



**HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF  
AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES**

**Examination of the Aspects of  
Transportation Well-being in the Ipoly  
Region**

**Doctoral (PhD) Thesis Summary**

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Gödöllő  
2024**

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## **1. Background and Objectives of the Research**

The aim of the scientific dissertation is to contribute to uncovering the potential of the North Hungarian region through the development of transportation, tourism, and the economy, maximizing the utilization of opportunities within these sectors. It seeks to outline tourism development directions and specific interventions aligned with the objectives of sustainable development, positively influencing the general well-being of the population and fostering local economic growth. To this end, the dissertation focuses on practical solutions, enabling effective collaboration among local residents, decision-making municipalities, attraction owners, and businesses directly involved in tourism. The North Hungarian region, particularly its border areas — specifically the border strip on both sides of the state line — is an underdeveloped area with unfavorable indicators.

The research plan underlying the dissertation included the following questions: „I will examine whether the transportation development plans of the North Hungarian region consider the accessibility of the area from a tourism perspective or bypass untapped potentials, thereby preserving the current isolation. How have the various versions of development concepts and proposals — such as the National Spatial Plan, county-level spatial plans, and the National Transportation Development Strategy — evolved in the case of the North Hungarian region, and what impact might these changes have on tourism development and regional accessibility?

In the case of villages, they cannot independently but primarily through collaboration and joint representation, present themselves strongly in the tourism product market. However, these settlements are precisely the ones in the poorest transportation situations. What transportation developments are necessary to ensure that services become accessible to a broader segment of society in their case?”

as well as

„What kinds of transport development investments have been implemented for the development of tourist destinations in the Northern Hungary region, and would the development of road 2 be able to contribute to the development of the Börzsöny tourist destination. Currently, due to Börzsöny's favorable location close to Budapest, the southern area of the destination is easily accessible with the development of the M2 to a 2x2 lane, but the northern parts are not easily accessible. The further development of the M2 is not only an issue because of the Börzsöny tourist destination, but also because of the developments in Nógrád County.

The county of Nógrád is wedged between two tourist destinations, so that a few settlements located on the edge of the county also belong to it, but there is no defining tourist destination in the county itself. According to ideas, Salgótarján

and the region of Karancs-Medves are suitable for becoming a priority development area and a decisive tourist area. In this case, the development of road transport here was realized before the coordinated and well-coordinated developments, however, the socio-economic characteristics of the region and the range of services also need to be developed in order to become a significant tourist point. According to expectations, the investments will also result in the modernization of railway line 81 in the region, which in the optimal case will not only go to Salgótarján or Somoskőújfalu, but will be modernized as far as Losonc as a result of an international agreement. Re-opening the possibility of international traffic can contribute to increasing the number of visitors to the area along the railway."

The basic aim of the dissertation, in accordance with the research work plan, is to focus attention on the problem of the Ipoly Valley, an area strongly affected by domestic active, eco- and cultural tourism, but so far little focused, which is not primarily due to the lack of attractions, but rather their underutilization, its unfamiliarity is due to its difficult accessibility, as well as the insufficiency of related services and the common image that ensures a unified, defining image of the region.

Based on the above, the general objective of the thesis is to make a proposal for the transport and, in this context, tourism and economic development within the Northern Hungary region, primarily affecting the border area. In the framework of the general objective, in order to achieve sustainable development goals, to improve livability and to mitigate environmental effects, the role of quality in relation to traffic characteristics can be demonstrated, as well as analysis with methods that can be used in practice, and the formulation of proposals based on the analyzes in order to eliminate border peripheral phenomena. The aim is to determine the development direction of the Ipoly valley in a broader sense, so that the results of the studies will be used in practice by the actors of regional development, the organizations responsible for the development and coordination of transport, as well as the tourism and economic actors.

The aim of the research is therefore to reveal the reasons that hinder the accessibility of the region and the internal barrier-free transport system, so the implementation of cross-border transport is one of the important challenges. The development potential of a region is basically determined by the accessibility of the region and its internal transport network, the latter of which is also enhanced by the problems arising from borderlessness.

One of the little-recognized institutions of the border area in the county is the European Territorial Partnership, which, due to the nature of the organization, can represent an opportunity to solve border traffic problems along with promoting the development of tourism and the economy.

