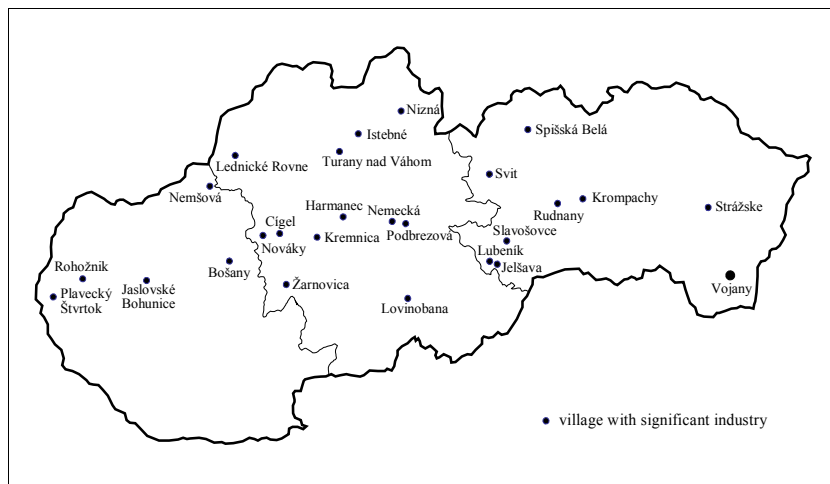
All in all, we can state that the favoured locations of industrial investment were the towns. The number of those employed in the industry increased to 778,000 in 1979 from 219,000 in 1948, i.e. in thirty years. This huge crowd of people was employed mainly in the industrial plants of the towns. Examining the year 1980 as the census year most suitable for a summary, we can find 30 towns out of 84 that are centres supported by considerable industrial development and investment, and these made up 35.7% of all towns. Industrial establishments were also located in villages, because, due to the supply of raw materials, transportation routes or other advantages, the settlement form itself had to be disregarded. Consequently, 29 out of the 2,639 villages became more important, but this was only 1.09% of all villages.

Figure 8. Cities producing the highest industrial value in 1980 in the different economic sectors



Source: edited by István Mezei based on Mariot (1988), drawn by Máté Mády

Figure 9. The villages that produced the highest industrial value in 1980 in the different economic sectors



towns, 2 – towns and cities with important industry

Source: edited by István Mezei based on Peter Mariot (1988), drawn by Máté Mády

Regarding the geographical location (*Figures 8 and 9*), we may say that according to the contemporary administrative division, there are an extremely high number of industrial towns in the western and central parts of the country. There are 12-13 important industrial towns in the western and central regions, while in the eastern region there are no more than five, even if we do not take the production value, or the role they play in the economy, into consideration. This means that starting from Bratislava, in the valleys of the rivers Váh and Hron a significant industrial area emerged, far away from which two isolated centres in the valley of the river Hornad, Košice and Prešov, have been developed as counterbalances. The gravitating effect that the two towns exert on their surroundings is inevitable, but they could not become a driving force for further development under the conditions present in the era.

The geographical locations of the industrialized villages also show disproportion. The lack of such villages in the southern part of the western region, which is mostly inhabited by people of Hungarian ethnicity, is striking.

The communist system forced on Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union justified the necessity of its existence, among other things, by emphasizing that it would provide equal development conditions for the two peoples living in one state. The means was the most popular solution: industrialization, even in the countries where natural conditions were not suitable for this purpose, e.g. due to the lack of raw materials. In spite of this, after the victory of the communist party in the 'elections', (mostly at the end of the 1940s), every country began to establish new industrial factories at a quick pace. This also meant higher employment rates, which were used to prove that the leading role of the working class had been achieved. This forced industrialization and urbanization had the purpose of reconciling the differences in economy and living standard between the Czech and the Slovak sections of the country. That this purpose had already been achieved, or at least approached, was mainly emphasized by party decisions, but the figures published by economists and statisticians were also used to prove this (*Table 23*).

Table 23. The industrial production of Slovakia in proportion to the industrial production of the Czechoslovak Republic, %

	1937	1948	1970	1976	1979
%	7.0	13.3	24.0	27.2	28.6

Source: Kazimour (1981) p. 133.

3. 6. 2 Towns as the symbols of Slovak grandeur

Industrial development had an important specific feature. In socialist countries industrial development followed the Western European model of the 19th century, i.e. huge factories, especially heavy industrial factories were built, which employed a high number of workers. This had further advantages for contemporary Czechoslovak politics, because under the auspices of this kind of development setting up the network of big cities could be started in Slovakia.

The builders of the Slovak state called the actors of the historical past to account for the missing big city network, one worthy of an independent and industrialized country. It is true that Slovakia lost its short-lived independence after 1945, but under the conditions of the dictatorship they could claim that in the century before 1948 there was no industrial development that could have resulted in a town network of an appropriate size. This was the reason why the Slovak town network in a state of disintegration and almost exclusively made up of small towns (*Očovský* 1979). Since they were lacking a developed town economy, towns could not absorb the increase in the village population, so the surplus population migrated abroad, from the historical Hungary to the United States, then, during the era of the first Czechoslovakia, to Western Europe. During the era of the second Czechoslovakia there was no way to leave the country, therefore for decades the destination of migration was Czechia. In the 1950s the net number of people migrating from the Slovak section of the country to Czechia was over 10,000 (the difference between the numbers of people migrating to and from Czechia). Due to industrialization, this number began to fall and in the 1970s it decreased to about 3,500 people. There were far fewer people moving in the opposite direction, i.e. from Czechia to Slovakia, which draws a true picture of what the relations were like between the two parts of the country. Calculating in thousandths, 2.3‰ arrived from Czechia and 9.2‰ from Slovakia in the 1950s, which decreased to 0.7‰ and 2.0‰ in the 1970s, respectively (*Kühnl* 1982, pp. 21-23).

Slovak researchers also calculated that, provided there had been favourable economic conditions and no migration, Slovakia would probably have become a country with 7,000,000 inhabitants by 1970. This huge population would mostly have been town dwellers. In reality, however, only two gravitation areas with a high population emerged, those of Bratislava and Košice. In their estimation, there would have been six economic and residential centres, each of them with a population of over 100,000 people by 2000, and one of them would have more than 500,000 inhabitants.

The political leaders of the time decided to make changes in the settlement structure not only because of the disadvantageous traditions of the town network, but also because of the surviving effect of those traditions. As a result of the inherited traditions, the settlements of the country began to increase in an inexpedient way, therefore their course of development had to be shaped, or else an unreasonable settlement structure would have emerged. Political interventions also led to changes in the functions of agricultural regions. Since the production became concentrated in certain towns, the settlements themselves also played a different role. Lifestyles and the needs of the population in terms of services changed, as well. The decision-makers thought that the main direction of the transformation of the settlement structure should be towards concentration. While planning the population increase of the towns, they calculated with a population increase to six million by the year 2000 and thought that towns should be able to absorb them.

The failure of the communist political system, the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968, and the 'correction' following the crisis motivated planning; the political power started at last to satisfy partially the needs of the population, e.g. by the construction of housing estates which started in the 1970s. Till that time, the crowds of people 'liberated' from agriculture and chased from their fields to industry had had to commute to their new places of work. The number of commuters started to decrease when new urban housing estates began to be built. Settlements were classified into different categories, forming sporadic settlements and small settlements into larger administrative units. It was determined where it was forbidden to build new houses. This was the first step on the way to the degradation and abolition of these settlements. New military drill-grounds were planned and, to improve the energy supply, new reservoirs were to be built. Therefore it had to be decided which settlements should be wiped out, so a list of the settlements was made to show where construction of housing estates could begin (Očovský 1979).

The government approved the plan for urban development in Slovakia in 1977. This determined the following directives (Očovský 1979):

- By 2000 urban development in Slovakia should reach a level where 54% of the population could live in settlements with more than 5,000 inhabitants.
- The natural increase of the population should be concentrated in the central settlements specified in the directives.

- The development of certain specified areas, especially residential and industrial areas, as well as relaxation zones, agricultural and water management zones, should be ensured.
- Urban development should be carried out along longitudinal and transversal axes, by developing the specified centres.
- By 2000, urban development should meet the following goals:
 - 6 settlements of Slovakia should have a population of over 100,000 people (Bratislava, Košice, Banská Bystrica, Nitra, Žilina, Prešov)
 - A further 6 gravitation areas should have 100,000 inhabitants with 40,000-50,000 people living in the centres.
 - Over 30 towns should have more than 20,000 inhabitants.
- Urban development should be carried out in the 13 approved regions.

The directives defined a town axis as an area where intensive urban development should be carried out (town region) with highly centralized dwelling functions (housing, production, traffic, services). Besides, the secondary axes were also marked out between the Small Hungarian Plain and the Košice Basin.

After the 1960 administration reform, the 1968 federal state modified the Slovak administrative division. Bratislava became an independent region (kraj), and together with the five districts that had been established, Košice, as a large city, also gained the rank of an independent district. In this way the number of the districts (okres) increased to 37. In accordance with the governmental decision, 13 regions of urban development were marked out, and one town in each was given priority in development. Besides these, district centres were to have chances of development within the so-called economic and residential zones, in the suburbs, in this way preparing the further concentration of administrative units. The population of the 13 town regions accounted for 50.2% of the population of the whole country in the 1970s. According to the directive, by the year 2000, 72.2% of the population, i.e. 4.3 million people, were expected to live there.

Apart from the regions of urban development and economic and residential zones, the third type included 27 so-called 'point towns', which had no actual links with the neighbouring settlements, as well as 14 further towns with special functions (preferred settlements with town rank, health and holiday resorts). It was also a consequence of this categorization that

the development of services was planned according to the type, rather than with regard to the needs of the population in the vicinity.

The directive provided that the three Slovak district centres should distinguish themselves from the six towns belonging to the first category and develop into metropolises with over 300,000 inhabitants. Besides Bratislava and Košice, Banská Bystrica was to have played such a role.

In fact, it is only since the 1960s that Košice has been regarded as a town for which Slovak national politics has had long-range plans. Before that it was one of the neglected Eastern Slovak towns. Its development declined in the 19th century when, as a result of competition between the two towns, Miskolc took over the central role Košice had played in economy, trade and transport. Due to its geographical location, Košice was able to keep its regional importance for centuries because it can be found in the meeting point of different geographical units. This is where the flat Hornad Valley with its wheat fields changes over to the northern wooded areas. This was where the roads from the north, from Šariš and Spiš and from Poland met and led to the Great Plain. At the time of the Turkish occupation of Hungary, Košice, which could be found at the crossing point of strategic roads of Transylvania and Felvidék, played an important military and diplomatic role. Lying in the meeting point of areas of agriculture and forestry, the economic prosperity of Košice started to decline at the time of the railway construction (*Bulla-Mendöl* 1999, p. 260).

When the decision was made that, in accordance with the general objectives of industrialization, an iron works was to be built in Košice, decision-makers considered several aspects, one of them being the question of raw material. With metallurgy developing rapidly, one aspect to be considered became the mining of high heat-value coking coal and of the crude iron layer. Košice, however, did not have deposits of either and nor did Slovakia. In the planned economy system, they disregarded the traditionally accepted criterion in metallurgy that the country should have at least one of the most important raw materials. They decided to disregard costs and have coke supplied from the Czech Ostrava and iron ore from the Soviet Union. The latter source was the most decisive one for Košice in becoming the new metallurgical centre. With regard to other factors, the indicators of Košice and its vicinity were much better. Of auxiliary materials, both limestone and magnesite were available in sufficient quantities in the vicinity; besides, it had abundant labourers on hand. The metallurgical works were meant to improve the backward situation of the eastern part of the country. Construction was begun in

1961, the cold rolling mill came into use in 1964, and the first blast furnace in 1965 (*Benedekné* 1969).

Urban development determined by directives also meant that there would be even less support for the development of settlements, mostly villages, that were not categorized. Villages were looked upon as settlements that first of all provided the population for towns, so that the population of the regions of towns should be as high as possible and the goal set in the directives could be achieved as soon as possible. Therefore, the settlements in the vicinities of towns were administratively attached to the towns, often even if the distance between the town and the settlement attached to it was considerable. Consequently, the number of villages in Slovakia decreased at a high rate.

Očovský (1979) points out the absurdities that resulted from the directives approved by the government in 1977. The development of marked-out town axes involves the danger of the disadvantages of certain areas and regions and the lack of towns becoming permanent, which could also make the settlements in their gravitation area stagnate. He gives the environs of Senica, and the broad zones between Nitra and Lučenec and between Lučenec and Košice as examples. In his opinion, the Šahy-Dudince region, in which there are no towns, is also a problem, because it proves that the drawbacks of the secondary axes have not been dealt with. Levice, Krupina and Veľký Krtíš will never be strong centres. *Očovský* emphasized the increasingly backward situation of borderland regions.

Table 24. Changes in the number and proportion of the population according to the different censuses in Slovakia

	1921	1930	1950	1961	1970	1980	1991	2001
	people							
-4,999	2,376,380	2,577,208	2,539,448	2,932,767	2,859,585	2,487,969	2,316,814	2,389,245
5,000-	621,859	753,677	902,864	1,241,283	1,677,700	2,510,199	2,957,521	2,990,210
<i>Total population</i>	<i>2,998,239</i>	<i>3,330,885</i>	<i>3,442,312</i>	<i>4,174,050</i>	<i>4,537,285</i>	<i>4,998,168</i>	<i>5,274,335</i>	<i>5,379,455</i>
	%							
-4,999	79.3	77.4	73.8	70.3	63.0	49.8	43.9	44.4
5,000-	20.7	22.6	26.2	29.7	37.0	50.2	56.1	55.6

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

Examining the implementation of the 1977 plans of the Czechoslovak government, we may state that the first victory could be confirmed as early as at the time of the 1980 census, since urban development achieved a level where 54% of the population lived in settlements with

over 5,000 inhabitants. This proportion had not been achieved before 1980; however, it had exceeded the threshold of 50%. By the time of the next census in 1991, this ambition had been realized most successfully, because the proportion had increased to 56.1%, although it was after the collapse of the communist rule (*Table 24*).

The curves in *Figure 10* show that the considerable increase in the population, typical of Slovakia's total population, took place in the settlements with over 5,000 inhabitants, i.e. it was cities and towns that absorbed the increasing number of people.

The threshold of 5,000 people was important because this was the condition regarding the population that a settlement had to meet if it wished to get the status of a town. Nevertheless, this condition was not taken seriously. There were several villages in the country where the population was higher and even more towns where the population was lower than this threshold.

Figure 10. Changes in the number and proportion of the population according to the different censuses in Slovakia

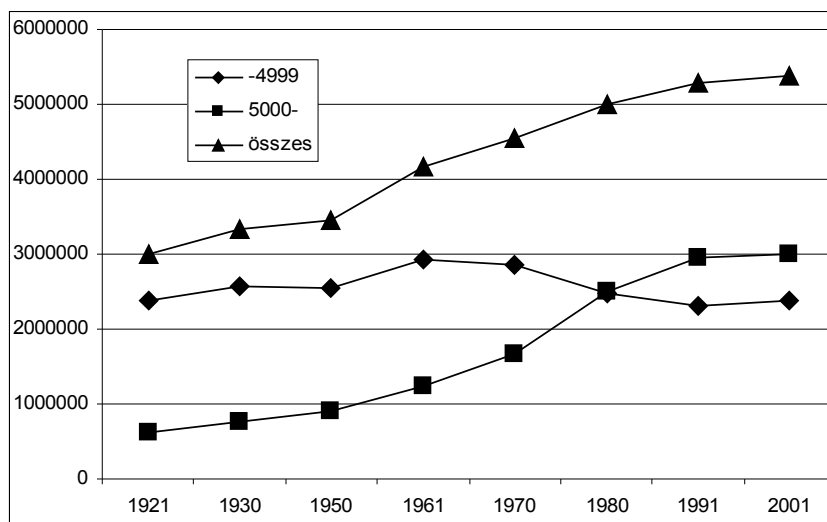


Table 25. Towns with populations lower than and villages exceeding the threshold of 5,000 people according to the 1991 census

Towns	people	Towns	people	Villages	people
Šaštín	4,787	Medzev	3,871	Beluša	5,919
Čierna nad Tisou	4,744	Leopoldov	3,826	Oščadnica	5,510
Svätý Jur	4,600	Spišské Podhradie	3,454	Tvrdošovce	5,276
Dobšiná	4,569	Spišské Vlachy	3,368	Dvory nad Žitavou	5,143
Trenčianske Teplice	4,436	Hanušovce nad Topľou	3,144	Nesvadby	5,125
Tisovec	4,430	Podolíneč	2,908	Čierny Balog	5,099
Nováky	4,341	Rajecké Teplice	2,540		
Strážske	4,255	Jelšava	2,508		
Rybáry	4,236	Spišská Stará Ves	2,196		
Veľký Šariš	4,058	Dudince	1,530		
Giraltovce	3,933	Modrý Kameň	1,374		

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

The cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants were intended to act as symbols of socialist industrial development and Slovak grandeur, which could also have proved for the historical past the strength of Slovak people as opposed to their 'former tyrants'. The results of the censuses, however, were not in accordance with the expectations. Although two towns, Bratislava and Košice, had managed to meet the requirements regarding population number before, Bratislava, Nitra and Banská Bystrica (the latter two under the required limit) showed decreases in population. The plans of the time had even more large-scale ambitions: the three cities of Bratislava, Košice and Banská Bystrica were intended to develop into metropolises with over 300,000 inhabitants. The development of a network of large cities is a task that has not been carried out up to the present day.

The 1977 party directives considered the towns as first of all economic and population centres. The 1982 modification, however, took them into account rather as centres of administration and power. The new conception names 77 settlements with district rank in the territory of Slovakia. These settlements make up a network according to the medium-level regional division of the country (mezo-regional level). Besides, 607 settlements represent the lower, local levels (micro-regional level). Both the medium- and lower-level centres had their gravitation areas marked out. An interesting approach of the time is that it was not the existing gravitation areas that the development plans of the particular settlements were adjusted to, but the other way round: the centre determined which settlements should play a central role and it defined their gravitation areas. Within these gravitation areas there were further set-

tlements without any central functions. Even this settlement group was subdivided into two further groups, one of non-central settlements of special importance and the other of non-central settlements of ordinary importance. The settlements belonging to the latter group were restricted in their development, because they were not allowed to mark out new areas for building housing estates but could only restore the existing ones. Institutions and service-providing facilities in such settlements could only be established in accordance with party directives. It is obvious that the 1977 and 1982 plans complement rather than cancel out each other. The plans of 1977 defined broader frames, those of 1982 focused on improvement, on the medium and lower levels. This also was in accordance with the attempts to solve the political crisis of 1968.

The issue of large cities can also be approached from another aspect. In a historically fairly short period of time, the towns in Slovakia underwent rapid and significant changes as far as both the number of inhabitants and functions are concerned.

In 1910 there were only three towns with more than 20,000 inhabitants: Bratislava, Košice and Komárno. In 1950 there were ten such towns, but Komárno was not one of them. At the time of the 1991 census there were 38 towns with a population of over 20,000 people, and in 2001 there were 40. Mention must be made of the fact that comparison of the particular censuses is rather difficult as the statistical office has modified the census results of the particular year retrospectively. Present-day statistical publications also calculate the population number of the individual settlements retrospectively, according to the present administrative boundaries. Consequently, they add the population numbers concerning villages in the past to that of the towns they were attached to later. The zigzag curve of population increase was mostly due to whether the surrounding settlements had been attached to or detached from the town, according to the current political interest. This method also had its influence on the emergence of gravitation areas, since this method of population increase was so common in the Czechoslovakia of the time that the new areas, i.e. enlarged towns and cities, concealed the new demographic situation. The increase of the urban population by administrative means only made easier rather than visible the population increase of former villages and, actually, this took place within the boundaries of the town. Most people continued commuting from the villages not far from the town. Before the large housing estates of pre-fabricated blocks had been built, the people arriving from

farther settlements also moved to such villages. This was how the process of gravitation began, but with the administrative changes and enlargement of the administrative boundaries, this phenomenon disappeared and became a population movement within towns.

If the names of the 15 largest cities of the particular census years are put next to each other (classified according to the original census data of 1910 and 1930), then it turns out that there are only two towns with unbroken development: Bratislava and Košice were always in the first two places. The order of the other towns was always different (*Table 26*).

Banská Štiavnica and Šamorín were already lagging behind the first 15 by 1930. Komárno fell behind gradually, Lučenec still belonged among them in 1930 and so did Ružomberok in 1950, but then they all dropped out of the top 15. Myjava, Levice, and what is more, Spišská Nová Ves dropped back in the same way. On the other hand, Prešov showed extraordinary development, Nitra gradually obtained the fourth place, and Žilina, which was not even among the first 15 in 1980 was the fifth in 2001. Michalovce joined the first 15 in 2001.

Table 26. The 15 largest cities of Felvidék (1910) and Slovakia (1930-2001)

1910	1930	1950	1980	1991	2001
Bratislava	Bratislava	Bratislava	Bratislava	Bratislava	Bratislava
Košice	Košice	Košice	Košice	Košice	Košice
Komárno	Žilina	Žilina	Žilina	Nitra	Prešov
Nitra	Nitra	Nitra	Nitra	Prešov	Nitra
Prešov	Trnava	Trnava	Prešov	Banská Bystrica	Žilina
Nové Zámky	Prešov	Prešov	Banská Bystrica	Žilina	Banská Bystrica
Banská Štiavnica	Komárno	Banská Bystrica	Trnava	Trnava	Trnava
Trnava	Nové Zámky	Martin	Trenčín	Martin	Martin
Lučenec	Banská Bystrica	Trenčín	Martin	Trenčín	Trenčín
Ružomberok	Martin	Nové Zámky	Prievidza	Prievidza	Poprad
Šamorín	Lučenec	Komárno	Poprad	Poprad	Prievidza
Banská Bystrica	Trenčín	Ružomberok	Zvolen	Nové Zámky	Zvolen
Spišská Nová Ves	Topoľčany	Piešťany	Nové Zámky	Zvolen	Považská Bystrica
Myjava	Ružomberok	Topoľčany	Komárno	Považská Bystrica	Nové Zámky
Levice	Zvolen	Zvolen	Spišská Nová Ves	Spišská Nová Ves	Michalovce

The changes are due to many different reasons; their typifying will be the task of urban research. It is easier to carry out the classification according to time because, compared to the period till 1918, the two decades between the two World Wars should be regarded as a new period and the decades after the World War II should also be subdivided into a period till 1990 and another one from 1990 until the present.

Apparently, the different or simultaneous political, administrative and economic roles of settlements were the decisive factors in the rise or fall of towns. In the period between 1950 and 1991 it was first of all the

industry that played an important part in the increase. Between 1991 and 2001, however, we can witness the influence of economic transformation. The crisis of the industry, or rather mostly that of heavy industry, resulted in the decline of several towns.

Table 27. Changes in the population of towns with over 10,000 inhabitants, 1910-1950

	1910	1950	%
Partizánske	458	10,245	2,236.9
Martin	4,113	23,975	582.9
Považská Bystrica	2,746	15,711	572.1
Poprad	2,283	12,590	551.5
Žilina	9,179	40,125	437.1
Liptovský Mikuláš	3,251	12,807	393.9
Trenčín	7,805	23,896	306.2
Topoľčany	6,399	17,434	272.4
Bratislava	78,223	209,397	267.7
Piešťany	7,379	17,577	238.2
Nitra	16,419	37,341	227.4
Banská Bystrica	10,776	24,195	224.5
Pezinok	4,809	10,292	214.0
Michalovce	6,120	13,065	213.5
Trnava	15,163	31,344	206.7
Zvolen	8,799	16,868	191.7
Prešov	16,323	29,533	180.9
Kežmarok	6,317	11,303	178.9
Nové Mesto nad Váhom	5,879	10,283	174.9
Košice	44,211	75,306	170.3
Rožňava	6,565	10,823	164.9
Hlohovec	7,749	12,731	164.3
Rimavská Sobota	6,912	11,064	160.1
Ružomberok	12,249	18,479	150.9
Levice	9,675	14,287	147.7
Nové Zámky	16,228	20,031	123.4
Lučenec	12,939	15,861	122.6
Špišská Nová Ves	10,525	12,248	116.4
Komárno	22,337	18,890	84.6
Vysoké Tatry / Starý Smokovec		11,254	

Table 28. Changes in the population of towns with over 20,000 inhabitants, 1950-1991

	1950	1991	%
Prievidza	6,746	53,424	791.94
Saľa	5,811	24,776	426.36
Poprad	12,590	52,914	420.29
Humenné	8,409	34,638	411.92
Bardejov	8,175	30,812	376.91
Banská Bystrica	24,195	85,030	351.44
Dunajská Streda	6,664	23,236	348.68
Vranov nad Topľou	6,793	22,487	331.03
Špišská Nová Ves	12,248	39,218	320.20
Brezno	7,159	22,469	313.86
Košice	75,306	235,160	312.27
Prešov	29,533	87,765	297.18
Michalovce	13,065	38,823	297.15
Senica	6,761	20,085	297.07
Čadca	8,595	25,183	293.00
Trebišov	7,276	20,675	284.15
Partizánske	10,245	26,543	259.08
Považská Bystrica	15,711	40,083	255.13
Zvolen	16,868	41,984	248.90
Liptovský Mikuláš	12,807	31,725	247.72
Martin	23,975	58,393	243.56
Nitra	37,341	89,969	240.94
Levice	14,287	33,991	237.92
Trenčín	23,896	56,828	237.81
Trnava	31,344	71,783	229.02
Rimavská Sobota	11,064	24,771	223.89
Nové Zámky	20,031	42,923	214.28
Bratislava	209,397	442,197	211.18
Žilina	40,125	83,911	209.12
Nové Mesto nad Váhom	10,283	20,956	203.79
Pezinok	10,292	20,515	199.33
Komárno	18,890	37,346	197.70
Piešťany	17,577	33,176	188.75
Topoľčany	17,434	32,603	187.01
Hlohovec	12,731	23,409	183.87
Lučenec	15,861	28,861	181.96
Kežmarok	11,303	20,294	179.55
Ružomberok	18,479	29,416	159.19

Forrás: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

In a geographical sense, we must add that the table only includes one or two of the members of the town ring following the southern border line, but their population did not remain over 10,000 permanently, either. Lučenec and Komárno are two such towns. The continuous presence of Nové Zámky and the appearance of Michalovce in the table are examples of towns that transmitted the needs of the settlements in the southern part

of the country to the gravitation centres in the north, rather than those for towns whose gravitation areas stretched over the border.

The examination of the population increase of towns is made rather difficult by the changing town status. The former town status that could be traced back to historical reasons was replaced by new criteria in (Czecho)Slovakia and both statistics and politics used different town concepts. The statistical office considered every settlement that had a regional or district role to be a town, as well as settlements with over 5,000 inhabitants. Besides, factors such as population density, the existence of certain services, or the urban character of the buildings were taken into consideration. Exceptions were e.g. spas or towns with great historical past, which did not need to meet any of the above requirements.

