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General information

The Primorskoe region including the cities Koper and Piran is located in the south-west of slovenia. It is the only coastal region in slovenia and it borders Italy, which has a significant influence on the region's culture and language. The region is influenced by a great deal of Traditions, which has a profound impact on the region's development, ability to adapt and on the modernisation. In the following, we will assess the region's, as well as the individual city's future prospects and the possible course of development, regarding especially the importance of Tourism for the region.

Primorskoe region - Liah

Demographic situation as it presents itself today

For a proper evaluation of the future best or worst perspective in regional development of



Slovenia we are going to begin by describing the situation as it presents today. Our focus lies on the Primorskoe Region or the Slovene littoral of Slovenia which comprises two out of the 12 statistical regions "Goriška" and the southern part of Obalno – Kraška (Karst region) and is one out of the five traditional areas,

characterized by their different landscapes.

The region forms most of the western part of Slovenia and stretches from the Adriatic Sea in the south up to the Julian Alps in the North and simultaneously borders the inter municipal union of Giuliana in the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, (which is one of the 20 regions of Italy) in the north and in the south the peninsula Istria of Croatia¹.

The area is the country's only excess to the sea and even though the coastline makes up only a small portion of the whole western border of the primorskoe region and the country itself,

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slovene_Littoral

it is of significant importance to the economic sector and is most developed after the capital Ljubljana² in terms of infrastructure, standard of living and touristic usage. Therefore has a lot of potential for growth due to the location followed by touristic attraction but this creates a strong dependence economically and a potential for risk but we are going to assess later how this mono – economy might be dangerous or not ideal for development as a whole concept.

Touristic attraction:

What makes the region so attractive for visitors? Characteristic for the region is not only the access to water in the south but its general huge variety of landscapes altogether. One could divide the region into two completely different areas depending on their relief and landscape, having that in mind a tourist individually can experience all what Slovenia has to offer in one vacation and that mindset can be very well advertised. From the Julian Alps and the Soca valley in the north to the Caves and underground rivers of the Karst region and the coastal area of the Adriatic sea in the south, there is a lot to discover.

Landscape variety:

The northern region has to offer the beautiful turquoise river the Soča and centered around the body of water can be a sporty vacation with activities like rafting, kayak, biking etc. There are accommodations like Hotels, apartments and farms in the towns Trenta, Bovec (spring of the Soča) Kobarid and Tolmin. The mountain health resort makes up 19 percent of the total number of overnight stays³ and to further nourish that



² <http://www.slowenien-individuell.de/Primorska.htm>

³ <https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/News/Index/10305>

touristic economical development, there are highways being build to connect the north and the south of the Primorska region, so that a visitor has more freedom and availability⁴.

As for the mediterranean area in the south the Adriatic sea is focused upon and surrounded by the biggest cities of Slovenia like Koper and Piran and is the most prosperous part of the country. The seaside health resort makes up 23 percent of the total number of overnight stays in Slovenia which is about 213.600⁵ in comparison the four municipalities lined up at the mediterranean coast, Koper, Izola, Ankaran and Piran inhabit about 88.000 people⁶ in total.

Workforce:

Despite being the most economically developed part of the country, The GDP per capita in the Karst and littoral region is at about 22.267 Euros, which is the second highest in Slovenia and the average net monthly wage is at about 1030.16 euros (Slovene average: 1014.77 euros), but many people depend on precarious and poorly paid jobs like harbor, tourism and industry labour.

Already in 2017 3 percent of the regions inhabitants were recipients of regular social support and in previous years there was a growing demand (e.g in Piran the number of recipients was growing by 14 percent from 2015 to 2017). The unemployment rate is at about 14 percent, which is in fact lower than the national average at 21.9 percent, however this could be explained that generally speaking all of the already mentioned factors and opportunities this region offers in relation to tourism



⁴ <http://www.slovenien-individuell.de/Primorska.htm>

⁵ <https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/News/Index/10305>

⁶ <https://www.empowermed.eu/resource/slovenian-toolbox/>

contribute to the decrease in unemployment, for example the main harbor in Koper creates a lot of job opportunities⁷.

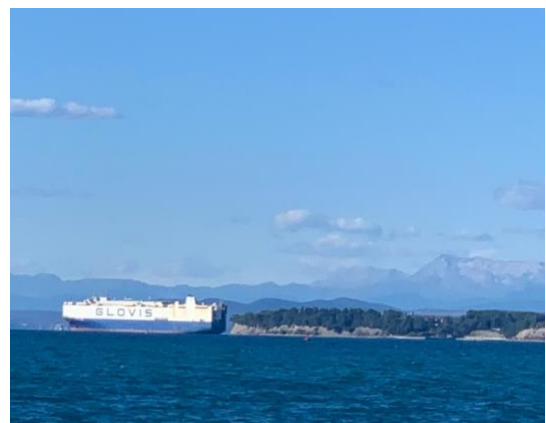
This development and high share in “low quality” jobs, create a high tension in real estate markets due to touristic demand for housing and impedes the search for accommodations of local citizens. In addition the lack of heating and cooling systems, the poor insulation and general deterioration of buildings are as well results of the dependency on the touristic market.