The aim of the thesis is to provide a comprehensive, complex transport geography assessment of the situation in the Ipoly Valley and similar areas with the help of the reviewed literature, evaluated statistical data, field trips, which include the ethnographic method, and in-depth interviews, which help to identify the

phenomena of the area that cannot be presented with data. , its features can be outlined, and on the basis of which economic and tourism developments can be promoted.

Along the general goal, various sub-goals also determined the research directions as follows:

- General exploration of the connected system of transport options and the economy and tourism and the determination of the development direction of the examined areaA határon átnyúló szervezeti struktúra bemutatása, lehetséges működési mechanizmus ismertetése
- The definition of urban areas that take into account the characteristics of the region's settlement network, which determines mobility needs, and which can be used to plan the development of transport links
- To strengthen local trade along the border with the help of the characteristics of the local economy, especially the production and trade of local services and local products
- The use of the Palóc culture, characteristic of the landscape, as an identity-forming force, taking into account aspects of population retention, as well as the development of a tourism brand system
- Exploration of existing and potential tourist attractions in the investigated area and examination of their accessibility in order to increase tourism, taking into account the knowledge of slow tourism

Objective, research questions and hypotheses of the thesis

I summarize the objectives of the research, the questions and hypotheses formulated in connection with them in Table 1.

During the research, the tests were aimed at verifying the following hypotheses:

- H1 The unified management and coordination of the area on both sides of the border enables a more effective development strategy, and one of the optimal organizations known today is the European Territorial Association
- H2 Eradication of the transport poverty in the region can be achieved by developing infrastructure and public services, which contributes to the increase of population mobility, thus causing economic revival.
- H3 Improving the accessibility of the area helps the population stay in place, better transport options contribute to the increase of the attractiveness of the area
- H4 The development of transport in the Northern Hungary region, and within it the Ipoly Valley, contributes to the development of the region's economy and tourism

**TABLE 1: GOALS, QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH**

The research			
	aims	questions	hypotheses
1.	In the Northern Hungary region, the development of the local economy and tourism can contribute to the improvement of the region's indicators with a mutually reinforcing effect	<p>Can the studied region be placed as part of a potential large area?</p> <p>Can it be proven that an organization that controls investments on both sides of the border in a unified way can promote the efficiency of developments with the help of better coordination?</p>	The development of transport in the Northern Hungary region, and within it the Ipoly Valley, contributes to the development of the region's economy and tourism
2.	With improved access to transport, mobility increases, which increases the population retention power of the area and improves employment and economic data.	What kind of cross-border mobility is typical, which establishes the need for cross-border public service transport?	Eradication of the transport poverty in the region can be achieved by developing infrastructure and public services, which contributes to the increase of population mobility, thus causing economic revival
3.	Infrastructure developments contribute to the effectiveness of tourism developments, and these help to improve social and economic indicators.	Can it be proven that the organization that unites the development of the two areas of the border can increase the population retention power of the area by performing additional tasks for the improvement of local indicators and by strengthening cross-border mobility?	The unified management and coordination of the area on both sides of the border enables a more effective development strategy, and one of the optimal organizations known today is the European Territorial Association.

4.	What phenomena of transport poverty can be experienced in the region	Does the external accessibility of the region and the internal transport system determine the development potential?	Eradication of the transport poverty in the region can be achieved by developing infrastructure and public services, which contributes to the increase of population mobility, thus causing economic revival
5.	Is the development of tourism in the Ipoly Valley and the improvement of accessibility compatible with the criteria of sustainable development and sustainable tourism?	What kind of tourism developments that match the research goal should be concentrated on?	The development of transport in the Northern Hungary region, and within it the Ipoly Valley, contributes to the development of the region's economy and tourism
7.	Will the improvement of the infrastructure and the livelihood opportunities provided by tourism contribute to catching up with the disadvantaged population.	Can it be proven that the development of cross-border transport promotes the development of the economy and tourism of peripheral regions?	Improving the accessibility of the area helps the population stay in place, better transport options contribute to the increase of the attractiveness of the area

Source: own editing (2024)



## 2. Material and methodology

The structure of the dissertation was prepared according to the requirements of the document published by the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, which includes the formal and content requirements of the doctoral dissertation.

The first chapter of the dissertation is the introduction, in which the antecedents of the research can be learned, as well as the actuality of the topic and its brief geographical and specialist location.

The geographical boundaries of the examined area - 4.2.1. as written in chapter - the 25 km border strip of Ipoly, which is shown in Figure 1.