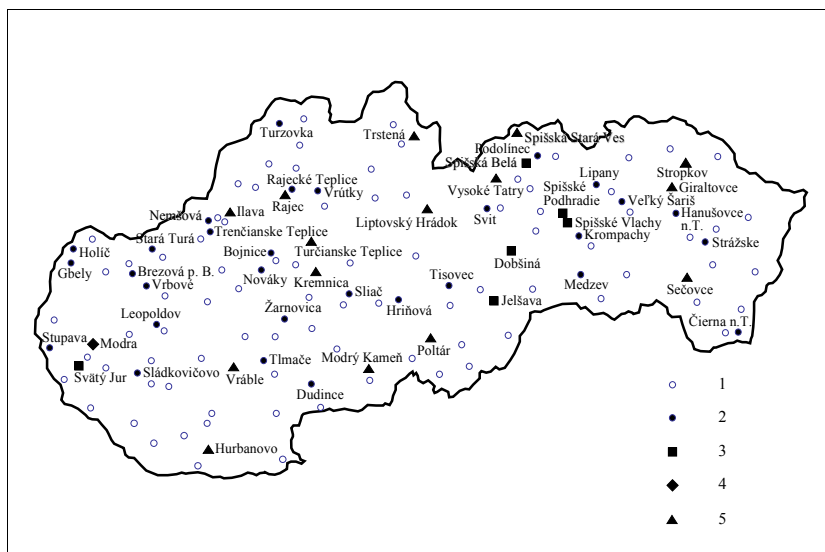
In the 1960s a regulation regarding the town status came into force. According to this, the town rank could only be granted by the Ministry of the Interior, so settlements could only become towns with the permission of the ministry. Prior to this, the number of settlements with a town rank by law had always been lower than in the reports of the statistical office. By way of illustration, in 1980 there were 123 legally recorded towns, whereas the statistical office took 146 settlements into account as towns. The difference between the two records was solved at the time of the 1991 census (*Očovský-Bezák-Podolák 1996*).

Probably due to the high number of settlements, the communist party did not intend to build new towns in its country- and town-building plans, which was the trend in other Eastern European countries. These were the so-called 'made' towns. Indeed, during the forty years of dictatorship there were only two new towns. Čierna nad Tisou was founded in 1957 from areas torn off from the neighbouring settlements. This was necessary because the Soviet Union took Sub-Carpathia from Czechoslovakia, so the two neighbouring countries had to reorganize the railway connection after 1945. The eastern-type broad gauge railway trains had to be transferred onto European narrow gauge rails. The new town was built next to the new railway junction. The other new town was Nová Dubnica, which was built for the workers of the heavy industrial factories in Dubnica nad Váhom. The construction work started in 1951 and the developing settlement, whose main function was to provide housing and services for the families, was detached from Dubnica nad Váhom and Trenčianske Teplice in an administrative sense in 1957. This was when it got the name Nová Dubnica. In 1960 it was granted town status.

4. Towns in Slovakia after 1993

The situation of the towns in Slovakia, which became independent again in 1993, is influenced by several factors at the same time. Of the many factors, those of administration, transportation and the geopolitical situation of the country have to be emphasized from the point of view of spatial formation. Besides, mention must be made of independence by self-governance, the individual ambitions of the towns and the geographical, historical and social conditions that have an effect on the development of the particular towns.

Figure 11. Towns in Slovakia in 2001



In 1991 there were 136 towns in Slovakia with 2,993,234 inhabitants, but in 2001 Krásno nad Kysucou and Šaštín-Stráže were also declared towns and the former Starý Smokovec became a larger town called Vysoké Tatry after some settlements in its environs had been attached to it. In this way, at the time of the 2001 census there were 138 settlements of town rank in the country. For the sake of comparison, *Table 29* also includes the 1991 figures regarding the two new towns.

After the collapse of the one-party system, the inhabitants of settlements and those of towns faced new conditions, one of them being a wider scope of free decision-making. However, one restricting factor of independent action was that market conditions had become universal. This began to exert an influence on the life of individuals to the highest degree and in a completely new way through rapid changes in real estate prices, job opportunities and incomes. A highly-qualified and well-paid employee who was able to choose between several market offers could achieve conditions quite different from those of a not-so-well-educated person who was rather unwilling to move to towns and was not used to making decisions of his own. From then on, individuals started to belong to new patterns of stratification with different lifestyles and habits and this also modified their attitude to their homes and to the settlement where they lived.

Table 29. Changes in the population of cities and towns, 1991-2001

	Population density (km ²)	Popula- tion 1991	Popula- tion 2001	%
Bratislava	1,159	442,197	428,672	96.94
Košice	966	235,160	236,093	100.40
Prešov	1,302	87,765	92,786	105.72
Nitra	844	89,969	87,285	97.02
Žilina	1,068	83,911	85,400	101.77
Banská Bystrica	781	85,030	83,056	97.68
Tnava	957	71,783	70,286	97.91
Martin	871	58,393	60,133	102.98
Trenčín	692	56,828	57,854	101.81
Poprad	874	52,914	56,157	106.13
Prievidza	1,189	53,424	53,097	99.39
Zvolen	436	41,984	43,789	104.30
Považská Bystrica	464	40,083	42,773	106.71
Nové Zámky	567	42,923	42,262	98.46
Michalovce	755	38,823	39,948	102.90
Spišská Nová Ves	575	39,218	39,193	99.94
Komárno	353	37,346	37,366	100.05

Levice	590	33,991	36,538	107.49
Humenné	1,219	34,638	35,157	101.50
Bardejov	461	30,812	33,247	107.90
Liptovský Mikuláš	468	31,725	33,007	104.04
Piešťany	671	33,176	30,606	92.25
Ružomberok	236	29,416	30,417	103.40
Topoľčany	1,040	32,603	28,968	88.85
Lučenec	581	28,861	28,332	98.17
Čadca	455	25,183	26,699	106.02
Dubnica nad Váhom	517	24,446	25,995	106.34
Rimavská Sobota	314	24,771	25,088	101.28
Partizánske	1,088	26,543	24,907	93.84
Šaľa	539	24,776	24,564	99.14
Hlohovec	356	23,409	23,729	101.37
Dunajská Streda	746	23,236	23,519	101.22
Vranov nad Topľou	670	22,487	22,985	102.21
Brezno	182	22,469	22,875	101.81
Trebišov	332	20,675	22,342	108.06
Nové Mesto nad Váhom	632	20,956	21,327	101.77
Snina	363	19,170	21,325	111.24
Senica	413	20,085	21,253	105.82
Pezinok	294	20,515	21,082	102.76
Bánovce nad Bebravou	778	19,893	20,901	105.07
Dolný Kubín	359	19,091	19,948	104.49
Žiar nad Hronom	506	21,516	19,945	92.70
Rožňava	419	18,647	19,261	103.29
Púchov	449	18,311	18,833	102.85
Handlová	207	17,835	18,018	101.03
Malacky	655	17,573	17,773	101.14
Sereď	564	16,612	17,406	104.78
Kežmarok	689	20,294	17,383	85.66
Kysucké Nové Mesto	622	17,139	16,558	96.61
Galanta	466	16,978	16,365	96.39
Stará Ľubovňa	533	13,995	16,227	115.95
Zlaté Moravce	491	15,820	15,618	98.72
Detva	220	15,039	15,122	100.55
Skalica	249	14,748	15,013	101.80
Senec	401	14,357	14,673	102.20
Levoča	230	12,678	14,366	113.31
Veľký Krtíš	916	14,212	14,013	98.60
Revúca	333	14,232	13,466	94.62
Myjava	262	13,135	13,142	100.05
Svidník	606	11,520	12,428	107.88
Nová Dubnica	1,063	12,590	12,358	98.16
Sabinov	531	10,657	12,290	115.32
Šamorín	283	12,051	12,143	100.76
Štúrovo	841	13,347	11,708	87.72
Bytča	269	12,139	11,550	95.15
Holíč	333	11,359	11,416	100.50
Stropkov	440	9,719	10,874	111.88
Banská Štiavnica	228	10,440	10,874	104.16
Kolárovo	101	11,007	10,823	98.33

Towns in Slovakia after 1993

	Population density (km ⁻²)	Popula- tion 1991	Popula- tion 2001	%
Šurany	175	10,192	10,491	102.93
Stará Turá	195	10,813	10,291	95.17
Filákov	643	10,451	10,198	97.58
Veľké Kapušany	323	9,421	9,760	103.60
Tvrdošín	166	9,509	9,544	100.37
Moldava nad Bodvou	502	8,796	9,525	108.29
Vráble	246	9,216	9,493	103.01
Veľký Meder	160	9,247	9,113	98.55
Krompachy	386	8,252	8,812	106.79
Modra	176	8,090	8,536	105.51
Hriňová	63	8,534	8,289	97.13
Liptovský Hrádok	425	10,927	8,232	75.34
Tornaľa	138	8,185	8,169	99.80
Hurbanovo	135	7,790	8,153	104.66
Námestovo	182	7,003	8,135	116.16
Stupava	128	7,834	8,063	102.92
Šahy	186	8,551	8,061	94.27
Kráľovský Chlmec	332	7,963	8,031	100.85
Krupina	88	7,971	7,991	100.25
Turzovka	222	7,287	7,854	107.78
Sečovce	245	6,705	7,819	116.61
Hnúšťa	110	7,146	7,557	105.75
Želiezovce	132	8,373	7,522	89.84
Nová Baňa	121	8,534	7,505	87.94
Trstená	91	6,059	7,461	123.14
Svit	1,667	7,485	7,445	99.47
Vrútky	388	7,523	7,298	97.01
Turčianske Teplice	208	7,168	7,031	98.09
<i>Krásno nad Kysucou</i>	<i>254</i>	<i>(6,682)</i>	<i>6,939</i>	<i>103.85</i>
Medzilaborce	139	6,391	6,741	105.48
Žarnovica	211	6,532	6,596	100.98
Gelnica	107	6,277	6,404	102.02
Sobrance	587	5,754	6,262	108.83
Vrbové	450	6,319	6,249	98.89
Spišská Belá	184	5,408	6,136	113.46
Nemšová	186	5,855	6,136	104.80
Lipany	506	5,519	6,130	111.07
Poltár	191	5,823	6,099	104.74
Sládkovičovo	195	5,874	6,078	103.47
Rajec	194	5,793	6,074	104.85
Kremnica	130	7,130	5,822	81.65
Berezo	132	5,551	5,567	100.29
Ilava	223	5,531	5,411	97.83
Vysoké Tatry	12	5,618	5,407	96.24
Gbely	86	5,177	5,223	100.89
Bojnice	250	5,084	5,006	98.47
<i>Šaštín-Stráže</i>	<i>121</i>	<i>(4,787)</i>	<i>5,005</i>	<i>104.55</i>
Dobšiná	62	4,569	4,896	107.16
Sliač / Rybáry	121	4,236	4,667	110.17
Čierna nad Tisou	452	4,744	4,645	97.91
Svätý Jur	124	4,600	4,614	100.30

Strážske	184	4,255	4,474	105.15
Trenčianske Teplice	410	4,436	4,438	100.05
Nováky	227	4,341	4,402	101.41
Tlmače	885	5,478	4,305	78.59
Tisovec	33	4,430	4,215	95.15
Giraltovce	379	3,933	4,189	106.51
Veľký Šariš	186	4,058	4,018	99.01
Leopoldov	725	3,826	3,999	104.52
Spišské Podhradie	154	3,562	3,780	106.12
Medzev	119	3,871	3,667	94.73
Hanušovce nad Topľou	257	3,144	3,582	113.93
Spišské Vlachy	86	3,368	3,518	104.45
Jelšava	67	2,508	3,287	131.06
Podolíneč	97	2,908	3,173	109.11
Rajecké Teplice	249	2,540	2,677	105.39
Spišská Stará Ves	133	2,234	2,355	105.42
Dudince	219	1,530	1,500	98.04
Modrý Kameň	76	1,374	1,434	104.37
Σ		2,993,234	3,022,106	

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

After 1990 the individual settlements, as independent local authorities, became able to make decisions about the issues within their competences rather than follow party directives and party instructions regarding the settlement system. Consequently, independence had a decisive influence on the future of individual settlements. As people's possibilities of making choices were increasing, and opportunities started to depend on their own performance, settlements were also forced to follow policies that could make their town or village more attractive, to prevent more highly-qualified young families with occupations in demand from moving away. In this way, it became necessary to explore local needs and try to satisfy them.

The first two censuses of the new era provide figures that indicate some new phenomena (*Table 30*).

Table 30. Towns with decreasing and increasing numbers of population, 1991-2001

	Towns with decreasing population	Towns with increasing population
Number of towns:	46	92
Average town population	27,183	19,258
Population of the largest town	428,672 (Bratislava)	236,093 (Košice)
Population of the smallest town	1,500 (Dudince)	1,434 (Modrý Kameň)

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

While the number of urban inhabitants rose from 2,993,234 to 3,022,106, the population of 46 towns still decreased, which is a sign of considerable changes in just a decade. These towns belong to larger settlements, with an average of 27,183 inhabitants, the capital city included. Of the towns with increasing population 40 have a population of fewer than 10,000 people, 19 have 10-20,000 inhabitants, and 28 more than 20,000.

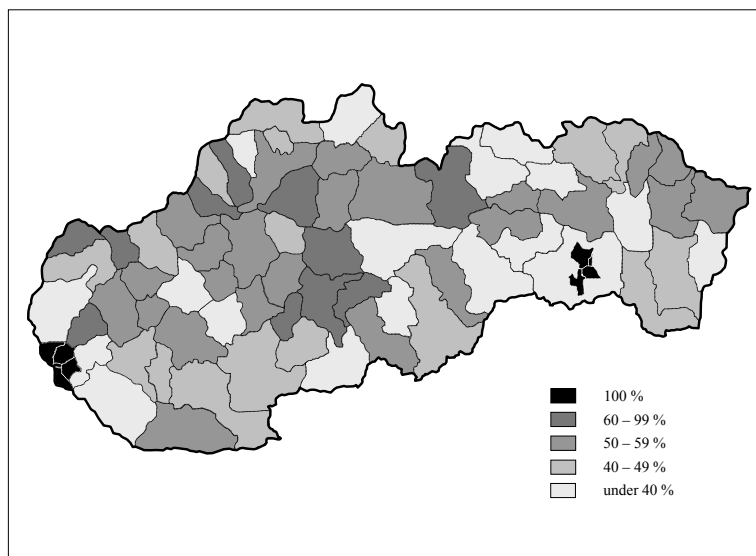
This movement of the population is due to several reasons. First of all, the villages that had been attached to the towns without their approval became independent again. This phenomenon is contradictory because, whereas during the decades of communism the concentration of villages had been more frequent, now separation of villages from towns was more typical (*Slavík* 2000). The increase in the number of people who moved to towns slowed down because of the termination of state housing construction, which had attracted people and made it possible for them to become inhabitants of towns in a short time. Some industrial sectors, such as arms manufacture, were faced with a crisis due to the changed political and market conditions. The closing down of such factories resulted in a high rate of unemployment, and a portion of the people, looking for a solution for their own situation, moved out of town. However, the reasons for moving from towns have changed considerably. One of the most extreme reasons is that the families that have acquired better living conditions move out of the crowded towns to family houses in the green belt, a village or a small town in its environs where there is quiet and clean air and from where they commute to the nearby city, mostly by car. The other extreme is represented by those who, because of their limited means, cannot afford to cover their living costs in the city, and so try to find cheaper housing in the countryside.

A special kind of population movement, typical of the Slovak settlement system, is the strong movement of the population within towns. Attaching the surrounding settlements to a town to make it larger was a method of developing large cities in state party times. Especially after the changes in 1989, the population of the settlements – sometimes relatively far away – that had become parts of a town started to increase suddenly. This was mainly due to the increasingly common construction of one-family houses. Meanwhile, the population of large cities, e.g. that of Bratislava as a whole, was perhaps even decreasing (*Slavík-Kožuch-Bačík* 2005).

The movement of the population can also be influenced by the urban development strategy of their new, elected leaders. In the towns where

the leaders had spent time, money and energy on urban development and, by developing the infrastructure and business parks and designating marketable lands and buildings, prepared the town for receiving economic units, the gradually increasing economic growth attracted families that were seeking jobs and wanted to make a living. A town that had adjusted itself to the post-industrial conditions had a better chance to participate in the increasing competition of towns for inhabitants.

Figure 12. Degree of urbanization in individual districts (Level NUTS 4)



1 – 100 %; 2 – 60-99 %; 3 – 50-59 %; 4 – 40-49 %; 5 – under 40 %

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

The degree of urbanization of the individual administrative districts can be seen in *Figure 12*. The 100% urbanization of Bratislava and Košice is easy to understand; what is more, in Slovak administration these two towns are subdivided into further districts.

In the country there are 11 districts where the proportion of the urban population within the district is over 60%. Banská Bystrica, Poprad and Martin are towns with more than 60,000 inhabitants, so they are actually the leading towns of their district, but Myjava, with its 18,160 inhabitants, or Banská Štiavnica, with its 10,662 inhabitants, belong to this category only because of the internal population proportions of their small district.

In 24 districts the proportion of the urban population is higher than 50%. This category includes large towns like Prešov, Žilina, Nitra, Trnava, Prievidza and Trenčín. However, this category also includes a contradictory example, because Medzilaborce, with its 6,616 inhabitants, belongs here only because its district has a low population.

The proportion of town-dwellers is higher than 40% in 17 districts. They also include both big towns like Nové Zámky (62,641), Levice (55,525) or Michalovce (53,970) and small towns, like Krupina with its 9,354 inhabitants.

In 18 districts the proportion of the urban population is between 12% and 40%. This category includes the Dunajská Streda district with its large area and 44,894 townspeople. Besides the district seat of Dunajská Streda, Šamorín and Veľký Meder also belong to this category and in this way add to the urban population. The districts that can be regarded as internal peripheries and where the small size of the town also makes it difficult for the district to strengthen its economy, like the Brezno, Zlaté Moravce and Gelnica districts, also belong to this group. At some other places, an oversized district worsens the problems of the small town, like in Rožnava or the above-mentioned Dunajská Streda. For Veľký Krtíš and Rožnava, their borderland location is also a limiting factor. The districts along the Polish border also have to cope with the same difficulties, e.g. Námestovo, Kežmarok, Stará Ľubovňa, Sabinov, or Sobrance district along the Ukrainian border. The sparse distribution of towns in the district in the environs of Košice is surely compensated for by the presence of the large city nearby. Commuting is the solution for the people living here to meet their needs concerning jobs and services.

4. 1 The effect of geopolitics on the urban network

Slovakia, as one of the youngest states of Europe, has to act to become have itself accepted by other countries and adjust itself to its farther and closer neighbours. A higher level of this dual, inward and outward, compliance is geopolitics. At present, geopolitics requires that the independent Slovakia should carry out an apparently simple task. It has to accept the trans-Atlantic establishment and has to enforce its principles and regulations with the means of power available within the country. The country that meets the requirements of the trans-Atlantic circle will be the member of this political, social and economic, in one word, power bloc. Any country that does not meet them will be excluded, or, in a worse case, it will be

regarded as an enemy. The recognition and enforcement of the geopolitical situation is the starting point for the organization of the internal and external conditions of the country concerned.

To examine the geopolitical situation of present-day Slovakia, Czechoslovakia has to be examined first.

Czechoslovakia owed its 1918 foundation to the victorious powers of the Triple Entente, and the dividing up of the country in 1938-39 was also due to the changes in the balance of the great powers. The situation of the second Czechoslovakia, which was reestablished in 1945, was simpler, because, as a part of the Soviet sphere of interest, the possibility of all independent initiation was ruled out. When the Soviet Union collapsed in the political and economic world competition, Czechoslovakia had a new chance at independence and in this way it occupied a new geopolitical space. This event coincided with the transformation of Eastern-Central Europe, after the countries that had been occupied by the Soviets abandoned the Eastern European bloc organized by the Soviets. They are the eastern countries of the new Central Europe, from the Baltic states to the Adriatic Sea (including the independent Croatia, even if it is not, for the time being, a member of the European Union). Eight of these countries joined the European Union in 2004. After 1989, it was the western character of the Czech people, rather than Slav brotherhood, that was emphasized in Czech common talk. Giving Huntington as a reference, they also used Latin letters as evidence, saying they had not even adopted the Cyrillic alphabet.

If, however, we only take into consideration the international power relations of contemporary Europe and the role that Czechoslovakia — within it the Slovak section — played, then we will forget that Slovakia's several decades of gradual development within Czechoslovakia meant its having to adjust itself to the new geopolitical situation and establish its inner order in accordance with the new geopolitical situation. This is what we called 'conquest' above. Not only was Slovakia subordinated to the Czech protectorate, but the Slovak section of the country also had to ensure its own inner independence. This influenced its relations to the central government, which were rather ambiguous until 1993. It was another, much more important ambition for Slovakia to break away from Hungary, the country where the Slovak people first emerged and to which all its traditions go back. However, this was the task that caused the most difficulties. The new state had to change the mostly northern-southern gravitation of Upper Hungary (Felvidék), which had existed till

1918 and had rather vague, centuries-old boundaries, into an eastern-western orientation. This 'gravitation' could best be illustrated by the railway lines. In 1914 the area of present-day Slovakia was connected with Galicia by four, with Moravia and Silesia by three, with Austria by two and, with the area of present-day Hungary, by ten railway lines (*Lipták* 1994). Since the neighbouring country of the new state, so also that of Slovakia, was Poland in the north and in the east, and Sub-Carpathia was bordered by Romania, the economic interest that had connected it to Austrian Galicia and Bucovina ceased to exist. The reduction of eastern relations, a trend that lasted till 1945, was another reason why the towns in Eastern Slovakia, including the towns in Spiš, which were in need of a 'structural change', lost importance and the role they used to play. As a result of being close to the Hungarian border, the towns along the new border, between Bratislava and Košice, lost their geopolitical weight. The positional value of the eastern part of the country and the towns along the Hungarian border fell at that time. It was in these towns that the most factories went bankrupt. *Lipták* adds in his paper that such a decline of the industry had nothing to do with the minority policy; it had an effect both on the Hungarian borderland and the purely Slovak Upper Garam area (*Lipták* 1994, p. 81.).

Consequently, we have returned to the above-mentioned situation: the Váh Valley, which was geographically close to the Czech section of the country, became more valuable. The factories built in this area made and have been making the successive waves of modernization possible up to the present day. The 19th century industrial and handicraft industrial crisis of the towns in Szepesség [Spiš] was 'solved' by the continuous industrialization in the Váh Valley. The German threat and the 1939 Czech occupation accelerated the development of the economy in the western Slovak areas. The industrialization and development priority of Slovakia was only modified by the 40-year presence of the Soviet sphere of interest: Košice was allowed to build the iron works in the 1960s and the towns along the Soviet border were permitted to build factories that were in accordance with Soviet interests (Humenné, Medzilaborce, Michalovce, etc.).

Mention must be made of the fact that it was between 1939 and 1945 that Slovakia first became independent. The geopolitical situation of the first 'independent' Slovak state was obvious, because it was a satellite state of the Nazi Germany, even if its independence had not been granted, only approved, by Germany.

The establishment of the second independent Slovak state was made possible by the collapse of the Soviet Union and then the Slovak secession from Czechoslovakia. It turned out to be impossible to unite peoples or nations in the name of the so-called Slav brotherhood, or the bilingual (Czech and Slovak) nation (the Czechoslovak nation), or the monolingual (Czechoslovak) two nations (Czech and Slovak), because the individual features determined by their historical past and the differences between them are stronger than their similarities.

In 1993 Slovakia emerged as a new state of Europe. Slovakia's self-interpretation brought important aspects to the surface, and their recognition, interpretation and reception determined public political actions and development plans.

It became a generally recognized fact that Slovakia belonged to Central Europe, i.e. it was a country that could be found between the former Soviet Union and Western Europe, but at the same time it was also one of the countries between Scandinavia and the Balkan states. However, it was a focus of debate which cardinal point it was closer to. The first Slovak nationalistic governments emphasized the importance of the east, which called forth closer relations with the new Russia. Nevertheless, the European Union made Slovakia understand that, by this forced alliance, it would exclude itself from an integrated Europe. The 1998 change of government meant both a break with the eastern orientation and a clear-cut espousal of tending westwards. This made it possible for Slovakia to become a member of the European Union.

East-west orientation is of utmost importance for Slovak policy and public life, which can also be seen in the fact that the Slovak people regard Slovakia as a country of the Carpathians. This statement also expresses negation, because it means that it is not a Carpathian Basin country, in the sense that Felvidék was considered an integral part of the Basin in the Hungarian geographical and historical approach. A consequence of this idea is, for instance, the way that the Slovak road network has been implemented. They speak about eastern-western valleys between the mountain ridges of the Carpathian country. The valleys of the rivers Váh, Hron and Hornád make east-west communication corridors. That the rivers flow southwards and flow into the Danube, and the rivers Sajó and Tisza, is regarded as a secondary fact. This idea serves as a basis for the political and geographical interpretation according to which the river valleys connect two central regions, the Eastern Slovak and the Western Slovak regions. The Bratislava-Košice axis runs in the

river valleys among the mountain peaks of the Carpathians. This curve forms the backbone of Slovak economy and population; this is the geographical belt towards which the human and economic movement in the areas to the south of it gravitates. The population movement, trade, exchange of goods and services of settlements in Southern Slovakia have one direction: from the south to the north.

As a result of the German unification, the shortest way to get to Russia is no longer via Slovakia, which reduces its importance. What is more, the uncertain situation of Ukraine adds to the importance of Belarus, and thus to the importance of the communication corridors via Poland, from the point of view of European economic relations with Russia.

The small size of Slovakia has also caused anxiety. Since 1989 the multipolar new world has been under a lot of uncertainty. For small countries such as Slovakia, safety is the most important from the point of view of economy, politics and defence. Eastern-Central European countries, however, have to be prepared to manage problems regarding democratic institutions and a social market economy as well as minority and ethnic conflicts, rather than military risks. The ability to maintain integrity is also crucial for Slovakia: it should not remain in the periphery of the European Union, either in an economic or in a political sense, and it should not worry about comparisons with its neighbouring countries, either.

Besides all the different kinds of ambitions, there is one more, a traditional Slovak desire, which goes back to the national movement of the 19th century: if only Bratislava could be the European centre for the Slav territories (*Korec* 2003).

Slovakia's geopolitical weight can be examined, among other things, from the point of view of politics, economy and military force (*Blažík* 1997). Transportation will be analysed later.

The *politics* of a country provide the general framework that is the result of recognizing the geopolitical situation. When Slovakia was declared independent, the primary question was to which geopolitical field it wished to belong. Due to its geographical location, the range of alternatives narrowed down to two, but the Slovak political élite tried both. One of them was to follow the eastern, i.e. Russian, centre. This meant restricted democracy and strong authoritarianism, and this was what the first governments were striving for. The consequences would have affected all the sectoral policies. This the European Union did not

tolerate. It demanded that Slovakia should belong to the trans-Atlantic field of force. This is the underlying reason for the victory of the Dzurinda government.

The political leadership in power after 1998 approved the rules of parliamentary democracy based on universal suffrage, as well as the division of the branches of power and the model of the social market economy. A criterion of this political system is the implementation of the principle of self-governance in practice, i.e. the development of the local and regional government system by restricting institutionalized state will. The trans-Atlantic political system is basically affected by the principle of competition, the competition of persons and institutions – including elected representatives, mayors and other leaders selected by competition – as well as the competition of settlements and towns. This political system provides the most opportunities for particular settlements to obtain outstanding roles based on the abilities of their inhabitants, but also, due to the lack of the necessary abilities in their inhabitants, they may fall into insignificance and become lacking in character. Competition is always based on performance. However, nowhere is performance alone victorious; there are influencing factors everywhere, and the extent of these factors should be considered. If performance is highly influenced by other factors, such as corruption, the power of politicians, their relatives, etc., we may call it Balkanization.

