

KAMNIK AND ITS DEVELOPMENT POTENTIALS

Situated at the foot of the green Alpine highlands, Kamnik is a medieval town with spirit and a rich history. Facts about its prehistoric past are vague, and the period of great migrations, which took place just before the collapse of the Roman Empire, is shrouded in mystery. It was during this time that Kamnik was born, its beginnings known to us only through numerous legends and myths. The latter, among other things, speak of the supposed existence of a lake, which used to cover the area of today's Kamnik, stretching all the way from Nevlje to what is now the Old Town centre on Šutna, more specifically to the parish church. According to Valvasor, mooring rings had at one time been attached to the defensive walls of the Little Castle. Another legend says that the two Kamnik castles, the Old and Little Castle, had once upon a time been joined together, only to be torn apart by a horrific tempest, which in all its might had split the mountain in twain. Yet the most famous tale of all is that of Veronika, the town's patron saint depicted on the Municipality of Kamnik's coat of arms, and her treasure, hidden in the cellars of the Little Castle. The beautiful and wealthy, yet cursed countess had supposedly turned into a monster, half woman half snake, after refusing to help a beggar. Veronika still lives beneath the Little Castle to this day, hidden with her treasure, waiting for a saviour to come. Her saviour will be the one who will rock in a pinewood cradle and will strike her three times with a hazel stick. After the third blow, the curse will be lifted, and Veronika will turn back into a beautiful countess. The one to save her shall become her husband and shall claim the treasure.

After centuries of anonymity, medieval Kamnik had appeared in all its glory under the auspices of the Old and Little Castles, and developed into a flourishing centre of craftsmanship with its own mint, and became home to many respectable dynastic families, e.g. the renowned Bavarian noble family, the Counts of Andechs.

Today Kamnik is the cultural and administrative centre of its municipality, occupying an area of 266 km² and home to approximately 30.000 inhabitants. Due to its location on the junction between the plains of the Gorenjska region and the Celje Basin, not far from the Slovene capital, with major transport, energy and other infrastructural pathways connecting eastern and western parts of the country via its territory or nearby, the Municipality of Kamnik possesses a unique potential for development. One of the main advantages representing key development opportunities and the basis for comprehensive and sustainable development of the local community lies in the municipality's close proximity to the Kamnik-Savinja Alps. The latter supply a whole array of possibilities to enjoy an active vacation or recreation, as well as provide many natural resources such as sufficient amount of clean drinking water and vast wooded areas. Another precious jewel of the region is Velika Planina, which is the largest highland pasture in Slovenia with over a hundred uniquely-shaped herdsman huts. It is also a rich cultural and historical heritage with a Romanesque chapel and renovated defence tower at Mali grad castle, the Renaissance-

baroque Zaprice Manor, the open-air museum Skansen with a collection of granaries from the Tuhinj Valley, the birth house of the great Slovene general, patriot and poet Rudolf Maister, etc.

In addition to ensuring efficient use of existing natural and cultural resources, Kamnik and its surroundings also offer numerous other development opportunities to boost competitiveness, stimulate economic growth and improve the quality of life:

- favourable conditions for the development of organic agriculture with emphasis on local self-sufficiency and the cultivation of old indigenous crop varieties (meadow orchards found in Kamnik's rural areas are of world-class quality);
- the structure of education, especially that of the young population, represents an enormous potential for creating new, high added value jobs (social entrepreneurship, start-up companies, innovative business solutions, etc.), as well as a number of measures aimed at improving the responsiveness of education to current labour market demands and to enhance the entrepreneurial skills of the local population;
- a number of degraded industrial areas suitable for revitalization;
- good accessibility of the area and proximity to the capital city provide favourable conditions for the promotion of cycling and walking between particular urban centres as well as the potential to upgrade cycling and hiking infrastructure, mountain and learning trails, and to promote alternative forms of transportation and non-motorized mobility;
- the richness of folk culture (pastoralism, milling, clothing heritage, handicrafts);
- a wide range of sports facilities (golf courses, a football and athletic stadium, swimming pool, tennis and volleyball courts, an archery range);
- broadly recognized tourist destinations/products (Volčji Potok Arboretum, the Kamnik Bistrica river valley, Terme Snovik thermal spa, Tunjice Natural Healing Resort, a selection of local delicacies under the recognized brand Tastes of Kamnik ...);
- an effective and efficient system of implementing various tasks related to the integrated management of natural and other disasters (preparedness, response, mitigation) based on voluntary activity which had led the Municipality of Kamnik to become the first Slovene municipality to join UNISDR's Making Cities Resilient Campaign;
- the efforts of the local community and its many humanitarian organizations to improve the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups (unemployed, the elderly, young people with physical disabilities, persons with developmental disorders) and to provide equal opportunities for our citizens;
- a number of social innovations (e.g. a care model for the elderly based on voluntary youth work, and a consulting office that provides the elderly and disabled with free legal and medical counselling and other useful information, both of which have been