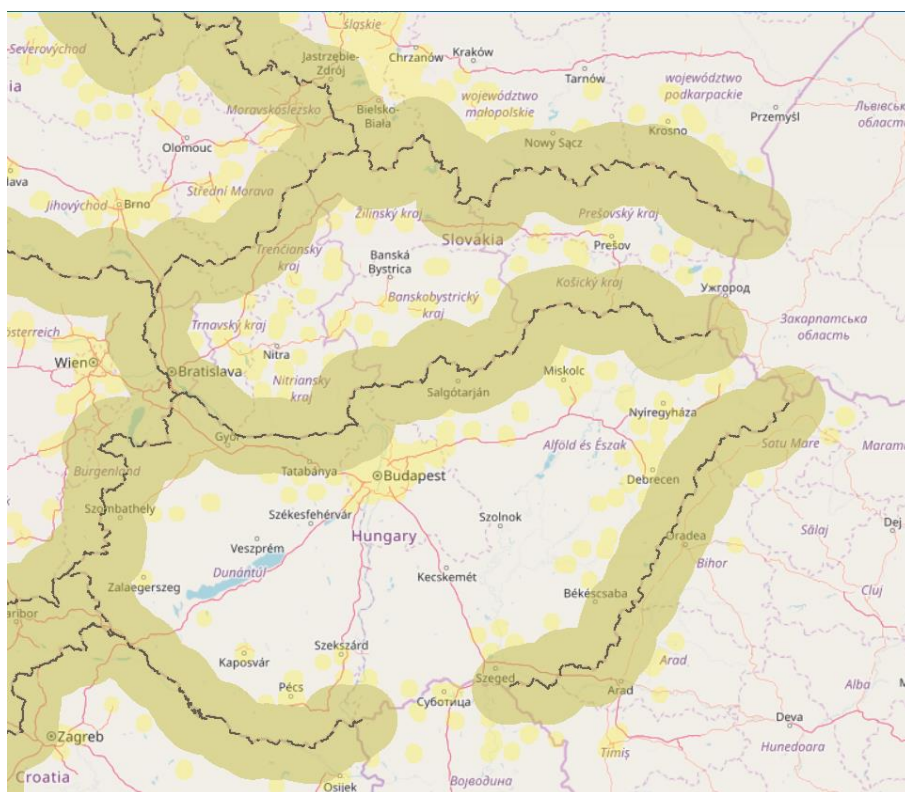


Figure 1. The geographic focus area of the research is the 25 km border strip of Ipoly

Source: own editing, 2024.

The three sub-chapters of the second chapter contain the explanation of the objectives of the thesis, the hypotheses and the structure of the thesis and its

research methods. The objectives of the thesis are found in the first sub-chapter, as well as an explanation of the aim, taking into account the history of the research. In the first half of the section, the relevant parts of the research plan that formed the basis of the study are listed, followed by the sub-goals, which also determined the study directions. The formulated hypotheses can be found in the second subsection. The third subsection describes the structure and research methods of the thesis.

The third chapter covers the summary of the scientific literature examined during the literature review, with particular regard to the relationship between tourism and transport in the first sub-chapter, the second sub-chapter contains the literature presentation of the relationship between sustainable tourism and transport. Within this, non-motorized transport and tourism (chapter 3.2.1), transport as the goal and means of tourism (3.2.2), the special group of attractions (3.2.3) and some issues of sustainable transport (3.2. 4.).

The third part of the literature review is the analysis of the concept of the region (3.3), which also includes the regulatory background affecting the regions (3.3.1) and the description of the regulatory environment of cross-border regions (3.3.2), as these are international and European Union regulatory can be designed with regard to the environment.

The literature review presents a synthesis of the known professional documents related to spatial networks (3.4), within this chapter 3.4.1 the development of the domestic rural settlement network and chapter 3.4.2 the literature on border traffic and border regions.

The fourth chapter is the material and method section, in which the research material (4.2) and the applied research methods (4.2), including the definition of the geographical area and focus area (4.2.1), the secondary (4.2.2.) and primary (4.2.3) research methods were included. The research methods were continuously developed in the course of the investigation, influencing each other, however, in parallel with the definition of the geographical focus area, a thorough study of the specialized literature and getting to know the figures of available databases helped to determine the appropriate primary research methods.