The uninterrupted development of Slovakia during the decades of socialism did not produce the basis in the *economy* on which construction would have been possible after the change of regime (1989) and the foundation of the new state (1993). Analysts found the heritage of the communist economic policy and the activity of the first governments of the new state alarming. The performance of Slovak economy achieved one-third that of the former Czechoslovakia and even compared to its neighbouring countries (Poland, Ukraine, Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary), it was much lower in the first half of the 1990s. The value added to the products was rather low, because of the extremely high rate of semi-finished products. The efficiency of production was only 20-30% of the average of the countries of the European Union. The out-of-date technology had huge energy intensity as a consequence (the iron works in Košice) and led to severe environmental damage (the aluminium works in Žiar nad Hronom). The underdeveloped machine industry meant severe problems for the economy. Analysts expected the reorganization of the particular sectors of the economy, modernization, open markets,

innovation and the introduction of individual products. These steps would have ensured the possibility of competitiveness for a small country like Slovakia. It was also emphasized that Slovak economy, which had insufficient capital, would need foreign investment. On the other hand, the abuse of privatization and the influence of politics on business led to distrust in Slovak business life. Due to the Russian orientation of Slovak foreign affairs, the ultra-nationalism of internal policy and privatization abuse, Slovak accession to the EU seemed to be in danger, which would have made the country even more isolated.

4. 2 Administration as a means of organizing the town network

When analyzing administration, we should first emphasize that, at the time of the establishment of the country in 1918, the Slovak section of the country did not have an outstanding and obvious centre, and it had no capital town. This was because contemporary Felvidék did not have a centre of its own or a town organizing the life of the Slovaks, exerting a gravitation effect on other areas, or giving an example to follow. Neither Bratislava, nor Košice, which later underwent striking development, were towns that could function as gravitation centres for the population of the new state. The controversial process of Bratislava becoming the capital and the repeated debates show that the new state, which became independent in 1993, had to have even its capital city accepted.

For *Bitusiková* (2002) it is a fact that Bratislava does not play an important part in Slovak identity. The glorious past of the city was in the 16th-19th centuries, after that it gradually became a grey, insignificant small town for transit traffic along the Danube to Vienna. After the 1918 establishment of Czechoslovakia it was the only city where there were a sufficient number of large hotels for the representatives of the new power. After Slovakia, which had become 'independent' in World War II, had been attached to Czechoslovakia in 1945 again, it became a mediator for the instructions of the central government in the decades of communism, which destroyed, rather than increased, the authority of the city. The urban network of present-day Slovakia is largely influenced by the fact that it was the new Czechoslovak state that appointed Bratislava a centre for the eastern section of the country inhabited by Slovak people, for political purposes.

It is typical of Bratislava even today that, unlike the capital cities of other countries, it does not exert any special political influence on the country. It was not only the votes cast in rural areas that contributed to Mečiar's victory (three times, between 1990 and 1998), but also the decisive manner of civil organizations in rural areas and their organized campaign that raised the opposition to power in rural centres in 1998. The same is true of the government change in 2006. Owing to the high number of nationalistic and left-wing voters in the country, the populist and nationalist left-wing Robert Fico, the former mayor of Žilina and the president of Smer (Direction – Social Democratic Party, which refers to the third way between the political left and right wings), was able to establish a cabinet with the Slovak National Party, Jan Slota's ultra-nationalist party.

After the establishment of the new state in 1918, it was the aim of the town policy to mark out the new administrative centres. We called this process 'conquest' above.

The first decisive step to state independence was to set up the 16 counties from the eight complete and twelve fragmentary counties, which happened in 1920. The six large counties formed in 1923 already indicated that the new power was seeking centralization, because in this way they could create a means of homogenization and Czechoslovakization. With the provincial system created in 1928, the eastern part of contemporary Czechoslovakia, i.e. the Slovak province, was converted into a subordinated part of the country. It was the task of this region to serve the Czech section of the country, even at the expense of sacrificing its factories. The eastern region supplied the western, more highly developed region with raw materials and it also became a market for the goods produced in the western section. The ethnic goals of regionalization were gradually completed with economic regionalization, which was also expressed in the administrative divisions (and, of course, operational regulations, laws and decrees).

The administration between 1939 and 1945 was an important period in Slovak history, because it was at that time that the first independent Slovak state was established. The division into six counties served the interests of those employed in administration, i.e. those of the Slovak middle classes, because in this way many loyal Slovak people could obtain genteel office jobs with regular salaries. Apart from the Slovakization of the administration and ethnic regionalization, the independent state, which was very important from the point of view of

strengthening Slovak national consciousness, accepted the German 'suggestion' of developing the munitions industry. Therefore, industrialization was started in the Váh Valley, and this laid the foundations of Slovak industrial development.

During the decades of communism the centres for the working class had to be established, which again increased the significance of towns and cities both in the Váh Valley, which was being industrialized rapidly, and in other places, too. For the sake of balance, the neglected eastern section of the country, which was rather poor in raw materials, also had to be developed. This was how Košice became the centre for the steel industry.

After 1945 administration became again a means of centralization, but this time in a more rigid way, since, unlike in previous years, there was no chance for different political forces and interest groups to give their opinions in public life. The state machinery and administration were controlled by one single party. In 1960, in accordance with the administrative reform, the number of regions was reduced to three, and that of the districts was also reduced to 32. This extremely simplified system, which was created for the aim only of carrying out the central will, operated up until 1991. In 1969 the only change made was that Bratislava itself also became an independent region, so the number of regions increased to four, and within the administrative boundaries of Bratislava and Košice, the two big cities, several districts were marked out, which increased the number of the 32 districts. These changes, however, did not have any effects on crucial aspects, and neither did control become more democratic.

Although the three cities of Bratislava, Košice and Banská Bystrica, were of utmost importance as centres and administrative regions, central control was a more important feature of the age. The centre was Prague and all the other regional centres only executed and transmitted central instructions. The only benefit the three cities had from this situation was that they had priority over other cities and towns. Their service providing facilities were increasing, which was an obvious advantage over other towns. In a political sense, it also meant better-balanced control, since the three large areas of Western, Central and Eastern Slovakia each had their own centres for three decades. The same is true, even if to a smaller degree, of the 32, and after some years, the 38 district centres, because, in the development plans for settlements between 1961 and 1991, smaller centres were also granted some development resources.

The change of regime gave a sudden impetus to the country. After 40 years of inflexibility and standstill in the socialist era, we have been able to witness incredibly rapid changes in Slovakia. The new, independent country has been able to adjust to the new conditions by radically reorganizing its administration system.

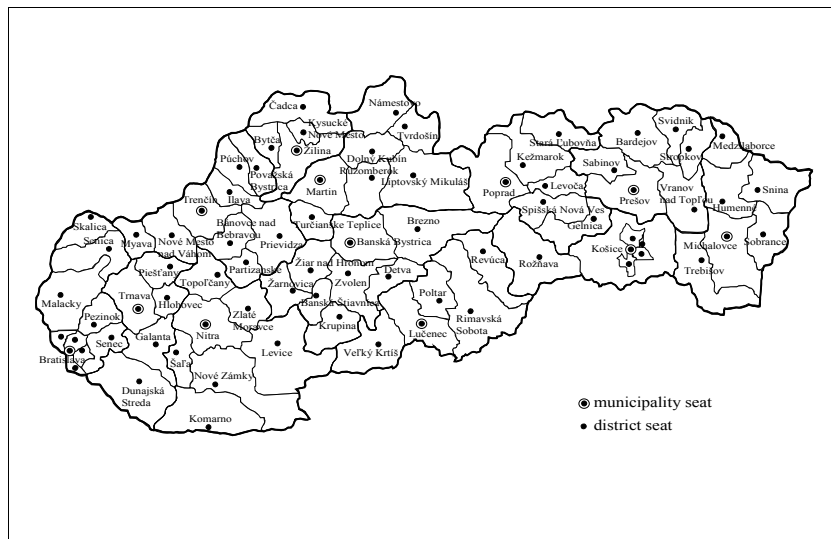
Table 31. The administrative system of present-day Slovakia

	Large territorial unit	Small territorial unit (district)
1918	8 counties + 12 fragmentary counties	97
1920	16 counties	95
1923	6 large counties	77+Bratislava and Košice
1928	1 province	77+Bratislava and Košice
1939	6 counties	58+Bratislava
1945	--	77+Bratislava and Košice
1949	6 regions	90+Bratislava and Košice
1960	3 regions	32
1969	4 regions (Bratislava included)	36+Bratislava and Košice
1991	--	121 small districts (obvod)
1996	8 regions (kraj)	79 districts (okres)
2004	8 regions (kraj)	50 small districts (obvod)

Source: compiled from *Kúhnl* (1982), *K.Petőcz* (1998) and *K.Kocsis* (2002)

The most decisive change in the administrative system was that the former, strictly hierarchical council system based on central directives was replaced by the municipality system; in 1991 administration and self-governance were separated again. Due to the political debates in the country, that was all the Slovak policy aimed to change the regime could achieve. They could not set up either the regional organs of local governance, or the correspondent administrative levels. Apart from the executive organs of a national sphere of authority, only a settlement-level local government system, although not the final one, was set up and 121 smaller districts were established for carrying out administrative tasks. It is typical of the extreme character of Slovak political action that in the new state after 1918 the number of the district-level administrative units was gradually decreased (from 97 to 32), and always in the name of centralization. Now that there is democracy, an unprecedented number of districts have been marked out. It was a reaction to the 'large independence' of the particular settlements that the 121 district offices became controlling and inspecting organs of the settlements in the particular districts.

Figure 13. Proposal for 12 counties in 2000



Source: edited by István Mezei based on *Návrh samosprávnych krajov*. ErasData-Pro, spol. S.r.o., Odbor informatiky SVS MV SR. 2001, drawn by Máté Mády

The new regional division of 1996 is all the more important because, after long debates, (the more significant plans are outlined in: *Kocsis* 1995), the eight administrative regions set up that year have remained, at present without the county municipality organs that were to be built simultaneously. Meanwhile, the number of districts has been started to be reduced. The number of the 79 districts (*okres*) marked out in 1996 were again reduced in 2004. At present there are 50 small regions (*obvod*) to carry out the different administrative tasks.

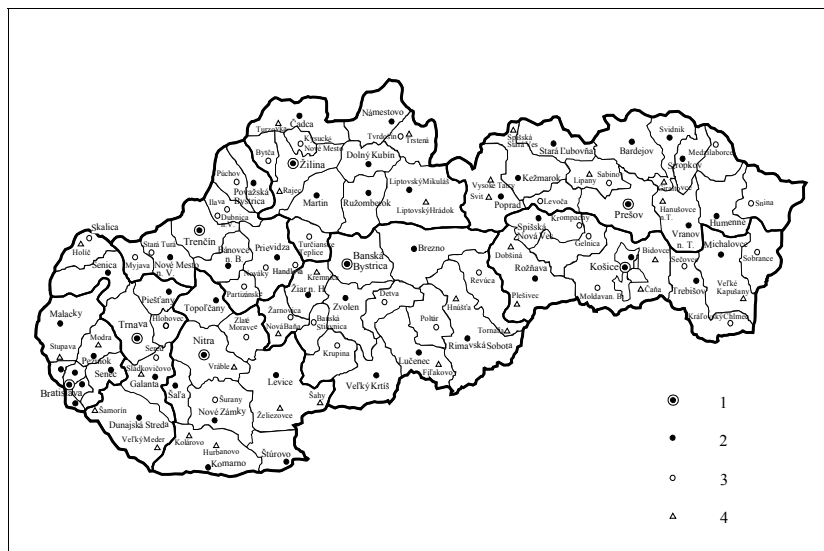
Mention must be made of the town-forming opportunities of administration, because the municipality and administrative units set up in the years of the transition have had a considerable influence on the development and regionalization of the towns, and, in a wider sense, the regions. The debates about the boundaries of regions show how the interests of power prevail over rationality, regional interests and traditions. It was because of the interests of those in power that the system of the eight regions was introduced in 1996. The interests of the parties that had won the elections demanded that the boundaries of the regions should be marked out in a way that was favourable for electoral geogra-

phy, i.e. for the winners. This was how the new administrative centres were marked out and the new administrative officials were appointed, and this was why the settlements and people in opposition were pushed into the background. Trenčín is usually taken as an example, because, although it had not been involved in the former state and the party political plans, now it was established as a new political regional unit at the cost of neighbouring regions. This was a reward (and political interest) as the most voters for the Mečiar-led HZDS (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia) came from those districts.

This happened in 2000 again, when Viktor Nižňanský, who was in charge of the state reform, submitted his proposal for the establishment of 12 counties. These counties would roughly have followed the traditional boundaries of the old Hungarian county system. The areas and names of the counties Zemplín [Zemplén], Šariš [Sáros] and Spiš [Szepes] were most similar to the former counties, but the unified Liptov [Liptó], Orava [Árva] and Turiec [Turóc], as well as the merged counties Gemer- Novohrad [Gömör-Nógrád] were also more or less similar to the form of the formerly separate counties. The areas and the boundaries of the western counties showed more marked differences from the traditional Hungarian county system, which had not included counties like Trnava, Žilina or the county Along the River Hron. Besides, though in new areas, there were Bratislava, Trenčín and Nitra Counties, too. Reviving centuries-old traditions disturbed Slovak public opinion, and this move was also strongly opposed by politicians, but only when the government party Hungarian Coalition Party expressed its claim for the independent Komárno County. This must have been the alarm bell that woke the otherwise equally nationalist forces on both sides of the Slovak political palette and they all rejected this plan. In their opinion, this form of regionalization would have endangered the realization of the unified national state.

This was a crucial decision also as far as the number of towns is concerned, because returning to the 1996 division into eight regions meant that Martin, Poprad, Lučenec and Michalovce were not county towns any more. This is a problem first of all for the underdeveloped eastern counties, because there are far fewer large cities there than in the western section. With this division, the position of Bratislava, the capital city, and the other regional centres, Trnava, Nitra, Trenčín, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice strengthened. Only the latter two are located in the eastern section of the country.

Figure 14. The regional and district (obvod) division of 2004



1 – headquarters of the regional office (8 kraj); 2 – headquarters of the district office (50 obvod); 3 – permanent office branch (33); 4 – temporary office branch (31)

Source: compiled by István Mezei based on Návrh samosprávnych krajov. ErasData-Pro, spol. S.r.o., Odbor informatiky SVS MV SR. 2003, drawn by Máté Mády.

The confirmation of the regional boundaries of 1996 excluded the resources that could have led to the self-governance of the Hungarian population. The ‘distribution’ of the Hungarian ethnicity among the Bratislava, Trnava and Nitra districts, as well as the decision to ignore Lučenec, Rimavská Sobota, Rožnava, Kráľovský Chlmec and their districts and their attachment to the regions and districts with Slovak majority to the north are signs of the conquerors being unfair. In legal terms, this could be considered refusal of the right to self-determination, or in political terms, the survival of national oppression. This was how the interests of the governing parties in keeping their own positions were interwoven with the interests of all nationalist Slovak political forces, governing and opposition, in keeping the nation-state aim in mind continuously.

It is a typical feature of the changes in the regional system of administration that there was an increasingly strong concentration for long decades after the 1918 establishment of Czechoslovakia. The initial number of 16 counties had been reduced to three in 1960. This con-

centrated regional, administrative system prevailed up until 1991. The reason for it was not simply the strengthening of political concentration, although this was the main political goal, but also the intention of setting the disintegrated, colourful urban structure to rights, developing three towns into large cities. The intention of giving three cities, Bratislava, Banská Bystrica and Košice, prominence over all the others, and developing them into political, economic and industrial centres (the most important ambition of the age) also meant pushing the other towns and cities into the background. The three cities as the three regional centres of the eastern, Slovak section of the new country (Czechoslovakia) were strengthened for three decades. The obtuse-angled triangle that can be drawn connecting them became the new urban axis of the new Slovakia.

The number of the smaller regional units was changed in the same way as towns and cities, i.e. disregarding the past and traditions. Besides promoting political centralization, the reduction of the initial 95 districts to 32 was aimed to strengthen the privileged position of 32 new centres among the many potential towns, which resulted in the new settlement structure of the new Czechoslovak regional system. After the 1989 political change the new settlement structure could not return to the centuries-old tradition; it could not continue the 1918 establishment. The only thing that could be done was to form a settlement structure that was suitable for the new political system on the basis of the forced categorisation. That was why Viktor Nižňanský's attempt to restore the historical regions was pointless and also harmless in a political sense.

The eight administrative regions established in 1996 gave a further five towns the opportunity to benefit from the advantages of belonging to the privileged. The role of an administrative centre grants considerable advantages over other towns concerning development. On the other hand, granting authority to these towns also means the enlargement of the existing Bratislava–Banská Bystrica–Košice axis. As a result of the enlargement, the developing new town system shows a new feature, i.e. the strengthening of the Váh Valley as an industrial and service-providing urban zone (Trnava, Trenčín and Žilina), and that of Nitra as the gravitation pole of the plains to the south. Prešov, as the equivalent of Košice, is granted similar opportunities. The task of these two towns is the development of the backward eastern region, which has been lagging behind the other regions.

4. 3 The connection between transportation and the town system

The position a country takes in the area-wide transportation network is decisive from the point of view of its geopolitical situation. Realizing the importance of the eastern-western communication axes that cross the Polish and Hungarian plains, Slovakia intends to stand its ground in this competition by marking out its route between them, i.e. building its motorways from Ostrava through Žilina and Košice to Lvov. This means that the road from Žilina will not run southwards at Košice, but it will take a sharp bend to Uzhhorod-Lvov. In comparison with this axis, and regarding also the international relations, the north-south corridors are of minor importance. Two of these corridors are in use. One of them is the route Katowice-Žilina-Bratislava in the valley of the river Váh, which corresponds to the road of the central region that is to be built to the north-east. This route is of importance mainly within the country, and has minor international importance. The other one is the corridor from the north to the south, from Cracow through Košice to Miskolc, which is much less busy. It is the Slovak section of the road that is important for Slovakia. At the same time, the road Orava-Banská Bystrica-Budapest, which was essential for centuries, is completely missing. A road network enhances the importance of the towns that can be found in the junctions and the planning of roads may encourage towns to have promising future prospects. Therefore transportation is of utmost importance in urban development.

The restored bridge between Esztergom and Štúrovo and the consequent planning constraints are a good example for this. Mária Valéria Bridge, which was inaugurated in 2001, symbolizes the end of World War II, because this was the last war-time ruins of a bridge in Europe. In practice, the bridge made actual, everyday relations between the two countries possible. Increased traffic, however, posed new problems. Commercial relations between the towns and smaller or larger regions on both banks of the Danube increased to a degree that the bridge connecting town centres soon proved to be insufficient. This made it necessary to build a larger bridge not far from the town so as to solve the problem of heavy traffic.

This demand made by the mayors of the two towns raises issues affecting the whole of Europe: where should the new northern-southern communication corridor be constructed and where should the Helsinki

corridor V/C be? There are two regions competing with each other: the Ipoly-Ipeľ Valley (Nógrád-Novohrad County) and the Esztergom-Štúrovo region (Komárom-Esztergom County and Nitra region/kraj). When emphasizing their significance, both regions refer to the fact that they are close to Budapest, the most dynamic centre of the Carpathian Basin. Before making a decision, the European Union will also declare its opinion taking the interests of several countries into consideration, because the plan severely affects the northern-southern connection of Eastern-Central Europe. Namely, the Hungarian planning process cannot disregard the transportation problem concerning the whole of Europe. The eastern-western communication lines have mostly been constructed but north-south corridors are also necessary. The demand of the two towns coincided with the ideas of those who urge the setting up of a European transportation network.

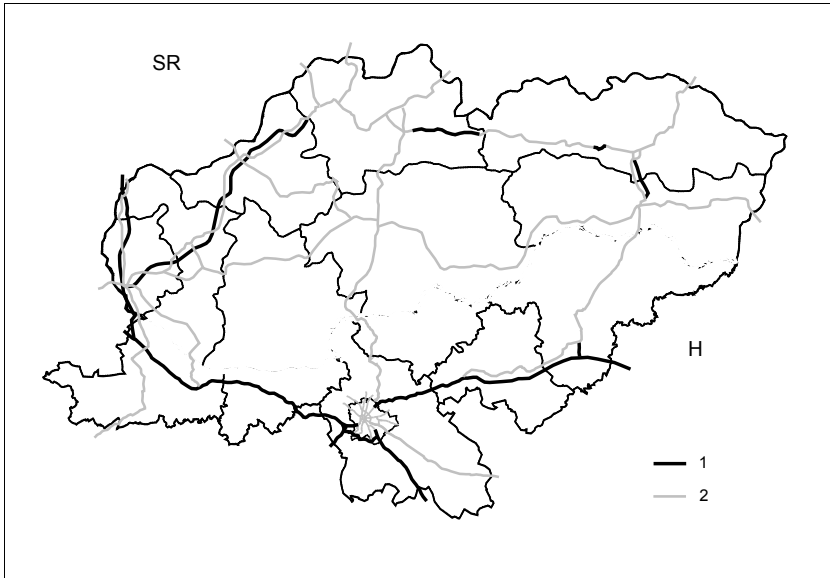
The complexity and importance of the issue can best be illustrated by the situation of the eastern section of the country. The border had been marked out so that the railway junction should belong to present-day Ukraine. Getting there is only possible from the direction of Záhony in Hungary and Čierna in Slovakia. Public roads have also been adjusted to this triangle, which means excluding both Hungary and Slovakia from this important junction. It is also obvious that, with Ungvár [today: Uzshorod in Ukraine] having been detached, this area lost its gravitation city. Due to the borders, this has had a negative effect on both Slovakia and Hungary. In this case, the interests of a third country, Ukraine, must also be considered when granting permits and restoring natural gravitation areas. Therefore, to avoid Ukrainian complications, the new communication corridor is likely to run from Finland, via the Baltic states, Poland, Košice in Slovakia and Miskolc in Hungary to the south. Consequently, it is obvious that the route Rajka-Szombathely-Nagykanizsa-Letenye also contributes to the organization of this north-south communication corridor. However, due to the central location of Budapest, the plans of two inside corridors seem to be taking shape between the two outside axial communication corridors: the Hungarian section of the above-mentioned V/C corridor: the routes Esztergom-Budapest-Dunaújváros-Szekszárd-Bóly-Ivándárda and Parassapuszta-Vác-Budapest-Kecskemét-Szeged-Röszke on the other side of the capital city. These routes not only touch but also flank the capital city. Both roads run towards Žilina in the north, making shortened and accelerated traffic possible towards the two countries as well as Poland (*Molnár 2007*).

Slovakia (and also Hungary!) still has to recognize that the European social and economic relations require that individual countries should implement a network-like rather than a single-line transportation conception. At present a single-line west-east road network is under construction in Slovakia, while the construction of public roads for the north-south international traffic is still a vague idea of planning. In case of Hungary, the single-line road network means a road network with one centre. Hungary is continuously developing its historical road and railway network with Budapest as its centre, and still has no intention of changing it into a net-like system. Both countries should recognize their own new geopolitical situation.

The map in *Figure 15* shows the route of the Slovak motorways that are to be built and the route of existing Hungarian motorways. Between the two road networks there are borderland settlements. It may be stated that the Hungarian motorway network serves the traffic of the dynamic region between the Austrian border and Budapest, while in the eastern part of the country it connects the towns of the North Hungarian range of mountains.

On the Slovak side, however, the long southern area of the country is not crossed by a freeway, but, starting from Bratislava it runs to the north. This is indicative of the fact that the chances of development in Southern Slovakia have been disregarded and pushed into the background, since road construction, just like any other state-controlled development, is carried out on the basis of intended plans.

Figure 15. The road network of the Slovak and Hungarian counties along the Slovak border



1 – motorway; 2 – E-roads

Edited by István Mezei, drawn by Máté Mády

4. 4 The urban development role of the economy

The development of the economy has been motivated in different ways in particular ages and regions. In the 20th century industry, especially heavy industry, was the most prosperous sector in the eastern part of Europe occupied by the Soviets, in the war years and during the cold war following them. However, new processes emerged in the world economy, and services began to play the leading role. The ex-communist countries could not take part in these changes until they had left the Soviet sphere of interest. The leading role of services means that it is no longer the available raw materials, the industrial factories planned and built by the central will, or the state logic of planned economy that initiates the establishment and development of settlements, but individuals who can utilize their expertise and qualifications on the market. Qualifications mean a high level of education, which is provided by towns; towns have

the establishments of finance, management and communications that are necessary for the profitable operation of market conditions. Apart from the new logic of market economy, municipal intentions also play a role in the intended increase of the development of its own settlements. The local governments of Slovak towns and cities also seek to attract and settle companies that can create jobs and incomes. This individual intention is intertwined with the state will that controls the choice of company headquarters of national and foreign investors through the nation-wide institutional system of regional development and by laws and decrees.

According to European practice, the statistical office of each country publishes regional data. This conceals the economic performance of the individual settlements, especially that of towns, although it is a well-known fact that the major part of the products of both industries and services are provided by towns. Since the Slovak statistical office publishes combined data of the national and regional economies, it was the data of settlements provided by the Bratislava-based TREND analysis centre that enabled us to clarify the role of towns in economic competition. The drawback of its method is that this does not mean a full-range data provision, because only figures regarding certain sectors are published and data on other sectors are not provided.

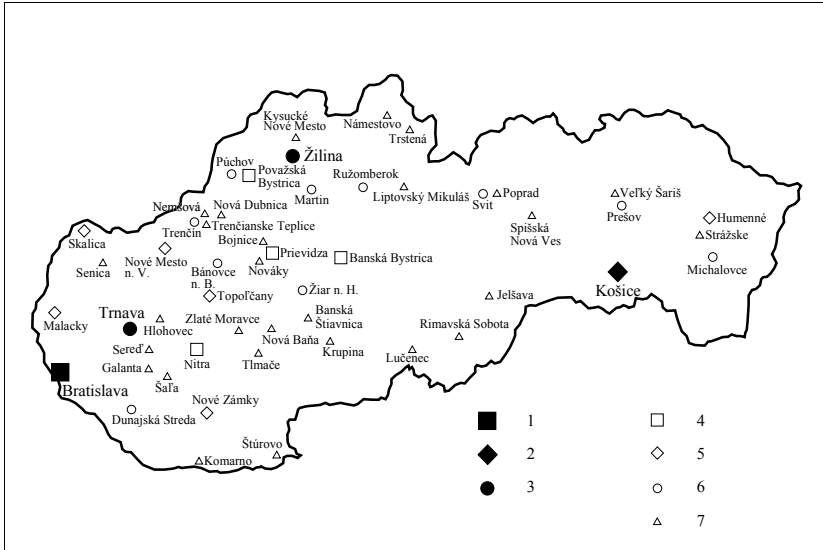
The TREND analysis centre lists 200 companies in 2005 that, according to their incomes, basically affect the economic life in Slovakia. On the basis of the location of their headquarters (*Table 32*), it can be stated that the 200 companies can be found in 69 settlements, 52 of which are towns and 17 are villages. The shift in proportions, however, cannot only be seen in settlement types, but also in the number of companies, because 90% of the listed companies can be found in towns, as can 94.8% of their income.