awarded several national awards, a day centre for people with mental health problems, a soup kitchen for underprivileged citizens, accommodations for the homeless).

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THE EUROPEAN PROJECTS OFFICE

With a wide range of financial and other incentives, the municipality of Kamnik is constantly striving to strengthen its development potential and to create an appropriate supportive environment for the benefit of its citizens. Unfortunately, the needs are extensive and resources available in the local and national budget are rather limited. Therefore, it will be necessary to obtain additional sources of financing elsewhere.

"Incentives come from outside, knowledge comes from within, yet only when both coincide, do we attain development." - Seneca

Presentation-Mission-Contacts

Presentation:

The municipality of Kamnik is aware that obtaining non-repayable funds represents an invaluable contribution to the progress and development of the local community. To this end, we are following the example of good practice on a national and European level within the Department of Development and Investments and have formed a European Projects Office, the primary focus of which is to obtain European grants, while with various development-oriented activities aiming to contribute to the utilization of the municipality's many development potentials, and consequently, to the well-being of our citizens.

The European Projects Office pursues the municipality's development aims by means of the following activities:

- monitoring calls for proposals on a regional, national and international level;
- developing, preparing, leading, coordinating and executing the municipality's development projects;
- searching for domestic and foreign project partners, arranging project documentation, submitting project applications;
- cooperating with competent regional institutions and actors of development and the interested professional public in the preparation of technical bases for regional development;
- managing and controlling the municipal government's integration activities in the preparation and implementation of development projects of the municipality;

➤ the inclusion of the municipality into regional and international development networks.

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References:

The municipality of Kamnik has in the past financial perspective obtained European grants and state funds for various projects in the total amount of € 7,186,113.8.

There has been a successful obtainment of grants from various funds such as the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development as well as from other European Community programmes such as the Europe for Citizens programme, dynAlp programme, the 6th and 7th Framework Programmes, and Exchange 3. The municipality of Kamnik had carried out some of the projects independently and for these had acquired assets in the amount of € 5,803,745.8. The municipality has also formed partnerships with other municipalities and participated in several regional and transnational projects for which it obtained € 1,382,368 of EU funds.

Projects funded by European transnational cooperation programmes:

1. Cross-border program Slovenia – Austria 2007-2013, project “Nature experience”, partner
2. Central Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, project named “Listen to the voice of villages”, pilot area
3. Alpine Space Programme European Territorial Cooperation 2007-2013, project named “CO2 Neutral Alp”, pilot area

4. Sixth Framework Programme EU, project Future bridge, partner

Projects funded by the European Agricultural Fund:

5. Renovation of the Budnar's museum house,
6. Renovation of the library in Šmarca,
7. LEADER projects.

Projects funded by the ERDF and social fund:

8. Expert Groundwork for the Preparation of the Regional Spatial Plan,
9. Regional Scholarship Scheme for Ljubljana Urban Region,
10. Expert Basis for Managing Public Transportation in the Region

Projects funded by the Cohesion Fund:

11. Energy renovation of public buildings (schools, kindergartens)
12. Exchange program (Business incubator in Backi Petrovac – Serbia)

Program Dynalp (Alpine convention)

13. Invitation into the forest, leading partner
14. Urban areas and ecological green space, partner
15. Eco-packaging, leading partner
16. Youth exchange, partner