In the fifth chapter, the description of the results covers the changes in the examined spatial structure - 5.1. subsection - and in subsection 5.2, in the results describing the traffic situation, the individual traffic characteristics, the characteristics of public transport services and the quality of life in transport are listed separately in 5.2.1., 5.2.2. and subsections 5.2.3. The description of the region's internal infrastructure network is contained in chapter 5.3, and finally in chapter 5.4. the hypothesis test was carried out in chapter

The sixth chapter, in the framework of the conclusions and recommendations chapter, in accordance with the hypotheses, includes three subsections, on the one hand, the recommendations for the operation of a cross-border organization (6.1.), the improvement of traffic conditions (6.2) and the overall possible direction of tourism development (6.3).

The seventh chapter contains the new scientific results.

The eighth chapter is the summary, which contains a short synthesis of the dissertation.

The thesis contains qualitative - interviews and in-depth interviews, observation and text analysis - and quantitative - statistical analysis, collection of numerical data - research methods, detailed explanation of which can be found in chapter 4.2.

### 3. Results

In the fifth chapter, the description of the results covers the changes in the examined spatial structure - 5.1. subsection - and in subsection 5.2, in the results describing the traffic situation, the individual traffic characteristics, the characteristics of public transport services and the quality of life in transport are listed separately in 5.2.1., 5.2.2. and subsections 5.2.3. The description of the region's internal infrastructure network is contained in chapter 5.3, and finally in chapter 5.4. the hypothesis test was carried out in chapter

In the course of the research, as stated in chapter 2.1, the tests aimed at verifying the following hypotheses, the evaluation of which is as follows:

- ∞ H1 The unified management and coordination of the area on both sides of the border enables a more effective development strategy, and one of the optimal organizations known today is the European Territorial Association.

He examined the hypothesis primarily on the basis of the operation of other European regional associations with membership in Hungary, as the state administration, public administration and within them the operation of transport systems and services show great differences between the member states of the European Union.

Among the tasks of the European regional associations with domestic membership, the development of transport networks and public transport services was given a less central role, despite the fact that all of them articulate the need for transport development. Regarding the border areas of Hungary where the infrastructure network is available - e.g. In the direction of Austria - cross-border public services are not available or not necessarily available. The regulatory background does not clearly define cross-border public services, which makes practical implementation difficult. The European territorial association can be a solution to the problem if you have the right rights.

Before the European Union membership, the concept of small border traffic was known among the neighboring states, which made everyday life easier for those living along the border. The activities of those living in a defined strip of the state border - usually 10-50 km wide - were facilitated by border crossing and other preventive measures. This clearly shows that the more disadvantageous living situation of the border population was recognized and alleviated through bilateral mutual agreements. Among other things, the aim of the European Union is to eliminate internal state borders, for which the regulatory environment is being shaped. Currently, although the state of border crossing is very advanced, the non-harmonized powers differ between nations, which makes life difficult for those living at the border. Specific research is being conducted in order to reveal the

factors hindering cross-border activities, some of which are already solved by the regulatory environment, only the interpretation and application of the new legislation remains, which causes the problem. In some cases, the lack of legal harmonization is the cause of the problem, and there are only exceptional cases when a really contradictory regulatory environment in one area or another is causing the barrier.

European regional associations can facilitate the temporary bridging of real obstacles that may arise. Their activities promoting regional development can only be fulfilled if the European Union accepts the proposal for a regulation on cross-border public services. According to the proposed decree, "the cooperation of national, regional and local governments is necessary", however, the scope of tasks of the local governments of different states may be different, therefore it is either necessary to coordinate the tasks or to find the organizations that are suitable for cross-state coordination of tasks. The institution of the European regional association can be a suitable organization for harmonizing the different organizational structure and for coordinating the cross-border tasks of the organizations and institutions involved.

It is recommended to accept the hypothesis based on the above tests.

- ∞ H2 Eradication of the transport poverty in the region can be achieved by developing infrastructure and public services, which contributes to the increase of population mobility, thus causing economic revival.

The hypothesis was tested by analyzing statistical data, timetables and line network maps as well as literature review and analysis of what was said in professional interviews.

The increasingly pressing problem of transport poverty manifests itself in individuals' reduced access to basic socio-economic activities and services, such as employment, education and health care, especially for vulnerable individuals and households.