Table 32. The 200 most important companies in the geographical space

	Number of settlements	%	Number of companies	%	Total income, thousand SK	%
Town	52	75.4	180	90.0	1,309,457,241	94.8
Village	17	24.6	20	10.0	71,360,623	5.2
Σ	69	100.0	200	100.0	1,380,817,864	100.0

Source: www.etrend.sk

Figure 16. The geographical location of the 180 most important urban companies



1 – 78 companies; 2 – 8 companies; 3 – 6 companies; 4 – 4 companies; 5 – 3 companies; 6 – 2 companies; 7 – 1 company

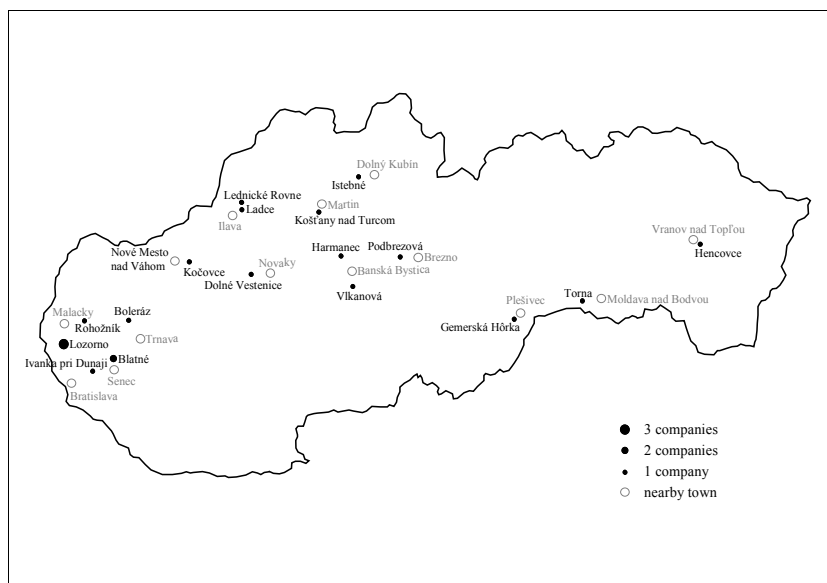
Source: the author's own compilation based on www.etrend.sk. Drawn by Máté Mády

If the data prove the priority of towns over villages, then we also must remember the fact that the significance of Bratislava is also extremely large compared to the other towns. Of the 200 most important companies, 78 are based in Bratislava. All the other towns are much less significant, because there are only eight companies in Košice, six in Žilina, six in Trnava, and four in Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Považská Bystrica and in Prievidza. There are 28 towns where only one company can be found.

The geographical location of the towns shows that the country is divided into two parts (*Figure 16*). The most important companies can be found in the western part of Slovakia. To the east of the Liptovský Mikuláš-Krupina line, there are very few important companies. Especially in the borderland region along the Polish border and in the broad area between Banská Bystrica and Košice, more exactly, between Banská Bystrica and the Ukrainian border, important and large companies are completely missing.

Special attention should be paid to the geographical situation of the 17 villages, because, as can be seen on the map (*Figure 17*), these villages are located rather close to towns, on average only 8-10 km far from the nearest town. Their density around Bratislava, Malacky, Senec and Trnava and their connections with the valleys of the rivers Váh, Nitra and Hron indicate that industrial and service-providing units choose to be based first of all in the gravitation area if they are to set up their headquarters outside the town.

Figure 17. The geographical location of the 20 most important rural companies



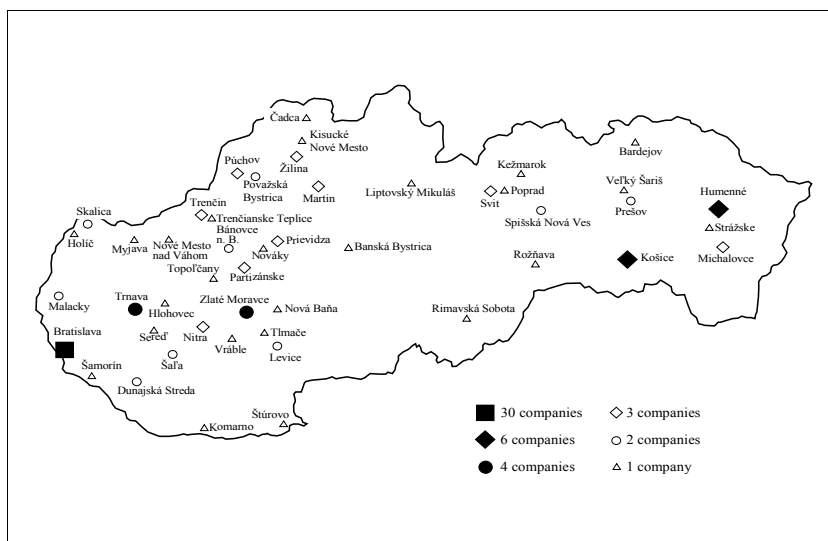
Source: the author's own compilation based on www.etrend.sk. Drawn by Máté Mády

Of the sectoral statements of TREND analysing centre, the first group to be analysed includes building materials, chemical factories, textile mills, factories of the food industry and companies of the machine and construction industry. The income from the production of these factories serves as a basis for ranking the first 20-25 factories.

Table 33. Industrial companies in the geographical space

	Number of settlements	%	Number of companies	%	Total income, thousand SK	%
Towns and cities	48	71.6	120	83.3	552,662,597	94.3
Villages	19	28.4	24	16.7	33,644,372	5.7
Σ	67	100.0	144	100.0	586,306,969	100.0

Source: www.etrend.sk

Figure 18. The 120 most important industrial companies in cities and towns


Source: the author's own compilation based on www.etrend.sk. Drawn by Máté Mády.

The 2005 figures indicate that the industrial establishments with the highest incomes in the listed sectors, altogether 144 factories, can be found in 67 settlements (*Table 33*). Most of them (120) are in cities and towns. These 120 companies account for 94.3% of the income.

Most of the largest industrial factories, 30 out of the 120 companies, have their headquarters in Bratislava. Among them are Slovnaft with receipts of over 102 billion crowns, Doprastav, the largest road and bridge constructing company, which, as a member of a Czech group of companies, has an income of over 13.4 billion crowns, and Whirlpool Slovakia with an income of 11.8 billion crowns. Mention must be made

of Volkswagen Slovakia, a really successful large factory, whose income exceeded 154.8 billion crowns in 2005. The priority of Bratislava is indicated by the fact that 59.1% of the total income in the listed sectors of the industry are produced there.

The headquarters of six important industrial factories can be found in Košice. The largest of them is Inžinierske stavby, a company of the construction industry, with receipts of 6.5 billion crowns and Eurovia-Cesty, a road building company, with 1.9 billion crowns. If the analysis centre had involved metallurgy, as an industrial sector, in the list, then U.S. Steel Košice would have been on it with 91 billion crowns, according to the balance sheet of the company on its homepage*.

Of the six large companies in Humenné, two large chemical factories have to be mentioned as examples: Nylstar Slovakia and Rhodia Industrial Yarns. Both of them have incomes of over 2 billion crowns.

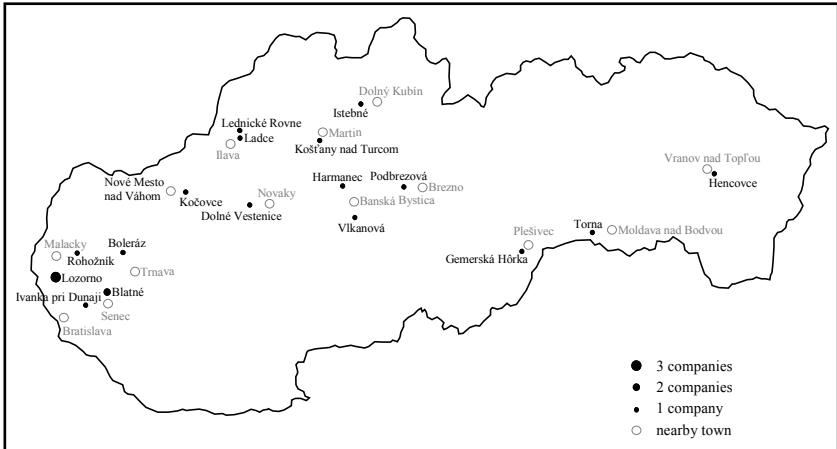
Of the four large companies in Trnava, ZF Sachs Slovakia, a gearbox-producing factory, with income of 4 billion crowns, and ŽOS Trnava, a railway repair company with 2 billion crowns, are worth mentioning.

Of the four companies of Zlaté Moravce, Danfoss Compressors, a parts manufacturing company with income of nearly 2 billion crowns and ViOn, an underground construction factory with 1.1 billion crowns, are most outstanding companies.

As for the group of service-providing companies, the analysing centre selected 72 as companies of nationwide importance. They can be found in 14 settlements, each of which is a town. The headquarters of 47 companies are in Bratislava. From the total income of 289 billion crowns, 84.2% is concentrated there. Among others, it is the leading telecommunications service providers, such as Orange Slovensko (21.4 billion SK), Slovak Telekom (16 billion SK), T-Mobile Slovensko (14.7 billion SK), Slovanet (464 million SK) that produce this high sum and extraordinarily high proportion along with utilities companies such as the Slovak gas works Slovenský plynárenský priemysel (87 billion SK) and the electricity company Slovenské elektrárne (45 billion SK). As far as other cities and towns are concerned, mention must be made of the Košice-seated Východoslovenská energetika, which is the electricity supplier in Eastern Slovakia (13 billion SK), the Žilina-seated Central Slovak electricity board Stredoslovenská energetika, (18.5 billion SK) and Nitrianska teplárenská spoločnosť, the heating supplying company in Nitra (411 million SK).

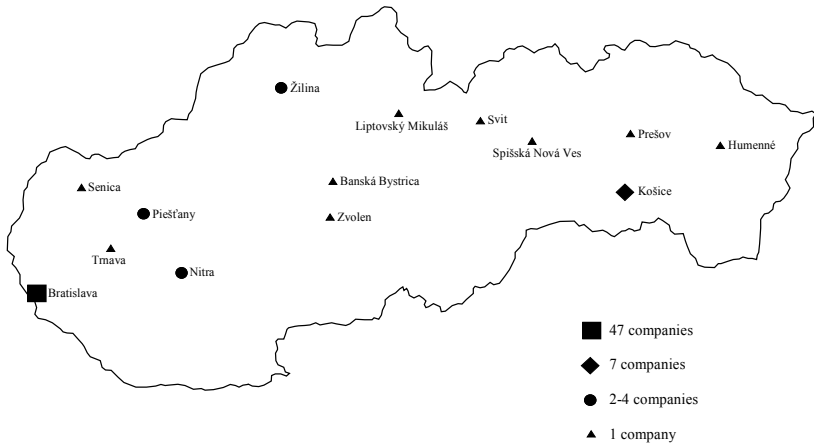
* <http://www.usske.sk/corpinfo/fin-e.htm>

Figure 19. The 24 most important industrial companies in villages



Source: the author's own compilation based on www.etrend.sk. Drawn by Máté Mády

Figure 20. The 72 most important service-providing companies in Slovakia



Source: the author's own compilation based on www.etrend.sk. Drawn by Máté Mády

The geographical location of the 72 most important service-providing companies (Figure 20) shows that, compared to industrial activities, services are much more linked to towns and cities. The importance of towns and cities is first of all due to education and research or the presence of quali-

fied, highly-educated intellectual specialists, rather than merely its higher number of inhabitants or buildings. Their everyday needs can best be met by urban services. This layer, which manages service providing companies and plays an important part in decision-making and preparing the decisions, has a much stronger ability to enforce their interests than the working class of former years. In most cases, the locating of a leading service-providing company depends on which settlement its management chooses. This can be seen in Bratislava's outstanding situation and this indicates that Košice is of minor importance, because only seven companies have moved there. Apparently, Košice's plans to open to the east have not achieved the expected results, yet, although Slovak company expansion towards Ukraine and Romania could best be organized from there.

Table 34. Comparison of industrial and service-providing companies

settlement	Industry		Services		
	number	income	number	income	Industry/services, %
Žilina	3	7,016,887	3	19,801,743	35.4
Košice	6	11,266,048	7	18,074,216	62.3
Banská Bystrica	1	1,409,858	1	1,628,651	86.6
Bratislava	30	346,365,849	47	243,712,475	142.1
Nitra	3	7,187,406	4	1,708,739	420.6
Prešov	2	3,351,869	1	523,311	640.5
Liptovský Mikuláš	1	1,035,784	1	143,429	722.2
Humenné	6	9,302,340	1	1,169,377	795.5
Trnava	4	8,609,415	1	376,244	2,288.3
Spišská Nová Ves	2	6,066,502	1	208,552	2,908.9
Σ	58	401,611,958	67	287,346,737	139.8

Source: the author's own calculations

When the incomes of the industrial and service-providing companies located in one town or city and listed by the analysis centre are compiled in one table (*Table 34*), it turns out that the 58 industrial companies have an income 39.8% higher than that of the 67 service providing units. If we regard the order by the ratio of the two sectors, we can see that in Žilina, Košice and Banská Bystrica services play a more important role, whereas in Spišská Nová Ves, Trnava and Humenné the traditional industrial activities are predominant. Since TREND analysis centre published a table that did not include all the companies of the whole sectoral system, we should be careful when stating that the increasing importance of services is a characteristic feature of the fast developing Slovak economy, whose obviously most outstanding scenes are towns.

4. 5 Education as a new factor of urban development

In recent years the most obvious sign of adjustment to the new conditions was if a town or city offered higher education opportunities. In the party-state era there were two towns, Bratislava and Košice, which had independent higher educational institutions that trained students for several professions. Besides these, there were two in Nitra (pedagogy and agricultural engineering) and one faculty (of forestry) in Zvolen, but after 1990 new universities were established in several towns. All in all, there are 20 higher educational institutions in Slovakia: apart from the two above mentioned cities, they are located in Banská Bystrica, Nitra, Prešov, Ružomberok, Trnava, Trenčín, Komárno, Zvolen and Žilina. The nine private universities have the most peculiar list of settlement names, because besides the big cities, like Bratislava, Prešov and Trenčín, there are small towns, like Skalica and Sládkovičovo, which have such institutions.

The appearance of private universities does not mean sharp competition with state institutions, because they only make up 10.3% of all the departments, 2.6% of full-time students and 6.3% of lecturers. The 22.8% proportion of part-time students indicates that private universities have discovered and are trying to meet the special needs of people who are employed.

Table 35 shows that, although the outstanding role of Bratislava is obvious, higher education in Slovakia is not really concentrated in one town. Only 25.9% of all the departments, 34.9% of all full-time students and 37.9% of lecturers can be found in Bratislava. The higher rate of lecturers indicates the outstanding importance of Bratislava in education and research. The high rate of foreign students (43.8%) is a sign of the good reputation of the universities in the city.

Table 35. State and private higher educational institutions, 2006

City or town	University by type	Number of departments	Number of full-time students	Number of part-time students	Number of foreign students	Number of lecturers
<i>State-run universities</i>						
Bratislava	Comenius University	13	19 402	5 937	1 087	2 139
	Slovak University of Technology	7	15 109	2 062	536	1 265
	University of Economics	6	9 979	3 271	67	613
	Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts	3	773	17	93	224
	Academy of Fine Arts and Applied Arts	1	540		76	117
	<i>Total:</i>	30	45,803	11,287	1,859	4,358
	%	25.9	34.9	15.5	43.8	37.9
Košice	P. J. Šafárik University	5	7,052	608	169	528
	Veterinary University	1	1,128	96	215	148
	University of Technology	9	11,301	3,847	69	842
Banská Bystrica	Matej Bel University	6	8,637	6,939	92	683
	Academy of Arts	3	494		39	124
Prešov	Prešov University	8	7,362	4,779	177	562
Komárno	Selye János University	3	1,263	1,069	52	77
Trnava	The University of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava	3	3,913	2,893	31	274
	Trnava University	5	4,108	2,563	25	501
Nitra	University of Constantinus the Philosopher	5	7,843	5,395	92	557
	Szlovák Agrártudományi Egyetem	6	6,444	3,423	87	476
Ružomberok	Catholic University in Ružomberok	4	6,918	5,777	43	393
Trenčín	Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín	5	3,888	3,142	239	277
Zvolen	University of Technology in Zvolen	4	3,086	1,147	86	291
Žilina	University of Žilina	7	8,588	3,191	172	676
	<i>Total:</i>	104	127,828	56,156	3,447	10,767
	%	89.7	97.4	77.2	81.2	93.7
<i>Private colleges</i>						
Bratislava	Bratislava School of Law	3	1,110	1,248	282	78
	St. Elizabeth College of Health and Social Work	1	0	10,103	444	240
	College of Public Administration Economics and Management	1	292	2,735	17	99
	College of International and Public Relations	1	32	0	2	15
	College of Organization Science	1	529	0	1	37
Skalica	Central European College	1	192	373	11	14
Trenčín	College of Management	1	817	458	26	93
Prešov	International Business College ISM Slovakia	1	240	215	4	20
Sládkovičovo	College in Sládkovičovo	2	267	1,487	13	124
	<i>Total:</i>	12	3,479	16,619	800	720
	%	10.3	2.6	22.8	18.8	6.3
	Total:	116	131,307	72,775	4,247	11,487

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

5. Regional organization in Slovakia

With an area of 50,000 km², Slovakia is one of the smallest countries of Europe, but due to geographical, historical and social factors, it is rather uneven. This variedness manifests itself not only in geographical diversification, but also in a social sense. According to statistics, the most obvious difference is in ethnic and religious composition, which also has some regional aspects. The social structure that had emerged in the area of present-day Slovakia as a result of a centuries-long process began to change after the 1918 establishment of the Czechoslovak state and has been changing ever since. Since the arising regional differences were mostly due to state and political control in the past, as they are in the present, this is intentional regionalization.

The previous chapters show how strongly the conquering Slovak will sought to establish a new country. Due to this, Slovakia has been changing its administration continuously and intentionally, so as to set up new regional units. The decades-long practice of urban development also shows that, regardless of the political system, Slovakia has always sought to develop a network that can guarantee the maintenance of the new country intentionally, with different means of centralization. After 1990, in the new bourgeois era, central control was replaced by the market economy. Consequently, municipality intentions and market interests have been reevaluated. Controlled (external) regionalization was accompanied by voluntary (internal) regionalization. Its special, combined forms can be seen in the development of the capital city and in the changing functions of borderland areas.

5. 1 Bratislava as a macroregional centre

In the beginning, the independent Slovakia completely subordinated the regionalization required by the European Union to domestic political conflicts. Privatization made it possible for Trnava and Košice to influence the economic activities of the other regions in such a way that they, as centres of power, could benefit from them. This was directed against the

regions that 'voted badly', i.e. voted against the governing parties. There were also some efforts made to relocate central institutions away from the capital city. The relocation of the Slovak National Bank to Banská Bystrica would have weakened Bratislava and strengthened Banská Bystrica*.

In spite of some rightful criticism, it is a fact that Bratislava has developed into a regional centre of increasing importance since Slovakia became independent in 1993, and especially after its accession to the European Union in 2004. This was made possible by the radical changes in the geopolitical situation of the region, because, by pulling down the iron curtain and moving the checked border eastwards, i.e. by setting up the Schengen system, Slovakia has become an important regional growth space of the European Union. Due to the special location of the city, regionality has a wider, cross-border importance. The administrative situation and geographical location of the city provide favourable opportunities that strengthen each other. The geographical location of the capital city is unique, since it can be found at the western edge of the country. According to Slovak analysts, the fact that Bratislava is so close to Austria and is the closest of all the capital cities of Eastern Europe to the Western European countries and the western culture makes Bratislava a gate between east and west. This location has decided advantages, especially from the point of view of financial investments.

Planners and developers first turned their attention to the Vienna-Bratislava route. They pointed out that, with the iron curtain pulled down, this region would be the laboratory of integration, because the differences between the two capital cities were so large that they would lead to the development of Bratislava, the weaker one (*Mastilak* 2004). There were no institutionalized relations between the two cities for long centuries. What is more, both were on the periphery of their countries and in the two world systems during the decades of the cold war. Now this region may turn into the centre of Central Europe. After the collapse of the Soviet eastern bloc

* It was Vladimír Mečiar's visionary idea to turn Slovakia into a country with three centres. Bratislava would have remained the administrative centre, Košice, by developing business life, the economic centre, and Banská Bystrica the financial centre of the country. Therefore, Bank Slovakia, which manages 60% of the National Wealth Fund, and Dopravná Banka (a shipping bank) were moved there in 1994, so as to set up the national centre of the capital market transactions in this town.

and that of the iron curtain and since the country rid itself of the Soviet sphere of interest, the region has started its own course of development. Bratislava having become a capital city of an independent country was something that could widen the range of its opportunities dramatically. Apart from the above-mentioned changes in its geopolitical situation, its administrative role, sharply increasing economic weight and the importance of education and research concentrated there, all contribute to Bratislava stepping onto a path leading to growth.

Concerning transportation, one of the most important aspects of our age, the city is also in an outstanding situation. It is located at the crossing point of several important routes. Both the Prague-Bratislava-Budapest and the Cracow-Žilina-Bratislava-Vienna routes contribute to its significance. However, if we set up a rank regarding the amount of traffic, then Brno, Prague and Vienna will be placed first before all the other, more remote centres. As a result of the former conflicts of cold war, there is still no motorway to Vienna, but there is a regular hydrofoil service. Besides, direct tram service between the two cities, which was first launched in 1914, is under construction.

The possibilities of the new capital of the new country drew the attention of regionalists very soon. The Hungarian György Enyedi and the Polish Grzegorz Gorzelak first toyed with the idea of a potential large Central European region involving not only Bratislava and Vienna, but also Budapest. On the basis of the economic possibilities of a settlement network in the gravitation area of the three cities, i.e. whole country parts, they thought a new European growth centre would develop. However, these ideas basically counted on the enlargement of the potential gravitation area of Vienna, and the other two cities were regarded as adopters and transmitters of the influence of Vienna (cited by *Rechnitzer* 1997).

Rechnitzer (1997) pointed out that, at the beginning of the planning process, strategic cooperation should be based on smaller, more comprehensible and manageable regional units, rather than such large units. He suggested developing relations according to provincial and county regional units (Vienna, Burgerland, Lower-Austrian provinces, Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas, Zala and Veszprém Counties, as well as Western Slovakia) as a potential solution. Due to the tardiness of the large regional model, he also outlined a small regional model whose cores were the gravitation areas of the particular towns. This was how Vienna, Bratislava, Győr and Sopron were placed in one development unit. The advantage of this idea was that, in this case, the development plans, or

perhaps also plans to set up euroregions, should be based on existing, everyday relations.

Between 2002 and 2005, the three countries only focused on three cities while elaborating their common development strategy: Vienna, Bratislava and Győr were the target areas (*JORDES+* 2005). Meanwhile, papers were written on the 'golden triangle' of Vienna, Bratislava and Győr, but an increasing number of publications called attention to the actual situation, i.e. that Bratislava was developing relations first of all with Vienna. The reason for this is the economic gravitation of Vienna, because thousands of people commute across the border to work to the Austrian capital city every day. As early as in 2001, official data proved that 4,700 Slovak citizens had jobs in Austria, but the estimated number of people working in the black economy was much higher than that (*ODPM* 2006).

Bratislava participated in the competition of European capital cities. It competed first of all with the capitals of the neighbouring countries and the capital city of Germany, the most important commercial partner of Slovakia.

Table 36. The population figures of some capital cities, 2001

Country	Population of the country	Proportion of the population of the selected countries compared with that of Slovakia	Capital	Population of the capital city	Proportion of the residents of the capital within the total population	Proportion of the population of selected capital cities compared with that of Bratislava
	people	%		people	%	%
Slovakia	5,402,547	100	Bratislava	428,672	7.93	100.0
Austria	8,032,875	148.7	Vienna	1,550,123	19.3	361.6
Czech Republic	10,230,060	189.4	Prague	1,169,106	11.43	272.7
Hungary	10,200,298	188.8	Budapest	1,777,921	17.43	414.8
Poland	38,644,211	715.3	Warsaw	1,609,780	4.17	375.5
Germany	82,259,540	1,522.6	Berlin	3,388,434	4.12	790.4

Source: Eurostat, <http://www.urbanaudit.org/CityProfiles>

The extraordinary character of Slovakia is obvious, as also shown by *Table 36*. All of its neighbouring countries are larger than it. As for the population, even Austria, which is the most similar in area has a population almost one and a half times larger than that of Slovakia. The population of Poland is more than seven times as large, and Germany, its most important commercial partner, is 15 times as populous. Therefore, also regarding the population of the capitals, differences are large. Compared with Bratislava, there are nearly three times as many people living in the capitals of all its neighbouring countries. On the other hand, the Slovak capital city has attracted fewer than 8% of the population of the country, compared with Vienna with nearly 20% and Budapest 17.43%.

The economic performance as displayed in *Table 37* shows the peculiar feature that the present-day economic advantage of the capital cities of Bratislava, Prague, and Warsaw (and also of Budapest) is still the consequence of the communist era, when these countries had one centre, so that the GDP per capita is more than two times as high in the capital cities as in the country as a whole. In countries with unbroken development, such as Austria and Germany, economic performance is more even, so economic performance in their capitals is also more proportional.

Table 37. The economic performance of some capital cities, 2001

Capital city	<i>Bratislava</i>	<i>Vienna</i>	<i>Prague</i>	<i>Budapest*</i>	<i>Berlin</i>	<i>Warsaw</i>
GDP per capita	9,865	36,844	14,860	6,600	22,159	13159
Country	<i>Slovakia</i>	<i>Austria</i>	<i>Czech Republic</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Poland</i>
GDP per capita	4,316	26,166	6,219	3,447	25,209	5,290
Percentage of the capital within the whole of the country	228.56	140.80	238.94	191.47	87.90	248.75

* 1996 figure

Source: Eurostat, <http://www.urbanaudit.org/CityProfiles>

5. 2 The administrative region as a development unit

By reorganizing administration in 1996 (regional division) and in 2002 (setting up municipalities), the state intended to produce an administrative framework that, by itself and by applying the legal means ensured by self-governance, would be able to have an effect on the social and economic development of an area. Administrative regionalization always means intended regionalization. Therefore, we have to examine briefly what regions the regional system established in this way resulted in.

Besides being a capital city, one of the most important advantages of Bratislava is that it is located close to Austria and the Czech Republic, and, to a lesser extent, to Hungary, as well as being at the meeting point of communication routes of international importance regarding public roads, motorways, air transport (M.R. Štefánik Airport) and a port on the Danube. This promotes and makes the movement of trained labour, goods, capital and information easier. Leading companies of every industrial sector can be found in the city, but its administrative function has become more important. The presence of financial service centres also makes the city a centre of utmost importance. Except for the Žilina-based Dexia Bank, the centre of every bank and also the centres of large insurance companies and financial investors can be found in Bratislava. The three most important universities of the country (Comenius University, the University of Economics and the Slovak University of Technology) train the most acknowledged graduates in this city, and this is where the best-known researchers work.

The capital was quickly able to find a solution for the economic crisis of the 1990s. The dominance of the machine industry and that of arms manufacturing and, consequently, their bankruptcy led to a difficult situation, but, with Volkswagen moving there in 1991, the city made its first model decision. A few years after its location, the value produced by this auto manufacturing company of international importance amounted to 10% of Slovak GDP and 25% of exports. The presence of Volkswagen and evidence of its success attracted further factories and suppliers to the country.

Electric wires were produced in Bratislava as early as in 1895 for the telephone service, the then newest invention. What is more, the first cables to be laid in the bed of the Danube were also produced there. The traditional production of welding apparatuses, generators and different kinds of insulating material go back to 1902. In 1873 the largest explosive-producing chemical factory, which was named after Alfred Nobel, was built there. At present, several small-sized companies work in its area. In 1962 the oil pipeline called 'Friendship', which came from the Soviet Union, was laid in the country. The refinery of Slovnaft was built at its end point in Bratislava; unfortunately, it was built over a natural underground clear water reservoir, the most important one in Central Europe, which was brought about and is still supplied by the Danube.