As a worst possible outcome would the dependency on tourism and the high share in low quality jobs lead to economic instability and a low quality of life or the economy will diversify and the focus would be on jobs of higher outcome and the region has a backbone in case a crisis were to happen.

Koper – Antonia

Koper is a city located in the south-west of Slovenia and is one of the few cities of Slovenia at the coast to the Mediterranean sea. Its location at the Gulf of Trieste is very significant, since Koper’s main economic factors are the export and import through Koper’s seaport and the summer tourism.

The region around Koper ranks 4th in inhabitants within Slovenia. ⁸It has approximately 25,000 inhabitants, most of which are employed in the harbour, in Koper’s tourism or in industry-jobs. Up until 2019, a company producing engines was one of the most prominent companies in Koper as well, however it became insolvent and therefore a great deal of employment was lost.⁹



⁷ <https://www.empowermed.eu/resource/slovenian-toolbox/>

⁸ <https://www.koper.si/aktualno/>

⁹ <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koper>

Education is valued highly in Koper, as they have several primary schools as well as high schools with different priorities, e.g. the Gimnazija Koper with an emphasis on a very academical education or another high school which is more job orientated and offers something similar to an apprenticeship.¹⁰

Since 2003 Koper also has a university.¹¹ Although this has changed the future prospects for many of Koper's younger students and has also improved Koper's prominence internationally, the university is relatively small, not particularly versatile and only offers very few majors.

Koper's main economic factor is the summer tourism, which employs many people, leads to more international acclaim of Koper and provides for a significant amount of the city's income. The location at the coast with multiple beaches, a diverse landscape, interesting culture and sights offers many opportunities for tourists and is therefore one of the most important financial factors for Koper's citizens, which allows for more economic opportunity in consequence. The tourism is supported by various hotels in the city centre, as well as by airports nearby, such as Ljubljana, Trieste and also Venice. Tourists are able to visit the famous and historic Praetorian Palace, as well as sights outside the city, like e.g. the Karst, olive plantations and salt pans.¹²

Even though Koper is a relatively small city with only few attractions, tourists can enjoy bigger cities and more sights like Ljubljana, Trieste, Piran or Lipica, which are not far away from Koper and easy to reach.

All of these aspects make Koper an almost ideal touristic destination, since there are many possibilities that meet the interests of many different people. However, this can become a problem for Koper in various ways, as Tourism is often not very environmentally friendly.

¹⁰ Interview with exchange partner

¹¹ Tour through Koper and the university

¹² <https://www.slovenia.info/de>

Additionally, Koper is very dependant on Tourism, which can become a problem as well. Especially in the Covid-Pandemic, areas depending mostly on tourism were affected deeply, as tourism could not take place at all. Another similar crisis would mean an extreme socioeconomic problem for the region. However it is important to remember that while a dependency on tourism is rather problematic, the economic opportunity of the region has significantly increased and many social factors have also improved profoundly just because of tourism, as many people can make a living from it.



A very important factor in Koper's development is tradition. Tradition is still very prominent in Koper and the area around Koper, as e.g. agricultural or industrial productions are still maintained in a traditional way. However, the region has managed to become a modern, industrial one, that is able to adapt while still maintaining traditions and conforming to its natural preconditions. This is very important for the region as traditions are an important social factor and provide for more stability within the society

In order to determine the best and worst possible cases of development, one has to know what has already happened in Koper to avoid a bad outcome and to achieve an ideal case of development. Koper already has a very good infrastructure and ranks second in the best developed regions of Slovenia. Additionally, the education possibilities have developed significantly in the last years and therefore provide much better future prospects for young people.

However, there are many aspects that are not ideal for the future, like the lack of education versatility and the mono-economy of tourism, which can become a problem, especially in crises like the Pandemic.



The worst possible outcome of development in Koper would be, if nothing changed or if opportunities decreased and the mono-economy became even more prominent.

The best case development would include a more versatile economy, that is not that strongly dependent on one thing, like tourism, as well as an increased modernisation of economic and industrial aspects, while still maintaining traditions as those are crucial for a functioning society. It would be beneficial to the development of Koper, if younger people had more

opportunities in their future, e.g. due to a more diverse education.

Altogether it can be said, that Koper is already on a good way to a positive development, even though there is much to be done.

Piran – Greta

Demography

Piran is a small town on a peninsula on the coast of Slovenia. It's overall area is about 14 square kilometers, 0.7 of which is the city centre. The town has 15,000 inhabitants which over time started to consist of more Slovenes than Italians, in contrast to 1910 when the population was almost completely Italian.¹³

The general population is slowly but continuously growing over the years.

About 1,400 of these citizens are pupils, studying at any one of Piran's 5 main schools.

62.7% of the citizens are employed and have the average income of 1,500€ per month¹⁴.