Based on the investigation, one form of expression of transport poverty in the region is shown through the poverty of families, which results from the high average age of the passenger vehicle fleet. The environmental and traffic safety of older cars is lower, which means a greater load. These cars are not only less favorable in terms of emission factors, but their maintenance requires more effort, which worsens financial conditions. For this reason, however, maintenance is often abandoned, which affects the environment and traffic safety. This could be offset by a demand-responsive public transport service offering, which not only responds to mobility needs, but also becomes an attractive alternative with modern, high-quality service.

The hypothesis is acceptable based on the results of the tests.

- ∞ H3 Improving the accessibility of the area helps the population stay in place, better transport options contribute to the increase of the attractiveness of the area

The foundation of the hypothesis is primarily based on the results of research using the ethnographic method, and it was confirmed based on what was said during the professional interviews.

Two main directions of population movement can be observed in the examined area. One of them is the capital city commuting, which is partly realized with the help of community public services, partly organized individually, so-called with a "carpooling" system. The latter includes the "workers' routes", which also transport lower-skilled workers to construction sites in the capital. This is partly related to the target group affected by transport poverty, as the vehicles used for transport are usually older and they prefer vehicles capable of transporting 7 people. The members of the target group are not mobile, and the need to move out of the area is low, as the seasonal work takes place in a short-term and changing location.

The danger of displacement occurs in the highly educated, primarily young population group, as there is a lack of jobs in the region that require high qualifications and are satisfactory for intellectuals. In the examined area, the Óbuda University Salgótarján Training Center and Research Center is the only place of higher education that offers training in 4 majors. The region lacks higher education institutions and well-functioning research centers that would locally examine the possibilities of the depressed region across the border, and that would keep the young and highly educated group of the population in place.

Commuters to the workplace and higher education institution are willing to commute on a daily basis if adequate transport services are available, which helps to keep the population in place, however, it is necessary to ensure a high level of transport services.

Another direction of commuting specifically affects the border area, to which the cross-sectional passenger traffic count was also aimed. Within the framework of organized passenger transport from the southern Slovak settlements to the Hungarian workplaces, transport of workers could be detected at the Balassagyarmat and Parassapuszta border crossings during the examined period. Movements are also known individually within non-organized frameworks, but these are difficult to measure, and due to the specific situations of the border strip, they are difficult to show with figures.

In the border zone, employees undertake daily trips of more than 2 hours, typically the commute of older and less qualified workers. However, the phenomenon also draws attention to a very important danger: previously, due to language barriers, residents of southern Slovakia took jobs in Hungary from areas inhabited by Hungarians, however, the younger generation already speaks Slovak at a native

level, so they prefer to take up work in Slovak areas that promise better pay. In order to prevent displacement and preserve bilingualism, in addition to the internal transport connections of the region, it is necessary to create workplaces that make the region attractive.

The possibility of working from home, which is becoming increasingly popular these days, is an ever-increasing opportunity, as it helps the population to look for calm, quiet, but well-connected rural settlements, from where they can work in healthy conditions, but if necessary, they can quickly get to their workplace. Based on the assumption, Budapest and the oversaturating agglomeration can be the external receiving area of the region, for which the improvement of the transport network is essential.

Based on the tests, the hypothesis is acceptable.

- H4 The development of transport in the Northern Hungary region, and within it the Ipoly Valley, contributes to the development of the region's economy and tourism.

The investigation of the hypothesis was based on the analysis of the infrastructure, compared with other areas with similar characteristics. By itself, better features of the transport infrastructure network do not contribute to the development of the economy, but without it, businesses will certainly not be established. Entrepreneurship depends on accessibility and mobility opportunities in the region, as does the spread of innovations. The replacement of the missing infrastructure elements is thus primarily a catalyst for the local population and the local economy, and on a regional scale, with the development of better transport options, the area can become a logistics hub.

The hypothesis is partially recommended to be rejected, because better transport options alone do not contribute to the improvement of the region's features without conscious economic development, but one of the key factors in the development of the economy is the accessibility of the region, the smoothness of transport, thus the existence and condition of the transport infrastructure.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The sixth chapter, in the framework of the conclusions and recommendations chapter, in accordance with the hypotheses, includes three subsections, on the one hand, the recommendations for the operation of a cross-border organization (6.1.), the improvement of traffic conditions (6.2) and the overall possible direction of tourism development (6.3).