Feverish construction in Bratislava led to the prosperity of the construction industry, which had almost gone bankrupt previously. As a

result, four out of the ten largest building companies can be found there. Glass factories, timber and furniture factories and the most important printing houses are located in the city. In 2005 the city council made the decision to start relocating industrial companies to gain areas for residential areas and offices.

The **Trnava region** can benefit from its location in the neighbourhood of Bratislava and the Czech Republic for its development. The settlement of the auto manufacturer PSA Peugeot Citroen was also due to this advantage. Apart from the Little Carpathians, which cross the region, most of its area is flat (Záhorie Plain, Matúšova zem). Trnava, Skalica, Piešťany and Hlohovec are regarded as fairly developed districts. They are also more densely populated than the Galanta, Senica and Dunajská Streda districts, which bear the marks of lowlands. It is a decided advantage of the region that, because of the location of Bratislava, every communication road crosses it and the airport is not far, either. The natural resources involve medicinal waters (Piešťany) and a large amount of clear water. The most important underground water resources of Central Europe can be found in Žitný ostrov [Csallóköz], under the gravel of the Danube. Of the southern part of the region, agricultural activities and food industry based on its products are typical, whereas in the northern districts the consumption industry is dominant, mainly around Trnava. The power generating giants built in this area play a decisive role in the energy supply of the whole country. The nuclear power station at Jaslovské Bohunice and the hydroelectric power plant at Gabčíkovo are well-known. Besides the appearance of auto manufacturing, which is crucial for the Slovak economy, the setting up of a factory of the South Korean firm Samsung in Galanta, where about 2,000 people are employed, was also important development. Concerning returns, Samsung is followed by the Trnava-seated television-producing factory of Sony, which, after producing traditional televisions in the beginning, launched the production of new flat-screen television sets. In Piešťany, in the old Tesla factory, semi-conductors are produced.

Based on the extensive wooded areas in the region, the timber industry is also highly developed. Office furniture is produced primarily for the Austrian, Czech and German markets in the Trnava-seated factory of Swedwood, which is in Swedish ownership and belongs to the Ikea Group. In Hlohovec there is a pharmaceutical factory and a steel works, where steel filaments are produced for the tyre factory in nearby Sládkovičovo. The privatization of the gas distribution network in Gbely was

an example for what the Mečiar way of developing Slovakia's own layer of owners actually was. The company was sold to Vladimír Poór, the Slovak owner in Trnava, for one-sixth of its actual value. The German INA-Schaeffler-group is one of the largest investors in the machine industry of the region. In Skalica, they employ almost 3,000 people in their bearing production factory. Grafobal, a company of the printing industry, also operates in Skalica. Its activity is so important that, besides domestic companies, it has already set up printing works in the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Bulgaria. The third important company of Skalica is Protherm Production, the boiler works of the German Vaillant Group. The sugar mill in Dunajská Streda, which was fairly famous in the food industry, operated till 2007 in French ownership. Today the food industry is only represented by Tauris Danubia, a meat-processing plant.

The **Trenčín region** can be found in a comparatively rich and highly-developed section of Slovakia, in a varied, rather hilly area, not far from the Czech border. After Bratislava, this is where the most people are employed in the industry, especially in the Ilava and Trenčín regions. The traffic conditions of the region are extremely favourable for investors.

The heavy-armament producing plants of the former Czechoslovakia used to be based in this region, because it was not bordered by any of the member countries of NATO, unlike the Czech areas, where, consequently, only light weapons were produced. As a matter of course, after 1989, this area was in crisis and the unemployment rate soared. Mečiar was successful in becoming a popular politician for such a long time because he supported the revival of the defence industry. He created this region in 1996 because of the crowds voting for him, and he has also moved there and lives in Trenčianske Teplice, the famous spa.

The revival of the industry in the region was due to the auto manufacturing industry. Since, from the point of view of transportation, this region is accessible by the roads connecting the auto manufacturing companies, it is worthwhile launching factories there to supply the plants in Bratislava, Trnava and Žilina. The most important of such plants is Continental Matador, the tyre factory in Púchov, which has been in German ownership since 1998. In commemoration of the ancestor of the factory, its 100th anniversary was celebrated in 2005. The company has subsidiaries in the Czech Republic, Russia, Kazakhstan and Ethiopia. A joint venture with a Korean company produces tyres for Kia auto manufacturing company, a plant in Vrábce for Volkswagen in Bratislava and Suzuki in Esztergom. In Dolné Vestenice hockey pucks are produced

first of all for the American market. The plant employs 1,500 people. The German company Hella Slovakia produces lights for cars in Kočovce and Bánovce nad Bebravou. In Nová Dubnica, the German Leoni Autokabel Slovakia operates a plant for assembling electric units. In Dubnica nad Váhom and Považská Bystrica, the German Sauer-Danfoss produces mechanical and hydraulic units, and in Prievidza, the Japanese Yazaki Slovakia manufactures electrical spare parts.

Besides the most successful sector of auto manufacturing, there are, of course, some other plants in the region, too. In Nováky a power station operates using brown coal. It has been in Italian ownership since 2006. The housing estates in Prievidza were built for its employees and the workers of the nearby brown coal mine in the communist era. The Swiss firm Nestlé has established a plant in the town. In Bánovce nad Bebravou the Austrian Gabor has set up a boot and shoe factory. In Trenčín there was no traditional textile industry – there was only one textile factory at the end of the 19th century – but large factories were built there in the communist era. At present, three of the largest textile and clothes factories are in this region. In Nová Dubnica Milex, a food industrial plant is operated by Groupe Soparind Bongrain, a French dairy firm.

The leading administrative role of **Nitra**, a county town, goes back to historical Hungary, but it was also an episcopal see before the Hungarian conquest. It lost its county town rank first at the time of the new Czechoslovak state, then again in the communist era. However, as the centre of the Nitra region, it has been an administrative centre since 1996. The town has special significance in Slovak historical mythology, because as the eastern capital of the Moravian Empire Nitra is looked upon as the ‘mother of all Slovak towns’.

The Nitra region can be considered an agricultural region; most of its area is suitable for farming. The alluvial deposit of the rivers crossing it (the Danube, Váh, Nitra and Hron) made this area fertile. The identity of the people living there is still determined first of all by agriculture. Industries can only be found sporadically, (the chemical industry in Šaľa, ship building in Komárno, the machine industry in Tlmače and paper manufacturing in Štúrovo); food industrial plants, on the other hand, occur more evenly. The traffic conditions of the regional centre are excellent: it takes only three-quarters of an hour to get to Bratislava on the motorway. Eastwards, however, there is no such a well-built road network. Due to frequent accidents, the very busy road from Nitra to Zlaté Moravce is often called ‘the road of death’. The largest port of the coun-

try can be found between Vienna and Budapest, in Komárno. In Nitra there is a university of agriculture and a university of arts. Selye János University, the only university with Hungarian as the language of education, is also based in Komárno.

In the years of the cold war following World War II, Western European countries refused to sell certain high-technology products to the countries of the Warsaw Pact. Consequently, the missing products, such as chemicals, were produced in Slovakia in much larger quantities than would have been necessary. After the collapse of the Soviet Empire, not only the manufacture of arms, but also the chemical industry came to a crisis, and the foreign investors that could make it prosperous again only arrived in Slovakia in the late 1990s. In 1958 Duslo chemical works, which produced rubber and artificial fertilizers, was built in Šaľa. At present it produces first of all insecticides. Duslo was first bought from its employees by the Czech Agrofert, then in 2004 by Andrej Babiš, the richest person in Slovakia.

In Zlaté Moravce there was first a large company that produced household gadgets, then, after it had gone bankrupt, a German firm (Volkswagen Elektrické Systémy) took it over, and since then cables have been produced for cars. To reduce unemployment, a business park has been established, where investors can employ people under favourable conditions. In the Tlmače machine factory, industrial boilers are produced; this is the largest machine industrial plant of the region. The three largest firms of the construction industry (Invest In – Šaľa, Cesty Nitra – Nitra, ViOn – Zlaté Moravce) can also be found in this region. Smurfit Kappa, a wrapping-paper production company, operates in Štúrovo, and Swiss Rieker, the largest boot and shoe factory of the country, can be found in Komárno. The auto factories attracted the electric bulb factory of the German company Osram to Nové Zámky. The former machine factory in Vrábľe, which was built in 1966, made car spare parts, wheel-disks and brakes for Škoda. At present it is a subsidiary of Matador in Púchov and produces press-forged and welded spare parts. Heineken bought the former Golden Pheasant brewery in Hurbanovo in 1995 and has been running it ever since.

The **Žilina** region is the most mountainous administrative region of the country. It has got several national parks and other nature reserves. Due to the high mountains there are a lot of wooded areas and few agricultural, arable fields. The districts Ružomberok, Dolný Kubín, Martin and Žilina belong to the most highly developed parts of the region.

Turčianske Teplice, Tvrdošín, Námestovo and Bytča are much more rural. The former Orava County, which used to be one of the poorest counties in Hungarian history, was divided and attached to three different present-day districts (Dolný Kubín, Tvrdošín and Námestovo), from where most people emigrated overseas, mainly to Canada and the United States. The main towns of the region can be accessed by important international roads. A motorway to Bratislava, which is intended to run across this region so as to solve the backward situation of this traditionally poor mountainous area, is also being built gradually. The motorway running in the Váh Valley from Bratislava will turn to Martin, Ružomberok and Liptovský Mikuláš at Žilina. Construction work is being carried out by sections.

The Žilina region in the Váh Valley became an industrial area between the two World Wars with arms-manufacturing machine industry as its main activity. The arms factories were built in the vicinities of Martin and Liptovský Mikuláš sheltered by the mountains. Lying close to the Czech Republic is a benefit for these towns. After 1989 the production of tanks, armoured vehicles and artillery tools went bankrupt, but there were a high number of well-trained workers skilled in the machine industry. This attracted investors, and that was why the Korean Kia auto manufacturer chose Teplička nad Váhom near Žilina for its plant. Including the suppliers that Kia attracted, there are about 10,000 people employed there. Apart from the chemical industrial plants, textile and boot and shoe factories have also been built in Liptovský Mikuláš and Martin. There is an electrotechnical plant in Liptovský Hrádok. In Istebné iron alloys are produced. The most important industrial establishment of the region is Stredoslovenská energetika – SSE, a power supplier, which employs about 2,000 people, and 49% of which is in French ownership. Due to the high proportion of wooded areas, a high capacity paper mill was built in Ružomberok in 2001. The leading electrotechnical plant, the Dutch firm LG Philips Displays, can be found in Námestovo. The French company Alcatel is also present. It established a joint venture with the former Czechoslovak Tesla in Liptovský Hrádok in 1991, but by now it has completely taken over the company. The leading boot and shoe industrial factory in the region is the Danish Ecco Slovakia, where shoe uppers imported from Indonesia are fixed on soles. Their products are almost completely exported. Owing to the cheap Asian textile industrial products, the textile factory in Liptovský Mikuláš went bankrupt. However, as a result of the changes in the ownership structure, some of

the workers could be taken over by a factory controlled by Penta, a financial investment group. The prosperity of the construction industry is first of all due to the investments in the auto industry and road construction. Doprastav and Váhostav, the two largest plants, were founded in the communist era.

Natural conditions make primarily grazing animal keeping and plant growing possible, but the natural environment is also excellent for tourism. A number of hot water springs and springs containing useful minerals and the health resorts based on them (Turčianske Teplice, Rajecké Teplice) add to the possibilities. There is also a bottling plant there.

Due to its mining and processing industrial traditions, **Banská Bystrica** is still regarded as a metal industrial centre. The transportation of the town has not been developed yet. The motorway only runs as far as Nitra, and the nearby airport in Sliač (15 km) is only suitable for cargo transportation, with only one passenger flight a day to Prague. The intended development of the town was already started in the communist era, and was continued also after the country had become independent. At present, the most profitable sectors are tourism and the timber and the machine industries. The two large Slovakian companies with an outstanding number of employees, the Slovak Post (employing the third-most people nationwide) and the national forestry service (employing the thirteenth-largest number of people) are also based there. Slovak and foreign investors have come to the town and its vicinity, which was also encouraged by the establishment of a business park. Its famous companies include Doka Drevo, an Austrian firm, Smrečina Hofatex, a Slovak timber industrial company, Küster and Witzenmann Slovakia, which is a German machine industrial companies, the domestic I.K.M. Reality-Staving BB building company and SHP Harmanec, a paper mill, etc.

The Banská Bystrica region is famous for its natural beauty. In its area there are three national parks: the Low Tatras, the Muráň Plateau and a part of the national park called Slovak Paradise, which is actually the breakthrough of the river Hornád through the Gemer- Spiš Erzgebirge. The rivers Hron [Garam], Rimava [Rima] and Ipel' [Ipoly] rise in the Banská Bystrica region and this is where the river Slaná [Sajó] crosses the Hungarian border.

The gold, silver, copper, mercury, lead and some other rare metals were mined, with different technologies, different intensity and varying success, until the 19th century. Kremnica was famous for its gold, Banská Štiavnica for its silver and Banská Bystrica for its copper. In the

19th century the centre for iron production became the Gemer area, this was the era of the Salgótarján-Rimamurány Iron Works. As a later consequence, arms factories were built in the area after World War II, such as one not far from Detva, which went bankrupt after 1989. At present brown coal is mined in the vicinity of Veľký Krtíš, magnesium at Jelšava and Lubeník and steatite at Hnúšťa.

Industry is highly developed first of all in the Banská Bystrica and Žiar nad Hronom districts. There are both industrial and agricultural factories in the Banská Štiavnica, Detva, Lučenec, Revúca and Žarnovica districts, whereas the Veľký Krtíš, Poltár, Krupina and Rimavská Sobota districts are hardly industrialized; they are underdeveloped and agricultural areas. The economic development of the region is made more difficult by bad traffic infrastructure. There are three large industrial plants in the region. There are two aluminum works in Žiar nad Hronom in Norwegian ownership; there is an iron works in Podbrezová, which was founded in the 19th century by the Hungarian state to produce railway products. In 2002 it was taken over by the Czech ŽDAS company, and since then metal pipes have been produced there for auto manufacturing. In Harmanec, not far from Banská Bystrica, there is a paper mill, in Zvolen, Banská Bystrica and Žarnovica there are timber industrial plants and in Lučenec and Krupina there are furniture factories. In Zvolen railway carriages are repaired in the vehicle factory. Glass-making has a centuries-old tradition, and in Nová Baňa and Poltár there are glass works.

Prešov is the centre of the poorest region of the country. In the Middle Ages this small town was famous for its salt mines and the trade route towards Poland. The town gained importance when Košice belonged to Hungary again from 1938 to 1945, and at that time several important institutions were moved to Prešov. It became the third largest city of the country in the period of communist industrialization. It was in these years that the machine, electrical and textile industrial factories were established. This tradition is continued in the bearing factory ZVL Auto, which was restored by its Italian investor. The only place in Slovakia where waterproof textiles are produced is the textile factory bought out by a German investor (Gemor Fashion Prešov). In Solivar, which belongs to Prešov today, a salt mine (Solivary) has been working since the Middle Ages. Due to the extended wooded areas, important timber processing plants were settled in the city (Kronospan Austria). Around Prešov there are twice as many people working in agriculture as the national average. This area has already been discovered for the pur-

poses of tourism. The four national parks (the High Tatras, the Low Tatras, the Slovak Paradise, and Piennine National Park) and the large reservoirs (Lake Zemplínska šírava in the Zemplín Hills, and the reservoirs at Veľká Domaša and Starina nad Čirochou) can be enjoyable holiday destinations. The transportation conditions of the city are rather poor, but the motorway starting from the capital city is already being built. On the other hand, it is an advantage that on the motorway to Košice the airport is within easy reach, and from there it only takes half an hour to get to Vienna or Prague by air.

Due to the nearby location of the Soviet Union, a chemical works was built in Humenné, a textile factory in Prešov and a boot and shoe factory in Bardejov at the time of communist industrialization. Shoemaking has a long tradition in this area. Actually, professional mass production was launched in World War I to satisfy military needs. During the communist era small factories were closed down and a large factory was built, whose capacity was far beyond Slovak demand. Therefore, after 1989 the production declined. After foreign capital had appeared in the region, this industry started to develop. The development of the textile industry was also due to the fact that the Soviet Union was rather close to this area. Consequently, the five largest textile industrial factories can be found in this region (Twista, Tylex Slovakia, VSK, Svik, Tatrasvit). The leading chemical works is Chemosvit, a Svit-based company, which produces plastic wrap. At Humenné a chemical industrial park has been established where seven foreign investors employ about 3,000 people. The former Chemlon factory was bought by a French firm from the state, and was divided into two parts. Rhodia Industrial Yarns works for the auto manufacturing industry, Nylstar for the textile industry. Both companies produce synthetic fibres to meet the market requirements. The American Whirlpool, the large manufacturer of household appliances, is based in Poprad and so is Tatramat Poprad, which was bought by the German Stiebel Eltron. Tatravagónka Poprad has been repairing goods carriages since 1922. In the communist era, the towns along the Soviet border such as Medzilaborce, Michalovce and Sobrance built machine industrial factories and that was their golden age. In Stropkov Tesla built an electrotechnical plant.

Košice is the second-largest regional centre of the country, but lags behind Bratislava in every respect. It is a town with central functions, but only at a regional level as the centre of Eastern Slovakia. It has hardly any institutions of national importance. It is a traffic junction, or rather a

potential traffic junction, because, although it has been involved in the plans of motorway construction, it is the destination rather than a starting point. The exception is a short, 20-km-long section, which has already been built between Košice and Prešov. Regarding its infrastructure and the number of flights, its airport lags behind that of Bratislava. It has no navigable river. Not only the motorway construction plan to connect the town with the western part of the country, but also the plans of the motorway to Uzshorod are still on the drawing board. It is only the broad-gauge railway line that connects the town with Ukraine. The raw material needs of the iron works of national importance are met in this way. The city has three universities (the University of Technology, P.J. Šafárik University and the Veterinary University) to train young professionals, which will be all the more necessary because an information technological park is being built in the outskirts of Košice. But the young professionals trained at these universities are also employed in the large auto manufacturing plants. Around 40% of the professionals working there were trained at one of the universities of Košice. There is no doubt, however, that Košice was converted from a small rural town into an industrial centre of national significance by its iron works, which were built in the 1960s (Eastern Slovak Iron Works). After that people started to flow into the city, and as a consequence, large housing estates and service-providing units had to be built. This was all the more necessary because in the golden age of the factory there were 24,000 people working there. The crisis of the iron works, a typically communist industrial establishment, was overcome by the Pittsburg-based US Steel, which bought it in 2000 for 500 million dollars and granted a promissory note of 700 million dollars for modernization. This was how the new name of the factory became US Steel Košice. As a result of modernization, it contributes to the boom of Slovak auto manufacturing by plate rolling. At present, there are about 16,000 people working there, making it the largest industrial plant of the country.

Of all the districts of the region, the Gelnica and Sobrance districts can be regarded as the most rural. Of the mixed (industrial and agricultural) districts, the Spišská Nová Ves district is the least developed, whereas the Michalovce, Trebišov and Rožňava districts are considered comparatively well-developed. In this environment Košice stands out sharply. Around Michalovce there are brown and black coal mines and natural gas sites. In the environs of Rožňava, Gelnica, Krompachy and Rudňany

people live on mining and processing of ores, although to a much smaller extent than before.

By setting up the regions, the state interfered significantly in the regionalization process, because the designation of the regional centres also involved development possibilities. The plans of the particular regions also contribute to further local development. It is also obvious that, unlike the administrative units, i.e. the regions, economic regions emerge within a wider range and their development is also intentional. The best example for that is partly the development of settlements, first of all that of towns in the Váh Valley, partly the increasingly frequent appearance of auto manufacturing plants and their suppliers in the Bratislava-Trnava-Žilina geographical zone.

Table 38. Some of the main indicators of the regions

Region	Area, km ²	Density of population		Population		%	Number of the employed, 1000 people		%	GDP per capita, euro		%
		1996	2006	2001	2006		2001	2006		1995	2005	
Bratislava	2,050	301	296	599,053	604,927	100.98	308.3	317.4	102.95	5,899	17,445	295.73
Trnava	4,150	132	134	550,982	554,644	100.66	232.4	264.5	113.81	3,087	7,691	249.14
Trenčín	4,500	136	133	605,503	600,202	99.12	254.0	280.0	110.24	2,611	6,302	241.36
Nitra	6,340	113	111	713,237	707,816	99.24	261.7	297.7	113.76	2,394	6,342	264.91
Žilina	6,800	101	102	692,343	694,922	100.37	267.6	294.1	109.90	2,263	5,867	259.26
Banská Bystrica	9,460	70	69	662,128	656,431	99.14	251.2	257.5	102.51	2,311	5,126	221.81
Prešov	8,980	86	89	790,321	799,597	101.17	279.7	309.2	110.55	1,796	4,193	233.46
Košice	6,750	112	115	766,213	772,645	100.84	268.8	281.0	104.54	2,419	6,016	248.70
Slovakia	49,030	110	110	5,379,780	5,391,184	100.21	2,123.7	2,301.4	108.37	2,784	7,143	256.57

Source: Štatistický úrad SR, Bratislava

Administrative regions are artificial configurations (*Table 38*). Their emergence is the result of some home political intention, but their establishment and the formation of their municipality forms were also urged by the European Union. There are marked differences between the established regions, such as their size. Bratislava is the smallest region; compared with it, the Trnava region is twice as large, and the Banská Bystrica region is 4.6 times larger. Similarly, there is a huge difference as far as the density of the population is concerned, too. Although the population density of the Bratislava region has declined, still, it is 2.7 times more densely populated than the average of the other regions. It is a fact that the population in the particular regions is proportional; the regions are inhabited by a roughly similar number of people. Thus, 10.29% of the population of the country lives in the Trnava region and 14.83% in the Prešov region. The number of the employed people is particularly high in Bratislava; in the Prešov region, on the other hand, the high number of employed people is due to the high population. As for

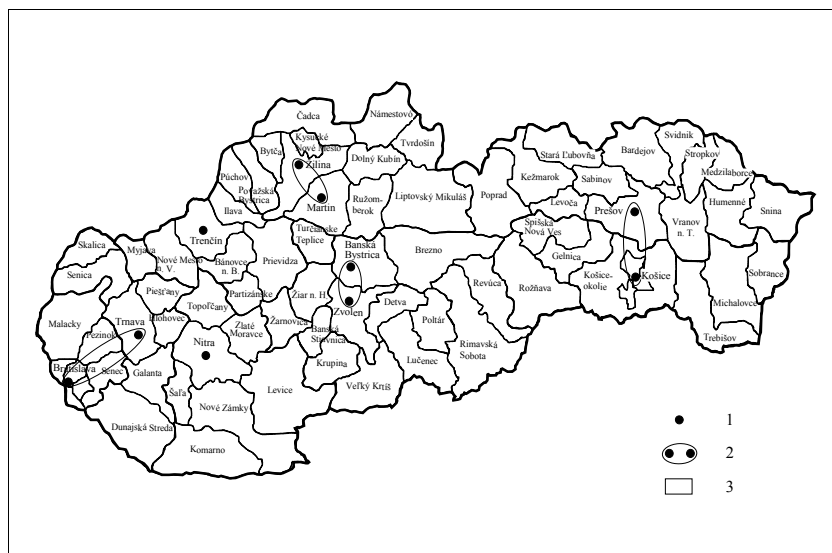
GDP figures, these differences become quite distinct. According to GDP per capita, the Bratislava region produces twice as much as the national average (17,445 Euros per person), while the Prešov region produces the lowest value (4,193 Euros per person).

However, all this can also be interpreted in a different way: the whole of the Košice region owes its position near the Slovak average to the economic performance of the city Košice, while in the parts of the region outside the city economic performance is much lower. It is also true of the other regions that it is first of all the economic performance of the regional centre and some other towns of the region that is responsible for the favourable or unfavourable level of the region as a whole. Therefore we may say that the regions marked out by the state will do not provide a real picture of the actual regional division of the country, because some cities or districts with outstanding performances raise the average of the region.

5. 3 Regional development role of towns

Like in other countries, in Slovakia regional differences result in a development pattern independent of the regional division. In some chapters above we have already mentioned the peak points of this pattern, i.e. cities and towns that are highly developed both in an economic and a social sense. *The Regional Development Conception of Slovakia*, which was published by the government in 2001, also emphasizes the importance of cities and towns when it suggests that settlement groups should be developed according to gravitation areas. These might be neighbouring cities and towns, such as Bratislava and Trnava (with Nitra also expected to join them), or Košice and Prešov. Another option is that a larger and a smaller town, such as Banská Bystrica and Zvolen, or Žilina and Martin should join. Trenčín is another category, because with the gravitation of the neighbouring small towns a gravitation area of a city may arise.

Figure 21. Highly developed urban gravitation areas and backward districts in Slovakia



1 – development centre, 2 – towns and cities growing together, 3 – underdeveloped district
 Edited by István Mezei, drawn by Máté Mády.

The urban characteristics described in the present paper determine certain cities and towns as the main centres of development in Slovakia (Figure 21). There are four pairs of towns whose simultaneous development already shows signs of the emergence of economic regions of utmost importance. The most important pair of cities is, of course, Bratislava, the capital city (and its environs) and the nearby Trnava. Another pair is Košice and Prešov, the only centres of development in the east. As a result of conscious planning, the Banská Bystrica-Zvolen town pair emerges in the middle of the country and Žilina-Martin in the Váh Valley. Besides these, only Trenčín and Nitra represent a breakthrough, an economic and gravitation centre. Slovak professional literature regards strengthening administrative, educational and economic service providing functions (trade, finance) as the basis for the increased importance of towns and cities (*Slavík– Kožuch– Bačík* 2005).

The areas outside the towns and cities listed above are less developed or backward. They are primarily districts that can partly be regard-

ed as internal peripheries, such as the Detva, Poltár, Gelnica, Sabinov and Vranov nad Topľou districts. The majority of them can be found along the border and are borderland peripheries, such as the Čadca and Námestovo districts along the Czech and Polish borders, the Kežmarok, Stará Ľubovňa, Bardejov, Stropkov, Medzilaborce and Snina districts along the Polish border, Sobrance (and partly the above mentioned Snina) district along the Ukrainian border and the Veľký Krtíš, Rimavská Sobota, Revúca, Rožňava, Košice-area and Trebišov districts along the Hungarian border. All in all, these areas divide the country into two parts, a more developed western part and a less developed one in the east, along a Veľký Krtíš- Kežmarok axis.