¹³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piran#Demographics>

¹⁴ <https://www.stat.si/obcine/en/Municip/GroupedAll/119>

Climate and Economics

Like all of Slovenia Piran's climate is rather warm and mediterranean. Due to climate change, which also affects Piran, temperatures as well as the sea level are progressively rising.

As Piran is close to the Italian border and has Italian citizens it is largely influenced by Italian culture. Especially traditions and foods have been taken over by the Slovenian town.

Piran also has many twin cities in countries like Italy, Norway, Turkey, Montenegro and US state Indiana, which means they have a social or legal agreement for solidarity.¹⁵



The main businesses in Piran are tourism, fishing and salt production.

In the area around the town there are salt pans, which are a big aspect of Piran's economy and income. They are a traditional business of naturally producing salt which is then transported all throughout Slovenia.

Even though there is an international airport close to Piran in Trieste it is not traded internationally, the same goes for the output of the fishing industry.

It mainly consists of local fishermen as Piran is located directly on the coast with a big and historical harbour. This makes fishing very common among the citizens, either for commercial or private manners.

Apart from the salt pans, most of the high tourism happens in the city centre. With its historic and mediterranean architecture and many narrow alleys, many people find it has a charming and beautiful atmosphere.

¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piran#International_relations

The most important sights are the church tower of Saint George's Church on a hill above the city, the Tartini square and the Cape Madonna which are frequently visited, especially in summer.

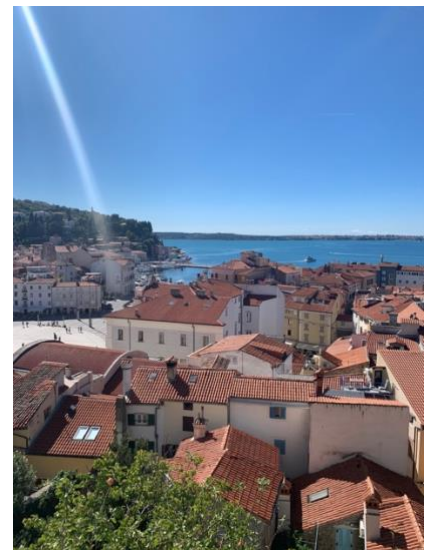
Tourism

From the church one has a view over the entire city. Especially the traditional red roofs of the houses creates an interesting perspective from above.

But also the church with the bell tower itself is very popular. It has 150 steps that you can climb to the very top to see even further.

From the Cape Madonna, the very edge of Piran's peninsula, you can see both Italy and Croatia. With the colorful houses of mediterranean architecture and many restaurants and cafés along the boardwalk it is a popular spot for going on walks, taking pictures or going swimming.

The boardwalk leads to a harbour, the Port Piran, which contains many sailboats belonging to the citizens and especially fishermen of the town.



Right by the harbour is the main square of Piran: the Tartini Square. It is named after Giuseppe Tartini, a composer from Piran, who also lived by the square. His house has since been turned into a museum about him.¹⁶

There are also other museums in Piran, as well as restaurants, cafés and small stores or gift shops, which together form a big part of Piran's work force.

Especially near the boardwalk and the sights they are mainly for touristic use as a free time activity and have been targeted at visitors, similar to the salt pans.

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tartini_House

There are also guided tours with different stops to book to have Piran's history explained by locals.¹⁷

Conditions for the future

To maintain Piran's charme, the restoration of historical sights and keeping them intact is very important to keep tourism active.

This, supported especially by the beautiful nature and architecture, could attract for example influencers to the town, leading to the best case of Piran getting more global attention as a travel destination.

Due to the history and therefore many historical sights, as they teach about the past, these aspects of Piran will most likely stay relevant in the future as well.

The worst case scenario here would be the loss of interest of foreign visitors, for example due to Piran becoming overcrowded beforehand because of its small size or it could be seriously affected by climate change in the future. For example rising sea levels could be a threat to the harbour and boardwalk and harm the houses located there.

As tourism is the main business in Piran, this would be fatal for the town.

To support Piran as a whole and make it more sustainable for the future, it would be important to advance especially international trade and transport for more global range, even though, due to the international connections with its twin towns, Piran is already playing a bigger role in globalization.

Final assessment

In general, one can say that the Primorskoe region has been built up to be a rather popular touristic attraction in Slovenia due to its history and aspects of nature.

This results in visitors being its main source of income and the need for progressively more attractions in order to avoid a loose of interest in the region.

¹⁷ <https://www.travelmag.com/articles/the-fishing-town-of-piran/>

In this case, in the foreseeable future, Slovenia will stay relevant and be able to maintain its income, which is important due to big parts of its workforce relying on and resulting from this.

But, as tourism is a rather unstable and unpredictable industry, it would be useful to not only rely on it but expand and advance to more businesses and become further international to be more secure of the region's future.

It is important for the region to keep adjusting to the social, economic and ecological situations and circumstances, while still being able to maintain traditions.