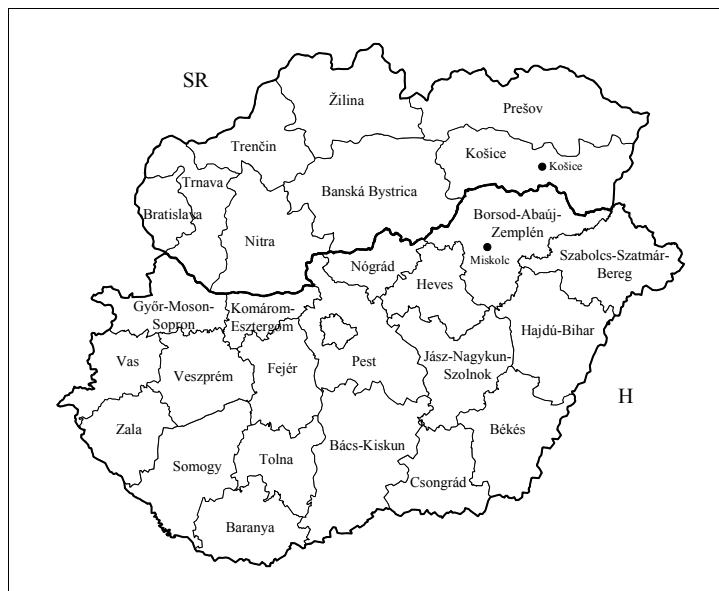
Thus, districts of very different levels of development can be found along the Hungarian and Slovak border, from Bratislava at a European level, through the districts along the Danube, whose level of development is still satisfactory, to the backward eastern districts, where the city Košice is the only one to stand out with its high level of development (*Korec 2007*).

6. Towns along the Hungarian and Slovak border

Slovakia, which was established in 1993, is surrounded by a 1,672-km-long border. It is bordered by five countries: Poland (with a shared border of 541.1 km), the Czech Republic (251.8 km), Austria (106.7 km), Hungary (664.7 km) and Ukraine (98.5 km). The area called borderland is, however, different in the different countries. The borderland areas may include towns, too. The situation of the divided towns is obvious, they are regarded as borderland towns, such as Komárno along the Hungarian border (the town now belonging to Slovakia has got several names: Őregkomárom [Oldkomárom], Révkomárom [Ferrykomárom], North Komárom, and opposite it, on the right bank of the Danube is the Hungarian South Komárom), Balassagyarmat (and Tótygyarmat [Slovenské Ďarmoty]) and Sátoraljaújhely (Slovenské Nové Mesto). It is a difficult task to determine the exact size of the borderland area, because in the course of the decades between 1918 and 1989 inter-settlement relations changed radically. After 1989, and especially 2004, with the accession of the two countries to the European Union, and after December 2007, when the borders were opened, new cross-border relations began to develop.

On the basis of the administrative units, no borderland area can be marked out, because it would give a stiff framework that could not make cooperation possible. Both the Slovak and the Hungarian regions and counties were organized in different historical conditions and, consequently, on very different principles. Neither of the two countries grasped the opportunity provided by their almost simultaneous accession to the NUTS system of the European Union, they did not take the other country into consideration when marking out their regional division and they did not attempt to try out solutions that would have been advantageous for both. Consequently, they did not coordinate the Slovak system of regions, the Hungarian system of counties and the regional NUTS system, either. The differences between the two administrative systems do not make it possible to provide an administrative framework for the borderland area (*Figure 22*).

Figure 22. Counties and regions along the Hungarian and Slovak border



Edited by István Mezei, drawn by Máté Mády.

The differences between the regions and counties are clearly shown both by the map and the figures. *Table 39* includes the census figures of five Slovak regions and six Hungarian counties bordering each other. The figures of the Bratislava region and Pest County also include the figures of the capital cities.

The population density of the two countries is the same, but if compared on the basis of the map, we can see differences between the regions and counties. On the one hand, due to the two capital cities, the population density of their region/county is extremely high compared to the national average. On the other hand, Budapest has a much stronger character of a large city. The population density of the agricultural Nitra region is smaller than that of the more industrial Komárom-Esztergom County. Another example for the differences is that, due to Košice being a big city, the population density of its region is also larger than that of its neighbouring Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County.

The Slovak regions are of a much larger size, especially if we compare them with Komárom-Esztergom or Nógrád Counties. This creates a problem if we try to pair regions and counties bordering each other, because the cooperation between a small-size county with a small population density and a larger region may result in a clash of interests. In case of the large-sized Banská Bystrica region and the small-sized Nógrád County, the distance of their centres from the border also plays an important role. Salgótarján, by the border, is interested in cooperation, but Banská Bystrica, which can be found much farther away from the border, has different interests. The same is true of the Nitra region and Komárom-Esztergom County, as well as the Trnava region and Győr-Moson-Sopron County, with special regard to the different interests of their centres.

The distribution of the towns is also uneven, because, in Pest County there are much more towns than in other Hungarian counties. Slovak towns, on the other hand, are more evenly distributed in the different Slovak regions. Due to their big size, Slovak regions are more populous, but have a higher number of small settlements. Therefore, the average population of settlements is lower. Here, in turn, there is a similarity, and right between Nógrád County and the Banská Bystrica region, which were the examples for large differences above. Both administrative units have typically many small settlements, which has different effects on cross-border relations. On the one hand, there are no nearby big cities with gravitation areas on either side of the border that could determine the nature of cooperation, and, on the other hand, the many small settlements are trying to develop relations because of their own difficulties, but, since their problems are very similar, they cannot find a growth path, even if they join forces.

Similarly, the district and small regional division is unusable, too, because the zone involved is too narrow. Actually, there are fairly important forms of cooperation beyond the boundaries of districts and small regions. Evidently, as is demonstrated by the social indicators involved in *Table 40*, there are similarities on the two sides of the border at district and small regional levels.

Table 39. The main figures of Slovak regions and Hungarian countries along the border, 2001

Region/country	Population density, people/km ²	Area, thousand km ²	Number of towns	Number of villages	Population	Average population of settlements
Bratislava	292	2,050	7	66	599,053	8,206
Trnava	133	4,150	16	235	550,982	2,195
Nitra	112	6,340	15	339	713,237	2,015
Banská Bystrica	70	9,460	24	492	662,128	1,283
Košice	114	6,750	17	423	766,213	1,741
Slovakia	110	49,030	138	2,753	3,291,613	1,861
Pest	409	6,918	28	157	2,831,107	15,303
Komárom-Esztergom	140	2,265	8	67	316,998	4,227
Győr-Moson-Sopron	106	4,208	7	168	434,209	2,481
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	104	7,248	17	340	753,497	2,111
Heves	90	3,637	7	111	327,733	2,777
Nógrád	87	2,546	6	122	221,605	1,731
Hungary	110	93,029	237	2,898	10,200,298	3,254

Source: Census, 2001. KSH, Štatistický úrad SR.

The agricultural character of the southern Slovak districts manifests itself in the fact that the proportion of those employed in agriculture is over the national average, except for the Senec and Nitra districts. As for the number of people employed in the industry and construction industry, it is just the opposite: they are under the national average, except the Šaľa, Revúca and Michalovce districts. The differences in the level of development in the districts to the west and to the east of the river Ipel' are also clearly shown by the higher number of people working in agriculture. This is the consequence of the backward situation and fewer jobs available, because better natural conditions and the shorter distance from Bratislava result in better agricultural performance to the west of the river Ipel', where the percentage of those employed is also a little higher.

Table 40. The main figures of borderland districts and small regions

District/Small region	Population	% Agriculture	% Industry	% Services	% Percentage of the employed	% Secondary education	% Higher education	% Number of people under 16	Hungarian %	% Gypsy	% Slovak
Senec	51,825	3.99	18.58	77.43	53.15	25.19	7.85	18.34	20.36	0.08	76.79
Dunajská Streda	112,384	8.48	23.92	67.60	52.10	21.16	4.91	18.68	83.34	0.95	14.01
Galanta	94,533	5.92	26.69	67.38	51.21	22.09	4.52	18.95	38.63	0.74	59.46
Komárno	108,556	10.85	26.17	62.98	50.94	22.07	5.15	17.34	69.07	1.12	27.71
Sáfa	54,000	6.31	33.12	60.57	52.18	23.00	5.31	18.95	35.71	1.00	61.92
Nitra	163,540	4.82	26.89	68.29	50.91	25.41	9.89	18.91	6.70	0.35	91.15
Nové Zámky	149,594	7.94	25.02	67.04	50.57	24.15	5.43	17.61	38.28	0.64	59.53
Levice	120,021	9.33	26.54	64.13	49.39	23.90	5.85	18.47	27.93	1.03	69.15
Veľký Krtíš	46,741	15.35	23.43	61.23	46.63	21.49	4.09	19.90	27.43	1.82	68.03
Lučenec	72,837	6.27	26.50	67.24	48.99	27.34	8.89	19.18	27.56	2.82	67.64
Ružica	40,918	7.54	32.47	59.99	50.31	20.86	4.61	21.36	21.98	6.84	69.44
Rimavská Sobota	83,124	11.05	21.84	67.12	48.45	21.89	4.45	20.96	41.29	4.65	52.32
Rožňava	61,887	8.27	24.57	67.16	54.23	24.09	4.81	20.57	30.63	4.70	62.96
Košice -okolie	106,999	7.45	24.06	68.49	51.12	21.59	3.28	23.21	13.22	5.04	79.30
Trebišov	103,779	9.16	16.61	74.23	51.71	23.53	4.58	21.96	29.32	4.45	64.75
Michalovce	109,121	7.71	27.87	64.42	50.99	25.77	6.34	21.89	11.75	4.03	81.70
16 districts	1,479,859	7.96	25.10	66.94	50.82	23.48	5.79	19.62	33.06	2.24	62.81
Mosonmagyaróvári	72,525	8.07	44.80	47.14	42.51	17.43	6.13	19.52	95.90	0.16	0.06
Győr	175,076	2.85	38.15	59.00	43.52	22.89	11.62	18.51	95.78	0.44	0.05
Komárom	41,346	10.45	42.32	47.23	42.54	18.77	6.42	19.46	97.38	0.36	0.13
Tatai	39,784	5.86	34.64	59.50	40.63	19.95	9.24	18.90	94.30	0.42	1.40
Esztergomi	55,594	1.82	48.30	49.88	38.81	20.51	8.59	19.73	93.98	1.73	1.25
Szobi	13,632	6.50	28.40	65.09	32.49	17.21	5.16	18.79	93.01	1.68	0.67
Balassagyarmati	43,424	4.07	38.87	57.06	35.03	18.42	6.19	19.38	96.84	3.07	1.38
Szécsényi	20,477	3.62	48.26	48.12	29.67	13.86	3.55	20.81	94.71	6.35	0.13
Sálgótarjáni	68,833	1.45	39.00	59.54	33.01	19.92	7.96	18.83	94.37	4.11	0.23
Ózdi	75,720	1.88	44.08	54.04	24.36	14.98	4.26	23.02	95.55	8.93	0.13
Kazincbarcikai	65,231	1.00	46.62	52.38	28.01	17.59	5.49	21.81	96.54	2.79	0.16
Edelényi	36,584	5.59	31.77	62.64	21.97	11.50	3.57	24.52	97.63	17.91	0.09
Encsi	35,163	10.32	23.74	65.94	20.83	10.85	3.67	26.47	98.27	15.89	0.18
Sátorajújhelyi	43,953	4.14	43.11	52.75	26.93	14.06	4.95	23.45	97.01	8.38	1.30
14 small regions	787,342	4.19	40.53	55.27	34.89	18.26	7.25	20.52	95.84	4.10	0.41

Source: Census, 2001. KSH, Štatistický úrad SR.

In the small regions along the Danube on the Hungarian side, the percentage of those employed is much higher than to the east of the river Ipeľ, and so is that of the people employed in agriculture or industry. Of the eastern small regions, especially the small region of Encs stands out with its low industrial indicators. Apart from this, the proportions are just the opposite to those in the southern Slovak districts along the border, because on the Hungarian side the percentage of the people working in agriculture is much lower than the national average, while, as for the industry, there are much higher proportions than the national average, especially in the small regions in the west.

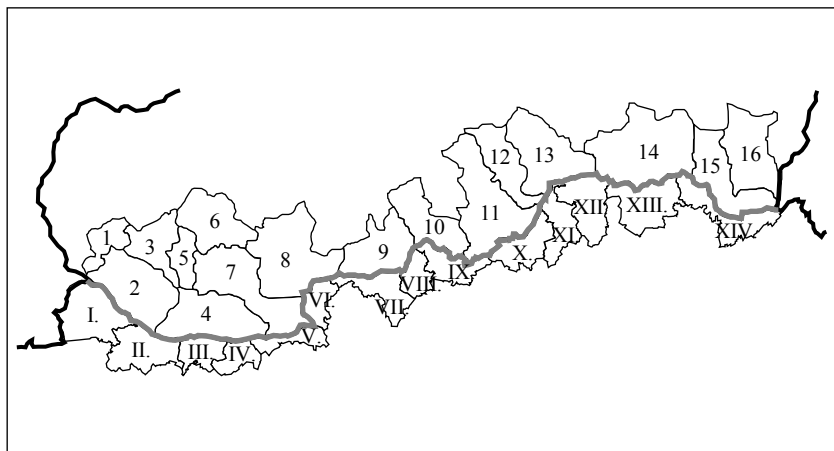
Thus, regarding the percentages of the people employed, there are similarities between the more developed western districts/small regions

and the more backward eastern districts/small regions on both sides of the border. This division is also reflected in education, because, although there is hardly any difference in the percentage of the people with secondary education between the southern Slovak districts, the percentage of the people with higher education is obviously higher in the western districts. On the Hungarian side, however, each indicator proves the advantage of the small regions in the west.

A typical feature of both sides is that in the eastern direction the percentage of young people is increasing, which is also influenced by the increasing percentage of Gypsy people. Another typical feature of ethnic division is the increased Slovak and dramatically decreasing Hungarian population in the southern Slovak districts, and, in the central areas of Hungary, a Slovak population slightly higher than the national average (over 1%).

Slovak researchers have also pointed out the similarities of borderland areas, when they compared indicators concerning the populations in the districts and small regions on both sides of the Danube (*Pulpitová*. 2002, pp. 216-230), or those of agricultural areas. They drew the conclusion that the area was suitable for cross-border cooperation and that similarities ensured the sustainable development of economic and social life (*Némethová* 2002, pp. 231-239).

Figure 23. Slovak districts and Hungarian small regions along the border



Edited by István Mezei, drawn by Máté Mády.

Slovak districts

1. Senec	2. Dunajská Streda	3. Galanta	4. Komárno	5. Šaľa	6. Nitra
7. Nové Zámky	8. Levice	9. Veľký Krtíš	10. Lučenec	11. Revúca	12. Rimavská Sobota
13. Rožňava	14. Košice -okolie	15. Trebišov	16. Michalovce		

Hungarian small regions

I. Mosonmagyaróvár	II. Győr	III. Komárom	IV. Tata	V. Esztergom	VI. Szob
VII. Balassagyarmat	VIII. Szécsény	IX. Salgótarján	X. Ózd	XI. Kazincbarcika	XII. Edelény
XIII. Encs	XIV. Sátoraljajuhely				

In the analyses, the apparently much larger southern Slovak districts are usually regarded as borderland areas, which is mostly due to the Hungarian population living there. One of the latest examples for that is the book *Southern Slovakia* (Horváth 2004). Meanwhile, it is provable that the interested parties take part in cross-border cooperation regardless of ethnicity. There is no similarly explicit limitation confirmed by custom on the Hungarian side. Therefore, in their book (2003), *Attila Hevesi* and *Károly Kocsis* describe the geography of the Hungarian and Slovak borderland in wide zones based on map segments in their own edition.

Any limitation is made difficult by the continuous change resulting from the fact that, in the past few years, it has become easier and easier to cross the border. Actually, we can witness an ever-changing phenomenon, whose assessment and the analysis of the processes going on show the continuous increase in cooperation. With a practical method based on surveying the interested parties, we can mark out the borderland zone that is taking shape along the border of the two countries at present. The driving force of this cooperation is towns.

6. 1 The line of Hungarian and Slovak towns

This town line runs along the whole of the border, sometimes on this, sometimes on that, or sometimes on both sides. Being located in the borderland area has been a disadvantage, rather than an advantage for them. Accession to the European Union (2004), or rather the opening of the borders (2007) according to the Schengen agreement has made it possible for towns to exert their gravitation effect. Along the Danube, this means first of all strong gravitation to Hungary, which goes on along the river Ipeľ, too, although it is rather weak there. In turn, the Slovak towns to the north of them gravitate the borderland villages of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County.

- The outstanding large city of the borderland is Bratislava, which, as a capital city, belongs to the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr golden triangle of international significance. Its gravitation area is continuously widening mainly in the direction of Dunajská Streda, but recently also towards Hungary. The long, eastward gravitation area of Bratislava runs parallel with Szigetköz on the Hungarian side, cut off from the Danube and the side-canal of the power station at Gabčíkovo. The settlements of Szigetköz belong to the gravitation area of Mosonmagyaróvár and Győr, where the influence of the Slovak capital cannot be felt.
- Bratislava is the centre of the border section between Komárno-Komárom and Rajka, but its effect on the environs is rather ambiguous. There are signs of the common historical past, but the Danube branches off here, which makes crossing rather difficult. The only bridge after Komárno-Komárom is on the road connecting Győr and Veľký Meder, between Vámoszabadi and Medveďov. With regard to the whole section of the Danube, this is where the distance between two bridges is the largest, since the first bridge to the north of Vámoszabadi can only be found in Bratislava. Szigetköz, the river branches in Žitný ostrov, the Landscape Protection Area of Szigetköz and the industrial canal of the power station, all make crossing difficult for the settlements on the two sides. Mention must be made of Bodak, Vojka nad Dunajom and Dobrohošť, the three settlements on the Slovak side that are cut off from the land by the industrial canal and whose connection with Slovakia is also made rather difficult. (There is a ferry service for the settlements.) The lack of larger towns or cities also distinguishes this region. The influence of Bratislava on the Slovak side exceeds every other influence, every connection starting from the Danube is directed there, whereas on the Hungarian side the gravitation of a smaller town (Mosonmagyaróvár) and that of a big city (Győr) are dominant, but these three towns do not gravitate toward each other. Consequently, in Dunajská Streda being closer to Győr than to Bratislava, the influence of Bratislava is much stronger than that of Győr. The large-scale development of the Slovak capital city in recent years also had a strong effect on the villages in Žitný ostrov. The ethnic division in this zone used to show an overwhelming majority of Hungarian people. This, however, seems to have changed in the past few years. Due to the soaring real estate prices in Bratislava, many people have moved to smaller settlements, and

to Dunajská Streda, too. (This wave of moving out has also reached Rajka on the Hungarian side.) A large percentage of the people moving out are of Slovak ethnicity. The Hungarian settlements in Slovakia were not prepared for this process. The borderland villages with a formerly overwhelming Hungarian majority have the impression that this Slovakization is a kind of ethnic loss of ground. The settlements on the Slovak side have also made efforts to preserve their ethnic consciousness, but, unlike the Hídverő (Bridge Builder) settlements (see below), the Hungarian settlements do not help their activities sufficiently. After the enactment of the municipality act, they established a regional organization called the Alliance of Žitný ostrov Towns and Villages. To increase national consciousness and lobby power, they intentionally lengthened the list of the organized settlements so that the representation of the Hungarian interests should be ensured properly. An equivalent Hungarian small regional organization is the Alliance of Szigetköz Local Governments. However, there are no continuous relations between the two organizations and is not as prosperous as in the case of the Hídverő settlements.

- The other large centre, which follows Bratislava closely in every aspect, is Košice with a population of 240,000 people. This city started to establish its international relations relatively early and in an inventive way, and therefore they have developed the airport strongly. A business park of information technology is being built, where also the young and well-trained graduates of Miskolc University are welcome as employees. There are plans to lengthen the tram-line from the iron works in Košice to Moldava nad Bodvou (about 40 km) so that commuting should be made easier for people working there. The motorway to Uzshorod is going to connect the city with Ukraine, so not only the ore needed for iron production, but also other products will be transported in larger quantities to Košice. Košice exerts a gravitation effect on Prešov, a town with a population of 70,000 people, 20 km to the north, whose economic power is increasing significantly. Thus, the long zone of towns from Bratislava to the north is getting larger in the east, too, and meets the line of towns from the direction of Košice-Prešov at Poprad.
- Along the Danube, between Győr and Esztergom, Hungarian towns have their own gravitation areas. Commuting daily or weekly, a high number of people go to work in the companies of these towns, where enterprises moving from across the Danube are also based. This divi-

sion of labour looks back on a long past. It can be stated that the municipality relations are the closest and most complex there along the whole Slovak and Hungarian border section, although crossing the border is made difficult by the Danube, a natural border. The river has not only separated, but also connected the people living there. In general, we may say that, in the course of history, the two banks of the Danube were always in a continuous economic interaction, which resulted from the industrial character of the right bank and the agricultural character of the left bank. The economic activities of the two sides completed each other. Matušova zem had been famous for its fruit- and vegetable growing villages for centuries, whereas the other bank, going a bit too far but expressing its essential characteristic features, was called the Hungarian Ruhr District. Before 1920 this section of the Danube belonged to Komárom and Esztergom Counties, where there were settlements on both banks of the river. The settlements of the counties were connected with a high number of ferries and bridges (Štúrovo-Esztergom and Komárno-Szőny). The historical relations did not break off after the new borders had been marked out in 1920, but the fact that the Danube became a border river limited the possibilities of the settlements on the two banks considerably. After 1945 the possibilities of developing and maintaining relations became worse, which resulted in border crossing being restricted to the cross-border trade of the bridge in Komárom-Komárno and the ferry between Štúrovo and Esztergom. The situation did not change until the change of regime, when, after 1990, latent relations could begin prospering again. The common historical roots, the common administrative past and the purely Hungarian settlements on the Slovak side made developing relations easier. The proportion of the Hungarian inhabitants of settlements is 97-98%, the remaining 2-3% includes mostly Slovak families that were resettled from Hungary in accordance with the agreement on the exchange of the Slovak and Hungarian populations after World War II. The newly-established municipality system on both sides made the development of relations at a settlement level possible. The region could return to the previous division of labour. The area to the north of the Danube was agricultural in the past, too, and to the south of the Danube there were more industries. Building new bridges would encourage the appearance of new suppliers in the settlements on the left bank of the Danube. The Slovak side also expects industrial

development from new bridges at Komárom and Esztergom. Štúrovo counts on the resettlement of the suppliers of Suzuki and Sanyo, and North Komárno intends to establish a business park similar to that in South Komárom. To implement the above-mentioned bridge investments, an interstate agreement and inter-governmental negotiations will be necessary.

- Rétság, Balassagyarmat, Szécsény and Salgótarján in Nógrád County and Ózd in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County make up the Hungarian line of towns, with rather weak gravitation areas, beyond the river Ipeľ. After getting to know Hungarian conditions, people commuting to work in Hungary from Slovakia move off to work in Vác or Budapest.
- The Slovak line of towns with gravitation areas for Hungarian villages stretches from Tornaľa, through Plešivec and Rožňava to Moldava nad Bodvou. Commuting to work has begun. The mostly Slovak employers are satisfied with the well-trained Hungarian employees. The inhabitants of Hungarian villages can earn higher wages in the companies of small towns than if they commuted to their 'own' regional centres to work.
- The only town in Bodroghöz to have no economic force to attract job-seekers from Hungary is Kráľovský Chlmec. The job-creating ability of Sátoraljaújhely is insufficient even for its own Hungarian environs.
- Budapest has not been able to extend its gravitation area to Slovakia so far. Between Budapest and Košice there are no cities with strong gravitation ability.

The border towns close to each other can be categorized in several ways. The ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observation Network) programme, which takes the morphological and functional characteristics of urban spaces into consideration, provides a theoretical framework for categorization. MOT (Mission Opérationelle Transfrontalière), which has been developed as a part of the programme, assesses the organizational level of cooperation (Székely 2007). Zoltán Dövényi, a Hungarian researcher, has elaborated a history-based categorization. This is the closest to historical and political reality, because the border divided existing towns and gravitation areas after the 1920 Trianon Peace Treaty.

According to Dövényi's (2002) categorization, *divided towns* emerged along the border. A characteristic feature of the divided town is that it had been developing as one town for centuries when, due to an unexpected historical event, the town on the two banks of the Danube was

divided into two parts. This is what happened in Komárom-Komárno at the Hungarian and Slovak border. This town was forced to follow two separate development paths after 1920. Following separate development paths meant for North Komárno and South Komárom growing into the category of twin towns. It will turn out in the course of time whether this separate development path will remain unchanged in the future, or the town will follow another path, as local people expect, i.e. that *de jure* there are two towns, but *de facto* they are still one (Síkó-Tiner 2007). Similarly, Sátoraljaújhely also belongs to the category of divided towns. Due to the railway juncture belonging to it, the part of the town called Slovenské Nové Mesto was cut off. Balassagyarmat also became a border town because its section on the right bank of the river Ipeľ, which is called Slovenské Ďarmoty today, had been cut off.

Esztergom and Štúrovo are examples for *twin towns* or *town pairs*. These towns are close to each other, but have separate development paths. They emerged as independent settlements in the past and there are no ambitions to unite them. On the other hand, they can both benefit from the possibilities provided by the border.

Miskolc and Košice are examples for towns lying relatively far from each other and developing independently. The issue of the close cooperation of the two cities continuously arises and a common euroregion has also been established, but the two cities tend to be rivals in the competition of towns. Due to its higher population, more important economic weight and the more decisive role it plays as an industrial centre and a traffic junction, Košice has a considerable advantage over Miskolc.

Lelkes (2008) has set up categories of southern Slovak towns by their revenues. According to this, the town of Nitra has the most favourable social and economic environment. This town is followed by Dunajská Streda, which has turned out to be a centre in the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr triangle in the past one and a half decades. These two towns are followed by Nové Zámky and Komárno. In an economic sense, these towns were still lagging behind a decade ago. These four towns are followed by two ambitious towns, Šamorín and Štúrovo. However, each of them is only developing in the shadow of the two cities (Bratislava and Esztergom, respectively). The other southern Slovak towns do not show any special characteristic features, they have not found a role suitable for them, and they are still lacking in innovation and the ability to renew. According to their economic performance, they can be divided into two groups. The towns with good economic performance

include Galanta, Senec, Sered' and Šaľa, and the towns with unfavourable economic performance are Levice, Veľký Krtíš, Lučenec, Rimavská Sobota, Rožňava, Revúca, Trebišov and Michalovce.

6. 2 Cross-border relations

On a historical scale, new countries with new borders were marked out around Hungary after World War I. The decision of the great powers, which was based on superior strength, has led to a number of tragic events since then. Therefore, the steps taken recently to solve the contradictory situations caused by the great powers are in the focus of interest.

After the establishment of the Czechoslovak state after 1918, it took years to organize the separation along the border that had been marked out artificially. While the cooperation between the dismembered Hungary and the new states, among them Czechoslovakia, was getting ever weaker, it was difficult for the people along the border, due to their former way of living, to take notice of the new situation. Only gradually could the Czechoslovak power enforce restrictions on cross-border travel for family or business reasons. As a result of unchanged ownership, people also cultivated the fields that were in the territory of the other state.

The second establishment of the Czechoslovak state in 1945 and the introduction of the communist dictatorship implemented the state form that confirmed the borders and had them accepted in the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947. This coincided with the ethnic cleansing in Czechoslovakia, during which German people were forced to leave the new country and there was an attempt to carry out the complete elimination of the Hungarian population. The victorious powers, however, did not approve the liquidation of such a huge crowd of people, so the original plan was implemented only partially and temporarily. They tried to achieve their aim by deportation, denationalization, population exchange, re-Slovakization or the simple expelling of *persona non grata*. With communist dictatorships established, the relations between the two countries had to be consolidated in the spirit of peoples' friendship and brotherhood, therefore the main aim of the assimilation of Hungarian people became Czechoslovakization of the mind and language usage in the past, and their Slovakization at present. To achieve this goal, there are open or hidden methods applied in every field of society, from schools to workplaces and when utilizing services. By such methods assimilation is forced again and again.

After World War II, leaving the country enforced by the Czechoslovak power was replaced by complete lack of mobility and strict defence of the frontiers. As late as the 1960s, people were not even allowed to visit anybody in the friendly country, except within the official system of relations of the party state, on an invitation basis. It was in these years that the model of controlled cooperation permitted by party centres appeared. After the 1960s it was this model that gave an increasing number of opportunities for the development of economic relations, such as the exchange of agricultural machines, meanwhile tight control was slackening.

From the 1980s on, it was price differences between the two countries that regulated the intensity of border crossing. It was mainly adjusted to the changes in petrol prices, which was now called tourism. The change of regime in 1990 did not bring drastic changes, either. It simply strengthened shopping tourism, since, in the beginning, the better assortment of goods attracted the citizens of the neighbouring countries to Hungarian stores, whereas cheap petrol attracted Hungarians to Czecho/Slovakia.

The deeper meaning of the 1990 change of regime, i.e. getting rid of Soviet control, the communist political system and dictatorship as well as the reorganization of democratic conditions made the re-establishment of the municipality system possible. The fact that local interests and goals could be worded and translated into deeds brought a new quality into the relations between the countries. The cross-border relations that were established, organized, institutionalized and developed into a network expressed the wish and goals of the population along the border. The ambitions and the demands of individuals to cross borders as well as the activities of the institutions of municipalities are becoming concerted. The aim and activities of municipality institutions are beginning to express individuals' ambitions and wishes. This institutionalized expression of the intentions of the population is what gives the most important content of recent events, i.e. democratization.

In dictatorships, it is the task of institutions to transmit the political will from above, to enforce the enacted laws, decrees and instructions and to force them on the population. In actual democracies, on the other hand, the task of institutions is exactly the opposite and this is due to the popular representation by elections, i.e. transmission of the popular will to the functional order of institutions and legislative organs. We can witness this process, which has been going on in the new, reviving stage

of cross-border relations, in several steps, especially since the borders were opened in 2007.

The main motivation for the popular will that determines the activities of the institutions is the unacceptable backward situation that the people living in the borderland area still have to suffer from. In this respect, this very long, 670-km-long border has several sections, which are basically different from each other. The border section around Bratislava, which is beginning to integrate into the Vienna-Bratislava-Győr region, is becoming a true gravitation area. Here the border ensures more favourable possibilities for those with higher demands, i.e. it divides crowdedness and comfort. The Slovak citizens escape from expensive flats in Bratislava to cheaper family houses in Rajka, where they can find conditions more suitable for their way of living. They make use of the traditional differences made by borders, just like the inhabitants of the agricultural Žitný ostrov, who have a much more modest lifestyle, do when they try to find jobs in Hungarian towns along the Danube. On the other hand, people living along the border section from the river Ipel' to the river Tisza expect to find jobs anywhere, on either side of the border, so that they can make a living without having to move away, even if they have to commute.

After the change of system, it was in 1995 that the two countries first signed an agreement. This was the so-called primary agreement, which they signed in Paris. It did not really include intentions elaborated jointly by the Hungarian and Slovak parties or plans that the two countries wanted to implement together. It was foreign political interests that forced the two countries to conclude the primary agreement so quickly. In the campaign of the French presidential election, the future president proved with this agreement that he was the right man for the position. The fact that the primary agreement concentrated first of all on problems of minorities and that even a proposal of the European Council acknowledging the territorial autonomy rights of ethnic minorities was also impetuously included are proof of the agreement not having been prepared properly. At that time, Slovak political public opinion was not prepared for this, so the agreement induced sharp debates. Cooperation was also made difficult by the fact that the primary agreement overemphasized the principle regarding the observance of the laws enforced in the cooperating administrative organs' own countries. This happened because Slovak laws did not make actual joint activity possible.

In 1998, cooperation, which had come to a standstill, was again on the agenda. However, it was the 2001 agreement that provided the pos-

sibility of unprecedented large-scale cooperation at last. It was of fundamental importance that the two parties agreed that the conditions ensured by them would be the same for the state and municipality participants of cooperation as those for cooperation in their own countries. They made a list of 15 headings concerning the main areas where cooperation should especially be encouraged. These include settlement and regional development, the utilization of the borderland from the aspect of ecotourism, the development of the infrastructure of transport, enterprises, investments, the promotion of job creation and agricultural development. The importance of the concerted development of public services, such as the utilization of public health institutions for the population of the neighbouring country, was emphasized in extra headings. Since the participation of various organizations in the implementation of many different services was counted on, the organizations to be supported were also listed. This was how local governments, civil organizations and foundations, together with some other non-profit-making organizations, enterprises and publicly financed institutions were legally raised to the level of administrative organs. An extra article emphasized that the listed organizations could establish contact with each other independently and freely, without any authorization procedure, simply by observing the laws.

The Hungarian and Slovak Intergovernmental Joint Commission for Cross-Border Cooperation was set up. With regard to the special fields, 11 intergovernmental joint commissions were established. By setting up a commission to support the cross-border cooperation of municipalities, their number rose to 12 in 2001.

Cooperation would be necessary, since each of the topics is affected by some cross-border influence, such as road construction, environmental protection, country planning or disaster recovery, etc. The statutory regulation of certain topics is insufficient, because the necessity of carrying out cross-border tasks is not provided by statute. Services should be organized jointly, which would need the harmonization of the laws and decrees by both countries to clarify legal relations and cover the costs.

The most active intergovernmental joint commission was the small regional joint commission. With regard to its work certain important characteristics should be pointed out.

The proposals to restore the bridge between Esztergom and Štúrovo or open further border stations strengthened the relations between the two countries and made transportation easier. The symbolic discussion

of political topics made it also necessary to discuss the restoration of the Sándor Petőfi statue in Bratislava and simultaneously the question of the Ján Kollár memorial plaque in Budapest and their placement at worthy places. It would have been advantageous if the Hungarian version of the Slovak provisions of law and the Slovak version of the Hungarian provisions of law had been published continuously, with special attention to EU law.

The Hungarian party wanted to improve the disadvantageous situation of the Hungarian people living in Slovakia by making the problems concerning education and culture as well as those concerning civil organizations subjects of debates. This goal was served by various topics, from teachers' further education to the refurbishment of the Thália Theatre in Košice. In 1999 the Hungarian party still had an advantage over the Slovak people, so the issue of opening a Hungarian consulate in Košice and that of an act regulating the usage of the Hungarian language could be raised. They urged the Slovak government to regard the Calvinist church as a negotiating party, what is more, in 2001, with reference to international law, they also sought to influence the Slovak municipality act, which was being drafted at that time. When these proposals were raised there were always some antitheses that were implemented by the improvement of the situation of the Slovak people living in Hungary.

The equality of the two parties required that they should regard the questions raised as equally important. Consequently, the Slovak party endeavoured to react to the Hungarian requests by making Slovak requests of the same weight. However, due to the obvious asymmetry of the populations, this could not always be solved. While, according to the 2001 census, the number of the Slovak population was 17,693 (0.17%) in Hungary, which had a population of around 10 million people, the number of the Hungarians living in Slovakia, with 5.4 million inhabitants, was 520,528 people (9.68%). Therefore it is impossible to provide both ethnic minorities with institutions in the same number, size and weight in the country where they live. An example for this is that at the statutory meeting of the joint commission of minorities the Slovak party required that the Slovak people should have political representation in Hungary just like the Hungarians have parliamentary representation and a party in Slovakia. They demanded that the Hungarian party should lengthen the time devoted to the Slovak-language programme of the Hungarian public service television and radio channels, and should ensure reception all over the coun-

try. Similarly, the Slovak request for the support of the educational and cultural institutions shows that, compared with the small number and sporadic occurrence of Slovak people in Hungary, the required number of institutions and buildings were exaggerated.

The activities of the special committees depend on the political attitude of each government in power, so no wonder that the work of the special committees has slowed down since the changes of government in the two countries. An example for this is the work of the glossary committee. One thing that creates many problems during negotiations is that the way concepts are used in the two countries is different. Therefore there is a need for a multilingual dictionary of regional development. Such a dictionary has already been compiled in the Czech, German and Slovak languages. It includes explanations of concepts in three languages. Modelled on this dictionary, a Hungarian and a Slovak monolingual dictionary began to be compiled in Hungary, but in the course of time, there was no money or no intention to compare the concepts in the two languages and compile a dictionary including both. This would have required expertise, but this last stage could not be organized. The failure is not only due to lack of money but also to the structural change in ministries. Development projects of this sort are often reassigned to different ministries. Besides, in the new ministry struggle for realizing the interests of the development sector has to be started from the very beginning, because at the new place other ministry tasks may be important.

At the meeting in 2007 the joint committee did not discuss any new issues, it only surveyed the existing situation. There was an exchange of opinions concerning experience they had gained and they called each other's attention to the possibilities of joint tenders. The existing situation and possibilities, however, require more than this, because, to further develop cooperation, the harmonization of statutory rules would be necessary in both countries. For the joint organization of services it would be important for both countries to harmonize laws and decrees so as to be able to settle legal relations and cover costs. It would also be necessary to harmonize the settlement and regional municipality tasks and competences in the two countries so that organs with approximately the same competences and authority could talk to each other.

Examples of the difficulties in establishing and maintaining relations include the different legal backgrounds of the two countries and the fact that the mandatory tasks of local governments and the main-

tenance rights of institutions are delegated to different levels. That is the reason why, for example, Hungarian regulations make it difficult and complicated to establish ports on the banks of the Danube. Jet skis are banned from the Hungarian section of the river, while they are not on the Slovak side. The different regulations regarding motor cruisers make scheduled service between the two banks difficult. The regulations of flood prevention also create some problems. Whereas on the Slovak side, all of the planned dams have been built, and cycling is also allowed on them (what is more, for Route 63 road traffic has also been planned), on the Hungarian side floods regularly cause damage and dams are not suitable for either cycling or road traffic. This fact will be important for the development of cycling tourism. Whereas the Slovak side can begin the development of services with a completed infrastructure, on the Hungarian side the cycling paths themselves are missing, in most cases.

A formal way of cooperation between settlements can be twin-town relations. In the beginning, the twin-town relations between settlements had strong political aspects. In the decades of communist dictatorship they served as a forced Hungarian and Czechoslovak friendship. Solidarity with the Hungarian ethnic minority could only be expressed in a hidden way. After 1990 signing twin-town contracts and the organization of mutual visits, mainly on national holidays, became visible forms of sympathy with the Hungarian people in Slovakia.

Strengthening national consciousness manifested itself in increasingly practical forms of cooperation. The cooperation of civil organizations and the particular municipality institutions indicated this trend. The financial support of the European Union, first PHARE CBC, and then INTERREG, brought a change towards profitableness. In the hope of the acquirable money, cooperation increased and dense institutional networks were set up between the settlements on both sides of the border even during the planning period already. This was when euroregions began to be established rapidly along the whole of the border. The prosperity of the relations coincided with the change of government in 1998, when the successive Slovak ultra-nationalist governments that had been in power before were replaced by the (nationalist, without a prefix) bourgeois government in coalition with the Hungarian Coalition Party.

6. 3 The organizational forms of cooperation

6. 3. 1 Twin-town relations

It is a characteristic feature of twin-town relations that they are not confined to cross-border relations, as such cooperation may just as well be possible with a settlement on any other continent. Therefore, this form of relations belongs to transnational relations. However, it is natural for settlements close to the border to establish cooperation with settlements on the other side.

Table 41. International relations of towns in Slovakia

With neighbouring country	188
With member state of the European Union	84
With third country in Europe	30
Total in European countries:	302
On another continent	22
Total relations:	324
Number of towns publishing data:	68

Source: home pages of Slovak towns

Table 42. Relations of towns in Slovakia with the neighbouring countries

Neighbouring country	8 counties (the whole of Slovakia)		5 counties (counties by the Hungarian border)	
	number	%	number	%
Czech Republic	65	34.57	37	33.94
Poland	58	30.85	23	21.10
Hungary	48	25.53	40	36.70
Ukraine	10	5.32	4	3.67
Austria	7	3.72	5	4.59
total	188		109	

Source: home pages of the particular Slovak towns

Twin-town relations are continuously expanding. In the course of time, however, they first tend to take the form of project-based cooperation and then they start organizing services together. With Slovakia becoming a member of the European Union, Slovak towns grabbed the opportunity to establish formal relations with other towns.

The home pages of 68 (50%) out of 136 towns in Slovakia refer to their twin-town relations (*Tables 41 and 42*). Most relations were developed between the towns of neighbouring countries, first of all with the Czech people. The first among non-neighbouring countries is Germany, and, of the European countries that are not member states of the EU, Slovak towns established the most relations with Serbia. The first among continents other than Europe is the United States. The motivation for developing relations is rather manifold. The representation of Slovak national interests plays an important role, because all the relations are based on some Slovak national reference. This mostly means people of Slovak ethnicity living in the settlement in question. Besides, there are also some other practical reasons, such as obtaining experience in urban development.

As can be seen from the table, apart from the extremely high number of traditional Czech relations, the relations developed by the particular counties are mostly influenced by the neighbouring country. The data concerning the counties in the neighbourhood of the Hungarian border are also proof of this: the relations with Hungarian towns are decisive. When developing cooperation they take geographical distance into consideration, but national and cultural aspects are often much more important. This is the reason why all the towns in Romania with which the towns in Slovakia with a Hungarian ethnic majority develop relations are towns in Transylvania with a Hungarian ethnic majority. Similarly, towns in Slovakia with a Slovak ethnic majority try to find towns in Hungary and Serbia that are mostly inhabited by Slovak people.

The same independence is typical of the relations between the institutions as of municipality relations. The individual institutions decide in their own sphere of authority whether they would like to cooperate with other institutions or not, and the development of relations depends on the intentions of the two parties. The most frequent form of cooperation is between schools and cultural communities, the meetings of choirs, theatres and sports clubs, or when students take part in study competitions. Grants help to finance the organization of such events.

6. 3. 2 Relations of euroregions

Euroregional cooperation looks back on a 50-year-long tradition in Europe. Such activities are very important in present-day borderless Europe, because, with this organizational form, the people living in bor-

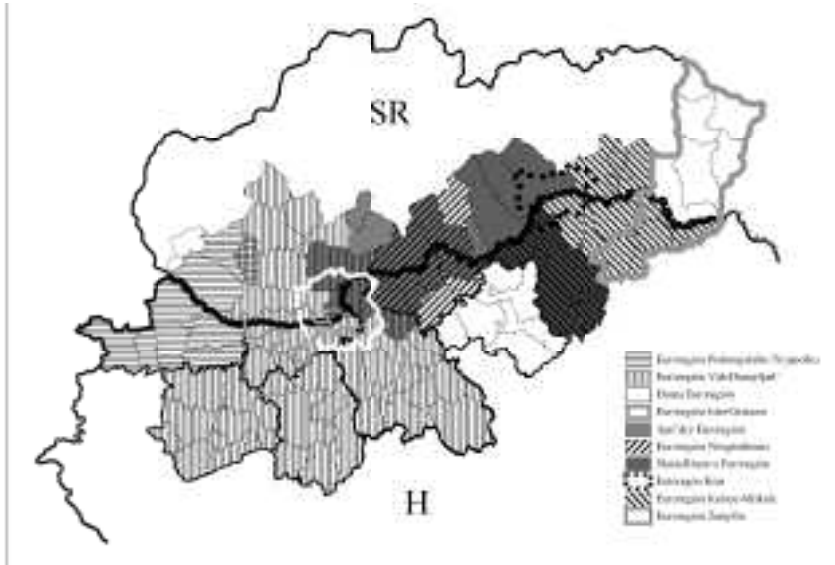
derland areas would like to solve their backward situation. The participants are the representatives of local and regional authorities and the actors of social and economic life. Thanks to municipality actors, they also play a political decision-making role; therefore they can form connections with domestic and European decision-making organs. The establishment of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), which also has an influence on the policy of the European Council and the European Union regarding cross-border cooperation, is proof of their strength. They have created an international legal framework and formed the policy of financial support. The latter involves the programmes INTERREG, PHARE CBC and TACIS CBC.

There are several models of euroregional structure, one of them being when there are mirror organizations on both sides of the border, which, often deceptively, call themselves a 'euroregion', and the two mirror organizations sign a cooperation agreement with each other. In case of the Sajó-Rimava Euroregion, the organizations are called this both in Hungarian and in Slovak, and the joint organization also bears this name, adding Cross-Border Cooperation. Similarly, the Ipoly-Ipeľ Euroregion established an association from Ipoly-Ipeľ Euroregion Cross-Border Cooperation, originally on the Hungarian side, and Ipeľský Euroregión: the Association of Legal Entities (*Figure 24, Table 43*).

In the other model, the participating members on both sides sign a cooperation agreement themselves. An elected body and a president, a presidency and a secretariat (work organizations), as well as work teams comprise the common organization of euroregions. They are elected by the members, and the participants are nominated to work committees.

Only exceptionally have independent offices been set up to fulfill the functions of the secretariat and work organization. On the other hand, in several euroregions one of the members operates the work organization, or perhaps there is one secretariat on both sides (e.g. the Carpathian Euroregion, which, due to its huge size, is not marked on the map). Where an organization of joint legal entity has been set up, there is a centre or headquarters, and an office in the other country, or offices in other countries. The operation costs of the secretariat or work organization are covered by the annual contributions of the members, in most cases in proportion to the number of the inhabitants, but in some cases costs are shared equally.

Figure 24. Euroregions along the Hungarian and Slovak border



Edited by István Mezei, drawn by Máté Mády.

The operation of euroregions has an important, national goal, too. If euroregions can accomplish their mission, if they can implement an increasing number of plans and if the networks of relations can be expanded widely, then participants can obtain everyday experience in the cooperation practice of the two neighbouring countries. The experience gained in this way can also be transmitted to a national level (*Mezei 2008*).

Euroregions, however, have not been able to draw any particular attention, either in Hungary or in Slovakia. They have not become legal entities with special advantages, nor have they received legal support. Thus, euroregions have just been an attempt to solve the problem of cross-border cooperation. The European practice of cross-border cooperation has resulted in a further legal form, and it is the European grouping of territorial cooperation.

Table 43. Euroregions along the Hungarian and Slovak border

Name	Centre in Hungary	Centre in Slovakia	Year of establishment
Hármas Duna-vidék Eurorégió/ Euroregión Podunajského Trojspolku	Győr	Dunaszerdahely/ Dunajská Streda	2001
Váh-Duna-Ipoly Eurorégió/ Euroregión Váh-Dunaj-Ipeľ Ostrihom	Tatabánya	Nyitra Nitra	1999
Ister-Granum Eurorégió/ Euroregión Ister-Granum	Esztergom	Párkány/ Štúrovo	2003
Duna Eurorégió/ Dunaj Euroregión	Neszmély	Búcs/ Búc	2003
Ipoly-Eurorégió/ Ipeľský euroregión	Balassagyarmat	Ipolyság/ Šahy	1999
Neogradiensis Eurorégió/ Euroregión Neogradiensis	Salgótarján	Losonc/ Lučenec	2000
Sajó-Rima Eurorégió/ Slaná-Rimava Euroregión	Putnok	Rozsnyó/ Rožňava	2000
Karszt-Eurorégió/ Euroregión Kras	Perkupa	Pelsőc/ Plešivec	2001
Miskolc-Kassa Eurorégió/ Euroregión Košice-Miškoltc	Miskolc	Kassa/ Košice	1999
Zemplén Eurorégió/ Euroregión Zemplín	Sátoraljaújhely	Királyhelmec/ Kráľovský Chlmec	2004
Kárpátok Eurorégió/ Kárpatský Euroregión	Nyíregyháza	Eperjes/ Prešov	1993/1996

Source: the author's own data.

6. 3. 3 European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)

The European Parliament and the European Council passed Decree 1082 regarding European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in July 2006. This form of cooperation was a reaction to the difficulties that hindered joint and successful work in areas such as euroregional cooperation. By acknowledging the legal entity status of the grouping (EGTC), they intended to eliminate legal insecurity. They wish to increase its independence by permitting the grouping to be free to dispose of personal property and real estate, employ staff and sue or be sued in its own right. The grouping's scope for action is increased by the fact that it can count not only on the funds of the European Union when planning and implementing programmes but also on the national or regional resources of their own countries, or on their own resources without any other contribution. The members of the groupings can be member states, regional and local authorities as well as other institutions of public law regulated by decree.

The European grouping for territorial cooperation is the first to make it possible for the authorities of the member states to cooperate without

international treaties ratified by the national parliaments. Nevertheless, the member states have to approve the participation of the future member in the grouping, as well as its competences and tasks. To interpret and implement an agreement regarding the establishment of a grouping, they should apply the law of the member state in which the headquarters of the grouping can be found, as specified in the agreement.

The facts that the competences exercised by the grouping as an authority may not involve the competences of the police and its regulators, i.e. legislative competences, and that the grouping may not carry out tasks of justice and foreign affairs serve the maintenance of the sovereignty of the member states. The task of the grouping is to strengthen economic and social cohesion (*Pintér* 2007).

The member states are obliged to take the necessary measures to enforce the decree and ensure its efficient adoption. The decree has been obligatory and has had to be enforced indirectly in all of the member states since 1st August 2007. Groupings can also be established without the preliminary adoption of national regulations. Hungary passed the law in June 2007 and Slovakia passed it in February 2008, however, Slovakia's president did not sign it.

The frames for cross-border development programmes as well as economic and social cooperation basically changed in 2008. On the one hand, by eliminating the Schengen internal borders, economic relations have been strengthening and new models of cooperation have emerged. On the other hand, based on the expectable influence of the decree regulating cooperation grouping and by the implementation of cross-border rural development programmes, there is a good chance of the integrated development of the small regions on both sides of the border.

In accordance with the EGTC decree, the cooperating groups have to be able to implement the cooperation programmes co-financed by the EU (ERFA and Structural Funds) and the programmes initiated at a state or a regional/county/district level. In this respect, preparing microregional work organizations for management tasks is of utmost importance, because it is possible only in this way for them to implement regional cooperation and programmes meeting the actual demands of the cooperating settlements.

The first grouping in Hungary was established on 27th January 2007 in Fehérgyarmat. The agreement on the Ung-Tisza-Túr European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation was signed by the mayors of the founding municipalities of the four countries (Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine, Roma-

nia). Their ambition was to encourage the economic and cultural cooperation of the approximately 400,000 inhabitants of the 216 settlements in the valleys of the rivers. The work organization of the grouping, which is comprised of three people, is based in the mayor's office of Túristvándi in Hungary. As a predecessor of the organization, the Association of Borderland Municipalities of Bereg District was established with 15 members in 2000 (*Kárpátinfo* 2007).

6. 4 Types of cooperation

6. 4. 1 Project-based cooperation

Since the border was opened, representative twin-town relations have been supplemented with some – rather symbolic – investments. Roads and paths along the border were cleaned and restored, very often in friendly cooperation. Popular representation is also present in this kind of cooperation, because in all such cases there was at least one local representative, but sometimes also a mayor, who organized the joint work. It was due to the organizational and leadership skills of these people that they had become representatives or mayors, and, by doing such kind of work, they proved worthy of the community's confidence. On the other hand, an important aspect of such cooperation was volunteering, since neither the budget nor the competences of local governments cover the repairs or construction of roads between settlements. Therefore, owners and managers of factories, stone-pits, sand and gravel pits and cement factories in the environs as well as the parties concerned and the people living there (Hídvégardó in Hungary – Hostŕovce, Turnianska Nová Ves in Slovakia) took part in such road construction. The notice on the walls of the local pub ensured publicity. In case of Őzd-Susa, clearing up ownership was made easier by the fact that it was the grandfather of the party interested in the property who had organized the census regarding the reannexation of the village after 1918 (Őzd-Susa in Hungary – Rimavská Seč in Slovakia).

Opposite national feeling is also capable of action along the opened border. The mayor of Slovenské Nové Mesto, formerly a part of Sátoraljaújhely but now belonging to Slovakia, even defying the standpoint of the European Union, is not willing to have the concrete flower boxes removed from the road. In this way traffic between the communities is prevented.

It is a typical feature of project-based cooperation that it always focuses on some joint investment. Investment usually requires the single joining of forces, which, as is shown by the above examples, can be organized without external help, in social work. However, to implement large-scale plans, large amounts of money are needed. As a result of tight resources and, to a larger extent, backward situation, settlements can only achieve their goals with resources from grants. This is how human needs are changed into projects. Since it is mostly good luck that these settlements need for a successful application for a grant, writing grant applications is an everyday activity; winning a grant, on the other hand, is an exceptional event.

Cross-border cooperation was helped by the PHARE CBC programme. Regarding the Hungarian and Slovak border, there were two limitations in connection with the programme. On the one hand, submitting joint grant applications along this border section was not possible until 1999, because before that two pilot attempts with the Austrian people had had to be completed. On the other hand, the support available for this longest border section (from the Hungarian point of view) was the least, an unchanged 2 million euros every year. In the course of the years more and more winners were able to fulfill the tasks specified in the grant application (*Table 44*).

Table 44. PHARE CBC programmes along the Hungarian and Slovak border

	1995	1996	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Approved support	1,500,000	1,500,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Contracted	723,116	1,498,580	1,793,815	1,969,670	1,998,659	1,819,146	1,953,459
Closing of the programm	1999	2000	2002	2003	2004	2000	2006
Supported projects	4	24	12	12	10	26	23
large (over 10,000 euros)	4	4	1	1	1	15	18
small(to 8,000 euros)	--	20	11	11	9	11	5

Source: Váti Kht.

Meanwhile, the authority in charge modified the initial practice, since, due to the high number of applications, the money allocated for larger tenders was divided into several parts in the last two rounds. If the money that can be distributed is too little, there should at least be more people to have a share. Concerning small projects, the conclusion can be drawn that the number of applications submitted by towns was higher, and the counties to the east of the Danube submitted more applications. The large difference between the sums they applied for and the

sums they actually spent confirms the former statement that it was due to good luck which of the high number of applications meeting the specifications of the tender became successful (Mezei 2004). In any case, as far as both their domestic and foreign relations are concerned, local governments could rely on a rather poor supply in the grant market. They are still continuously confined to it because of tight municipal income. Only a thorough examination of the incomes could provide exact information to compare the structure of the income of municipalities in general and that of municipalities along the border, to find the percentage of money coming from grants, and to assess whether the income that municipalities along the border have won from grants to ease their backward situation and the proportion of support granted to them has increased.

The clarification of actual conditions, a situation analysis, has become the prerequisite of joint planning; only on this basis can plans be devised. Expertise is involved in situation analyses to an increasing extent. Local governments apply the analysis approach when planning cooperation necessary for investments and the implementation of investments. They sometimes involve researchers, sometimes their own experts. The papers evaluating the situation are sometimes superficial, but they tend to rely on thorough statistical data collection when analysing inter-settlement and regional conditions, which serve as the basis for the development that can be expected or planned there. Examples for this can be found among the administrative organs, too, because job centres also employ statisticians and analysts. When planning cooperation, factors such as geographical area, population, employment rate, education, business environment, and communication opportunities have to be surveyed, which postulates that more and more theories and principles of sciences, such as geography, sociology and economics, are involved in the particular vocations. The people engaged in planning include the representatives of several walks of life. Apart from the representatives and officials of local governments, experts of administration, actors of economic life, business federations of enterprises, and civil organizations are also involved.

The structure of the institutional system of planning and the method of its operation have not yet come to a rest in Hungary. The subjects of development are also continuously changing. At first, the politicians of the most backward villages wanted to urge the governments to develop the backward regions, and then regional units, such as larger regions,

and later small regions, came into prominence. In recent times the role of large cities has been emphasized, this is the so-called *pole programme*. This seems to be diminishing now and replaced by the ambition to develop towns in general.

The Hungarian actors that take part in Hungarian and Slovak cross-border cooperation have mixed feelings concerning the changed conditions of language usage. Hungarian public opinion has not become aware of the fact that the Czecho/Slovak assimilation policy that has been going on for several decades has been successful, and even those living close to the border still do not realize this. First of all, as a result of the several waves of deportation and reslovakization after World War II, Slovak people appeared and gained leading positions in areas where formerly a high number of Hungarians were living, thus forcing them into a subjugated situation. The vast settlement after the population exchange and the almost complete Slovakization following it have achieved their goal. Along the line of the towns Veľký Krtíš-Lučenec-Fiľakovo-Rimavská Sobota-Tornaľa-Plešivec-Rožňava-Moldava nad Bodvou, they managed to oust or assimilate Hungarian people and, by settling down Slovak people and brainwashing Hungarians, change ethnicity proportions. They managed to turn the formerly extremely strong Hungarian consciousness into Slovak consciousness. This is also a kind of assimilation, the state-trained Hungarian-speaking Slovak people. All this has led to the fact that it is rather difficult to find partners for cross-border cooperation, let alone Hungarian-speaking partners now that the border is opened. There are just few Hungarian-hearted partners who understand Hungarian interests and the unification of the Hungarian nation. There are also some figures to confirm this. Proportionally, the fewest identity cards available for Hungarian ethnic minorities living outside of Hungary were taken out in Slovakia (Szarka 2005).

To overcome language problems, the English language could be used, but neither party is really prepared for this and the people living there do not really consider it natural. The young generation, still at school, is expected to be able to use good and fluent English, but in real life it is still a question as to which language will be the language of the maintenance of relations. Meanwhile, just as a result of the opening of the borders, the formerly despised Hungarian knowledge has begun to be appreciated. Well-educated young people who can speak Hungarian, Slovak and English are very much in demand nowadays, mainly in settlement and regional development and in economic life.

6. 4. 2 Plans for the joint organization of services

The most complete form of cooperation is when services are joined to satisfy human and market needs regardless of borders. This is the most practical form of cooperation. It mostly involves institutions, such as communal supply, schools, health care and social provision as services meeting human needs and as economic actors that monitor market needs to make profits.

The local government of any settlement may choose a form of meeting the needs of the population when they make use of the facilities on both sides of the border. In this respect, county-level local governments play the role of mediators. They try to find the actors that carry out similar tasks and the parties entitled to negotiate and then they encourage them (state, municipality, business or civil partners) to enter into negotiations with each other. To unite their services, they offer the necessary administrative, official and legal knowledge.

Following this, the institutions taking part in service provision indirectly (hospitals, health service, ambulance, primary and secondary education, social institutions and communal suppliers, etc.) inform each other about their strengths and weaknesses, about where they have free capacity or lack of capacity.

In accordance with intergovernmental agreements, mutual urgent health provision is approved and settled. In case of programmed and planned health provision, depending on the condition of the patients, an agreement between the social security systems is necessary regarding the costs. Health care is rather costly and needs a lot of instruments and equipment. Therefore it has to be examined how the burdens could be shared in the frame of cooperation. It has to be examined which party is in a better situation in which field, who has something to offer to the other party in return for something else. The first step is surveying the specialist fields, then the system of covering the costs. The costs of health provision are different in the different countries; there can be considerable differences in price. It does not benefit Slovak insurers that patients of Slovak nationality insured with them should go to hospital on the Hungarian side of the border, which means more expensive treatment. It also contributes to the difficulties of establishing relations with institutions beyond the border that it has been incalculable in Hungary for years what will happen in health care. The fact that Hungarian hospitals still exist is a great achievement. Every institution struggles for

survival every day. This causes further difficulties in developing relations with the other country.

Regarding education, social provision and other services, agreement must be reached on covering the state and municipality costs of the service concerned. The issues arising in education have been solved by national feeling so far. In the secondary schools of the towns close to the border there are a high number of students who are not Hungarian citizens, but, due to the many kinds of maintainers, the burdens are shared. As an example we could mention the town Sátoraljaújhely, where there are county-, town- and church-maintained secondary schools. Since 2007 the National Slovak Minority Local Government has had the maintenance rights of the Slovak-Hungarian bilingual primary school, which is a new form. In this way, the education costs of the approximately 100 students of the town are shared among the different maintainers.

The joint organization of services requires that both countries should harmonize their laws and decrees to clarify legal relations and cover costs.

6. 5 Actors of administration

6. 5. 1 County municipalities

In most cases, the personal character is typical of the relations of county municipalities. In the course of conversations, it turns out that there are people originating from Felvidék among the officials or some others that have some relatives or other personal connection there. If they find an expert of Hungarian ethnicity on the Slovak side, too, then cooperation will be smooth.

The local government of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County prepared for the accession to the European Union by sending its international official to Brussels as a representative between 1998 and 2002. This meant that the expert concerned travelled there four times a year. This step had evident benefits, since the two neighbouring counties (Košice and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County) could gain exact information about the 2004-2006 Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine neighbourhood programme advertised in 2002 as early as 2001.

The reformation of the administrative system took place at different points of time in the two countries. County councils were replaced by local governments as early as in 1990 in Hungary, whereas in Slovakia

this only happened after 2001. The county local governments of the two countries have been in contact since 2002. The first steps were the courtesy visits of the presidents. Before that county local governments had had to hold talks with the Slovak administrative districts. As an example the agreement of country planning could be mentioned, which was already necessary in the council system. According to the minutes, these talks were conducted by special committees.

Hungarian county local governments have to be rather diplomatic when contacting a Slovak partner. The establishment of relations can be made easier if the first steps are taken in English. With meetings becoming more frequent, people who can speak Hungarian, or even of Hungarian ethnicity, begin to appear. However, talks can be interrupted if the colleague in charge with maintaining relations changes jobs. In case of foreign affairs, personal contacts are very important.

The county local government plays a mediating role between the different organizations. A good example for this is road construction. In Slovakia, public roads marked II and III belong to the county local governments, thus counties have roads of their own. In Hungary, on the other hand, only the roads within the boundaries of settlements belong to the local governments, so the roads between the particular settlements are owned by the state. Therefore, the organizations in charge of public roads belong to the counties in Slovakia, whereas in Hungary they belong to an administrative deconcentrated organization. In the present form of cross-border cooperation, county local governments can only support and influence road construction by organization or talks, because they are no decision-making bodies. Accordingly, it was the Road Management and Coordination Directorate (legal successor: Coordination Centre for the Development of Traffic – henceforth abbreviated CCDT) that submitted applications for grants in the period between 2004 and 2006 of the INTERREG IIIA. The procedure was like this: the county local government discussed with the county local government of Košice that the 'historical crossing points' should be restored. Following this, the county local government applied to the deconcentrated organ for involving the crossing points in its plans. Planning was urged by the county local government, plans were devised, but only on the Hungarian side. Now the task of the county local government is to monitor the Slovak events. Only if planning is started on the Slovak side can they begin coordinating the activities between the Slovak county organization and CCDT, the Hungarian deconcentrated organ.

That the Slovak party has accepted CSEMADOK (a cultural organization for the Hungarian ethnic minority in Slovakia) as a partner can be regarded as a diplomatic step forward. The fact that Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and Banská Bystrica Counties agreed to support the cooperation of the Slovak and the Hungarian ethnic minorities contributed to it, because in Slovakia there are no local governments for minorities, so CSEMADOK had to be accepted. The main organizational role in the joint programme will be played by the local government of the Slovak minority of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County. To facilitate cooperation, the president of the local government of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County and the national president of CSEMADOK signed a letter of intent concerning cooperation in April 2007. In this way, the two organizations have a similar legal status implicitly.

County local governments have to adjust themselves to the changing Slovak political environment. Since the change of government in 2006, the officials of Hungarian ethnicity, who maintained former relations, have disappeared. Again, the Slovak interests gravitating to the north have come into prominence over Hungarian interest gravitating to the south. This can be seen in the case of Banská Bystrica, because, geographically, the county centre is too far in the north and therefore the development of Hungarian and Slovak cross-border relations does not fall within the sight of the authorities. Slovak policy is aimed at building a large national motorway network, so the repairs of the short minor roads of just a few kilometers between villages, so important from a Hungarian point of view, are not in the focus of their attention any more.

The four county development strategies concerning Nógrád and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, as well as Banská Bystrica and Košice Counties, have not been completed yet, although they would be necessary first of all for nature protection. Due to the huge clear water capacity and sewage-water management, the proportion of vulnerable areas is considerable in this section of the border.

However, the letter of intent of the four counties has already been signed in which the areas of cooperation are marked out. Joint planning was launched in general topics on a presidential level in 2002. A general agreement on cooperation was drawn up and signed on 7th April 2004 in Král' near Bánréve. The way to this event had been rather long because talks had had to be held with each of the partners to ensure actual quadrilateral cooperation. At first, there were some difficulties with Nógrád County, probably because it wanted to give preference to its

own bilateral relations. After reaching a political agreement they could start drawing up an actual agreement. The language of the talks was English everywhere, which made common work more efficient. What is more, the original basic document was also in English and it was translated into both Hungarian and Slovak. As for its content, the agreement corresponds to any other document of the Union. The ambition was to acquire as much money as possible through grant applications in the Hungary-Slovakia-Ukraine INTERREG III A-programme. After this, on the basis of the priorities of the operative programme, experts compiled a list of 74 project proposals within 3-4 months after mutual checking. The prepared package of project proposals circulated twice in different venues in the area of the four counties. Groups of two people were in charge everywhere. The package was the subject of discussion in the office departments of the particular local governments, it was revised and, at last, its final version was drawn up in Miskolc. They compiled a table including the participating counties, project managers, the budget of the project, the counties' own contributions, the amounts of the money managed, etc. The completed plan was again discussed and approved by the presidents. In the course of the discussions, the presidents set up an order of priority, which was just slightly different from the proposals of experts. The preparatory stage was successful. In the first round, 143 out of 477 applications were incomplete, but 67 won funding. Hungary won 40, Slovakia 27 and Ukraine 9 tenders, together with the other two countries. In the first round, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County won 46.3% of the amount allocated for Hungary, and 58.6% in the second.

To take part in the cooperation programme of 2007-2013, the participating parties have to work out a new strategy. It is worth involving only the nearby counties in the work and it is pointless to involve several other partners. The professional secretariat is only in contact with the leading project manager. The political tension between the right-wing county local governments and the left-wing Hungarian government has led to the chances of participation of county local governments being narrowed, because the central government withdrew the local governments' contributions necessary for the submission of applications. Cooperation between the institutions has also narrowed down, because they can only implement investments with money from grants. It is hard to prove cross-border influence, which may be an obstacle for investments. The investments with cross-border influence require much higher sums of money. It creates a further difficulty that, even if the investment

can be implemented, due to their tight budgets, local governments cannot provide the money necessary for the continuous operation of the establishment, which is ordained by grant funding regulations.

6. 5. 2 Local governments of settlements

At the level of settlement local governments, there are several processes going on partly simultaneously, partly intertwining with each other.

This phenomenon involves first of all the restoration, construction and putting to use of the minor roads connecting villages separated forcefully by borders. Symbolically, this section of the border is counted from the path running to the castle of Somoskő to Dámóc in Bodroghöz, from where, according to the plans, the road to Pribenik will be built. Along the section between the two crossing points, several paths have been, are being or will be restored, cleaned or built. These tiny roads, marked usually with four-digit numbers, solve the isolation of the local population and lead them back to the centuries-long coexistence again. Among them there are also roads of more significance, such as the roads between Ózd-Susa and Janice or Rimavská Seč, the latter one providing connection between Ózd and Rimavská Sobota towards Lučenec and Zvolen, or the road between Hollóháza and Skároš, a short cut which makes it possible for the population of Sátoraljaújhely to get to Košice and to the airport in Košice on a road that is half as long, only 45 km.

The reconstruction of the bridges over the river Ipeľ would have the same function because it would need relatively small-scale investment. Paths between villages and bridges connecting minor roads would be necessary.

The cooperation of the villages lying close to each other is accompanied by the revival of traditions. This is understandable after such long detachment. The local governments discovering each other again make an inventory of the traditions they have in the fields of the national heritage, the beauty of the landscape and human activities (folk and urban traditions, artistic values). Traditional crafts and world-famous products emerge and are involved in projects. Modernization of traditions means that the rediscovered individual and common values are turned into forms of tourism that can be marketed and into occupations that contribute to making a living and are adjusted to the new conditions. This is how wine tourism is intertwined with the world of thermal baths and spas, regional specialties with hiking and other sports, such as cycling,

rowing and rock climbing, etc. This is how the Danube has become a connecting link and a possibility serving as the basis for future development. *Eurovelo 6*, an international cycling path, is being planned along the banks of the Danube, as well as the construction of marinas and other infrastructure necessary for water tourism.

As an example we could mention the relations between the Hídverő (bridge-building) settlements at the mouth of the river Žitava, which was organized by the Rákóczi Alliance at the end of the 1990s. The idea was that the experience of former historical coexistence should be renewed and, in an abstract sense, a bridge should be built to connect the settlements on the two banks of the Danube, as a result of which cooperation would probably be easier in the future and the small region forming in this way might be more powerful when facing different forums. The idea was supported by the local government of Neszmély in Hungary. In Slovakia thirteen settlements joined the alliance, after it had been officially established on 2nd July 1999. The Slovak settlements that joined are Zlatná na Ostrove, Bátorove Kosihy, Búč, Chotín, Iža, Kravany nad Dunajom, Marcelová, Moča, Modrany, Patince, Radvaň nad Dunajom, Virt and Vrbová nad Váhom. On the Hungarian side, no additional settlements have joined the alliance, but they appreciate its work and participate officially in all of its programmes.

Concerning the Hídverő settlements, it can be stated that the cooperation did not exclusively involve the Hídverő Days, which is an annual event held in Neszmély as its permanent venue and in another settlement of the alliance and which has inevitable regional gravitational force. In 2009, the Hídverő Days were organized for the fourteenth time. Every year a *bridge-building column* is always dedicated in any of the member settlements. On the occasion of the Hungarian millennium, almost all of the settlements erected a sculpture expressing that they are parts of Hungarian history. It was mentioned in Neszmély that alliance membership has greatly contributed to the development of the settlement and it is indispensable when the member settlements are planning the future of their villages and striving to achieve their goals. The infrastructure that is necessary for the organization of the Hídverő Days (a wooden community room – actually a hayshed – and a row of ovens on the bank of the Danube to provide for several thousand people) can be used by the local government of Neszmély for other purposes, too. At present, it serves as a stop of a scheduled cruise organized by an American travel agency where interesting programmes are awaiting tourists. The other

bank of the river is also interested in utilizing the possibilities of tourism. The members of the alliance also thought of the possibility of jointly submitting grant applications. In the frame of the Váh-Dunaj Euroregion, the alliance participated in four PHARE grant programs and they have already submitted a successful application to the Visegrád Fund. Most funding is for planning further development for tourism purposes and different ways of involving the other bank of the Danube in the tourist industry. One of the best examples for this is the Europe Village, which is a part of the plans of Búč and Neszmély and which would be built in the territories of the two villages. It would be an open-air village museum where the traditional village architecture of the member states of the Union would be displayed. Since the exhibition is only complete if tourists visit both sides, it seems to be a good solution for stimulating tourism on the other bank, too.

Simultaneous possibilities can also develop relations between two settlements. The thermal water resources that can be found on both sides of the Danube are exploited in similar ways. The only difference is that Hungarian spas had the opportunity to implement large-scale development in the frame of the Széchenyi Plan between 1998 and 2002, whereas the local governments that operate thermal baths in Slovakia have not had such opportunities so far. Each of the small Slovak settlements with a thermal bath can join the more interesting programmes of the big cities on the other bank (e.g. Veľký Meder and Győr, Štúrovo and Esztergom), but this phenomenon also typically works the other way round, like in case of North Komárno and South Komárom. The spas that can be found very close to each other, but on the two banks of the Danube, can complement each other because in most cases visitors of a spa based on medicinal tourism can also find an aqua park in the neighbourhood.

Examining local governments and municipality institutions, it turns out that legal limitations create a larger obstacle for them than for economic life. However, with a lot of small, rather representative kind of relations, they have already expressed their intentions of cooperation. The cooperation between such large systems takes up more time and requires agreement, mutual adoption and amendments of laws, decrees and procedural methods. Meanwhile, the formerly frozen relations have been revived along the borders. Traffic and the exchange of goods have improved the life of the people living in the borderland. We can witness very different ways of living in the different sections of the border. While

in the western parts coaches transport Slovak people to work in Hungarian companies and industrial plants emerge on the other side, in the east waste iron is collected and transported in trailers pulled by 20 or 30-year-old Ladas produced in the Soviet Union on newly cleaned paths to blast-furnaces and unemployed Hungarian citizens are seeking jobs in small towns in Slovakia.

7. Appendix

List of Slovak Towns in the Hungarian and Slovak languages

Hungarian	Slovak	Hungarian	Slovak
Alsókubin	Dolný Kubín	Kassa	Košice
Aranyosmarót	Zlaté Moravce	Kékkő	Modrý Kameň
Bajmóc	Bojnice	Késmárk	Kežmarok
Bán	Bánovce nad Bebravou	Királyhelmece	Kráľovský Chlmec
Bártfa	Bardejov	Kisszeben	Sabinov
Bazin	Pezinok	Kiszucaújhely	Kysucké Nové Mesto
Berezó	Brezová pod Bradlom	Komárom	Komárno
Besztercebánya	Banská Bystrica	Korompa	Krompachy
Breznóbánya	Brezno	Korpona	Krupina
Csaca	Čadca	Körmöcbánya	Kremnica
Diószeg	Sládkovičovo	Krasznó	Krásno nad Kysucou
Dobsina	Dobšiná	Léva	Levice
Dunaszerdahely	Dunajská Streda	Liptószentmiklós	Liptovský Mikuláš
Egbeľ	Gbeľ	Liptóújvár	Liptovský Hrádok
Eperjes	Prešov	Losonc	Lučenec
Érsekújvár	Nové Zámky	Lőcse	Levoča
Felsővízköz	Svidník	Magastátra	Vysoké Tatry
Fülek	Fíľakovo	Malacka	Malacky
Galánta	Galanta	Máriatólgyes	Dubnica nad Váhom
Galgóc	Hlohovec	Mecenzéf	Medzev
Gálszécs	Sečovce	Mezőlaborc	Medzilaborce
Garamszentkereszt	Žiar nad Hronom	Miava	Myjava
Garamtolmács	Tlmače	Modor	Modra
Girált	Giraltovce	Nagybiccse	Bytča
Gölnicbánya	Gelnica	Nagykapos	Veľké Kapušany
Gúta	Kolárovo	Nagykürtös	Veľký Krtíš
Gyetva, Dettva	Detva	Nagymegyer	Veľký Meder
Gyűgy	Dudince	Nagy Mihály	Michalovce
Herencsvölgy	Hriňová	Nagyróce	Revúca
Héthárs	Lipany	Nagysáros	Veľký Šariš
Holícs	Holíč	Nagyszombat	Trnava
Homonna	Humenné	Nagytopolcsány	Topoľčany
Igló	Spišská Nová Ves	Námesztó	Námestovo
Illava	Ilava	Nemsó	Nemšová
Ipolyság	Šahy	Nyitra	Nitra
Jolsva	Jelšava	Nyitrabánya	Handlová

Appendix

Nyitra novák	Nováky	Szepesolaszi	Spišské Vlachy
Nyustya	Hnúšťa	Szepesvár alja	Spišské Podhradie
Ógyalla	Hurbanovo	Szepeš	Moldava nad Bodvou
Ólubló	Stará Ľubovňa	Szered	Sereď
Ótura	Stará Turá	Szinna	Snina
Órmező	Strážske	Szliács	Sliach
Párkány	Štúrovo	Szobránc	Sobrance
Podolin	Podolíneec	Sztropkó	Stropkov
Poltár	Poltár	Szvit	Svit
Poprád	Poprad	Tapolyhanusfalva	Hanušovce nad Topľou
Pozsony	Bratislava	Tiszacsemyő	Čierna nad Tisou
Pőstyén	Piešťany	Tiszolc	Tisovec
Privigye	Prievidza	Torna lja	Tornaľa
Puhó	Púchov	Tőketerebes	Trebišov
Rajec	Rajec	Trencsén	Trenčín
Rajecfürdő	Rajecké Teplice	Trencsénteplie	Trenčianske Teplice
Rimaszombat	Rimavská Sobota	Trsztena	Trstená
Rózsahegy	Ružomberok	Turdossin	Tvrdošín
Rozsnyó	Rožňava	Turócszentmárton	Martin
Ruttka	Vrútky	Turzófalva	Turzovka
Sasvár-Morvaőr	Šaštín-Stráže	Újbánya	Nová Baňa
Selmecbánya	Banská Štiavnica	Újtölgyes	Nová Dubnica
Simony	Partizánske	Újvároska	Leopoldov
Somorja	Šamorín	Vágbeszterce	Považská Bystrica
Stomfa	Stupava	Vágsellye	Šafa
Stubnyafürdő	Turčianske Teplice	Vágújhely	Nové Mesto nad Váhom
Surány	Šurany	Varannó	Vranov nad Topľou
Szabolca	Skalica	Verbó	Vrbové
Szenc	Senec	Verebély	Vráble
Szenice	Senica	Zólyom	Zvolen
Szentgyörgy	Svätý Jur	Zsarnóca	Žarnovica
Szepesbéla	Spišská Belá	Zseliz	Želiezovce
Szepesófalv	Spišská Stará Ves	Zsolna	Žilina

Slovak	Hungarian	Slovak	Hungarian
Banská Bystrica	Besztercebánya	Malacky	Malacka
Banská Štiavnica	Selmecbánya	Martin	Turócszentmárton
Bardejov	Bártfa	Medzev	Mecenzéf
Bojnice	Bajmóc	Medzilaborce	Mezőlaborc
Bratislava	Pozsony	Michalovce	Nagymihály
Brezno	Breznóbánya	Modra	Modor
Brezová pod Bradlom	Berezó	Modrý Kameň	Kékkő
Bytča	Nagybiccse	Moldava nad Bodvou	Szepesi
Bánovce nad Bebravou	Bán	Myjava	Miava
Detva	Gyetva, Dettva	Nemšová	Nemsó
Dobšiná	Dobsina	Nitra	Nyitra
Dolný Kubín	Alsókubin	Nová Baňa	Újbánya
Dubnica nad Váhom	Máriatölgyes	Nová Dubnica	Újtölgyes
Dudince	Gyűgy	Nováky	Nyitraenovák
Dunajská Streda	Dunaszerdahely	Nové Mesto nad Váhom	Vágújhely
Fifakovo	Fülek	Nové Zámky	Érsekújvár
Galanta	Galánta	Námestovo	Námesztó
Gbely	Egbell	Partizánske	Simony
Gelnica	Gölnicbánya	Pezinok	Bazin
Giraltovce	Girált	Piešťany	Pöstyén
Handlová	Nyitraabánya	Podolíneč	Podolin
Hanušovce nad Topľou	Tapolyhanusfalva	Poltár	Poltár
Hlohovec	Galgóc	Poprad	Poprád
Hnúšťa	Nyustya	Považská Bystrica	Vágbeszterce
Holíč	Holics	Prešov	Eperjes
Hriňová	Herencsvölgy	Prievidza	Privigye
Humenné	Homonna	Púchov	Puhó
Hurbanovo	Ógyalla	Rajec	Rajec
Ilava	Illava	Rajecké Teplice	Rajecfürdő
Jelšava	Jolsva	Revúca	Nagyőrce
Kežmarok	Késmárk	Rimavská Sobota	Rimaszombat
Kolárovo	Gúta	Rožňava	Rozsnyó
Komárno	Komárom	Ružomberok	Rózsahegy
Košice	Kassa	Sabinov	Kisszeben
Kremnica	Körmöcbánya	Senec	Szenc
Krompachy	Korompa	Senica	Szenice
Krupina	Korpona	Sereď	Szered
Krásno nad Kysucou	Krasznó	Sečovce	Gálszécs
Kráľovský Chlmec	Királyhelmece	Skalica	Szakolca
Kysucké Nové Mesto	Kiszucaújhely	Sliac	Szliács
Leopoldov	Újvároska	Sládkovičovo	Diószeg
Levice	Léva	Snina	Szinna
Levoča	Lőcse	Sobrance	Szobránc
Lipany	Héthárs	Spišská Belá	Szepesbéla
Liptovský Hrádok	Liptóújvár	Spišská Nová Ves	Igló
Liptovský Mikuláš	Liptószentmiklós	Spišská Stará Ves	Szepesófalva
Lučenec	Losonc	Spišské Podhradie	Szepesvárallja

Appendix

Spišské Vlachy	Szepesolaszi	Veľký Krtíš	Nagykürtös
Stará Turá	Ótura	Veľký Meder	Nagymegyer
Stará Ľubovňa	Ólubló	Veľký Šariš	Nagysáros
Stropkov	Sztropkó	Vranov nad Topľou	Varannó
Strážske	Órmező	Vrbové	Verbó
Stupava	Stomfa	Vráble	Verebély
Svidník	Felsővízköz	Vrútky	Ruttka
Svit	Szvit	Vysoké Tatry	Magastátra
Svätý Jur	Szentgyörgy	Zlaté Moravce	Aranyosmarót
Tisovec	Tiszolc	Zvolen	Zólyom
Tlmače	Garamtolmács	Čadca	Csaca
Topoľčany	Nagytapolcsány	Čierna nad Tisou	Tiszacsernyő
Tornaľa	Tornalja	Šahy	Ipolyság
Trebišov	Tóketerebes	Šamorín	Somorja
Trenčianske Teplice	Trencsénteplíc	Šaľa	Vágsellye
Trenčín	Trencsén	Šaštín-Stráže	Sasvár-Morvaőr
Tmava	Nagyszombat	Štúrovo	Párkány
Trstená	Trsztena	Šurany	Surány
Turzovka	Turzófalva	Žarnovica	Zsarnóca
Turčianske Teplice	Stubnyafürdő	Želiezovce	Zselíz
Tvrdošín	Turdossin	Žiar nad Hronom	Garamszentkereszt
Veľké Kapušany	Nagykapos	Žilina	Zsolna

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I might dedicate this book to my children: I wonder how they interpret the world around them, since curious reaction is the duty of each generation. With a grand gesture, I might as well dedicate this book to the people living in the Carpathian Basin, since we have all gone through radical changes and we have to speak about them. The majority of the papers written on the topic in Hungary focus on historical events and come to the conclusion that we became losers due to the conflicts of the great powers. This is true. The neighbouring peoples trace the changes in the borders back to the oppressive nature of the Hungarian politics. This, on the other hand, is not or just partly true, which could be exaggerated by the propaganda. I chose to have a different approach and interpret the emergence of the Slovak state as a conquest, because, I think, after so many years the present situation has to be evaluated. What has become of the multinational and multicultural part of present-day Slovakia which we call Felvidék? What has become of the multinational and multicultural towns there, which so many novels have been written about? The present book begins with the comparison of old and new and describes how the conditions have changed paying special attention to the changes that have taken place in towns. Finally, it gives an account of the reviving cooperation in the area.

An increasing number of books, articles and papers are being published on Slovakia. I hope this book will also contribute to the knowledge involved in them.

Lectori salutem!

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