The aim of the research is to explore the transport situation, primarily by examining the internal transport system, and to present the possibilities of tourism in the area separated by the border. The region's historical and international legal relationship is decisive in its development, and the relationship between the two states on the border - Hungary and Slovakia - has a continuous impact on the development of the region. Both states joined the European Union, thereby improving the region's development opportunities.

The state and public administration positions of Slovakia and Hungary are significantly different, each organization has significantly different tasks and functions, so among these the most typical partners in relation to the ETT, the different operational, task and competence scope of the role of the NUTS3 level territorial units (counties) should be highlighted. While the actors at the Slovak county level have many regulatory tools and independent revenues, the counties in Hungary have moderate options: CLXXIX of 2011 on local self-government in Hungary. Act § 27. according to the county self-government is a territorial self-government, which performs territorial development, rural development, spatial planning and coordination tasks as defined by law. Despite everything, territorial municipalities are absolutely necessary for the establishment and operation of the ETT, since the task of territorial planning is carried out by these organizations.

Additional members of the ETT can be local governments and other organizations defined by law, however, for the most efficient operation, it is optimal to involve a higher education institution, as well as other professional organizations operating in the area of the ETT, such as professional organizations that support the activities of the ETT. One of the defining areas of activity is the coordination and implementation of cross-border transport services, therefore the involvement of professional organizations performing transport organization tasks may be justified. The ETT has an independent organization to carry out its tasks and is interested in the implementation of cross-border developments. It has the necessary authorizations vis-à-vis the state and local government organizations whose task is to organize transport within the state border.



The operational resources of the ETT come from the membership fees of the members, the operating and project financing support provided annually by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, as well as the funds necessary for operation from various tender sources. You can receive support from national and European Union funding programs for the performance of your tasks.

The main task of the ETT is to promote the cohesion of disadvantaged areas on both sides of the border, by stimulating cross-border relations. A comprehensive intervention is necessary to strengthen the relations, one of the elements of which is the enhancement of transport links. Supporting the process of appreciation in the border region is a goal whose basis is the transport system that explores the region, which integrates the settlements into a region, and makes the region accessible and accessible to the region. The transport connections that create the basis of social and economic relations also contribute to the availability of the locally realized educational and economic base, the availability of existing and future higher education institutions in the border region and its wider environment promotes the strengthening of the local intellectual layer, and also has a positive effect on the labor market.

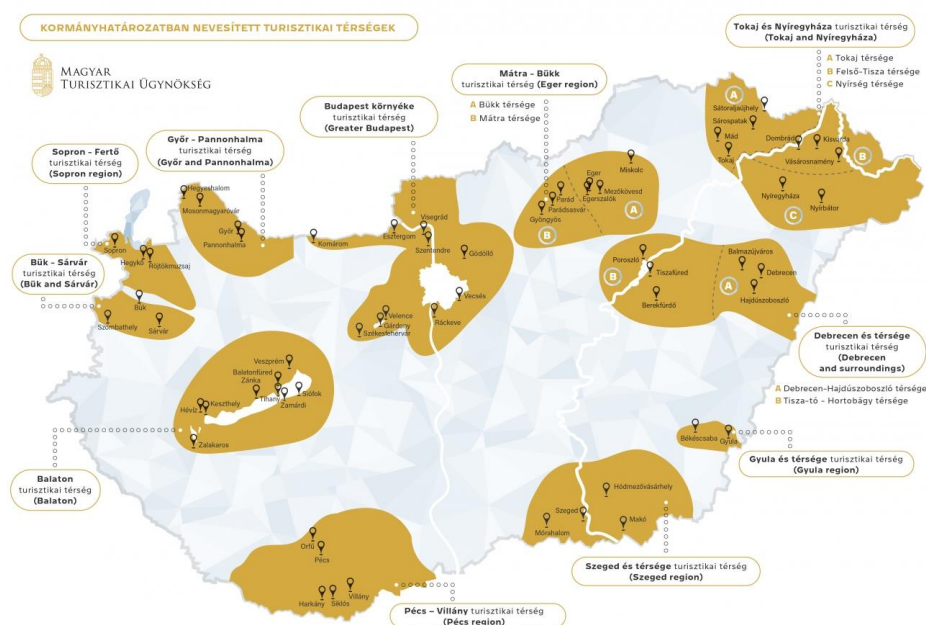
Transport and tourism form an inseparable unit, so any development of transport contributes to the growth of tourism, which is one of the priority (economic) areas of the region. The border areas can be the area of the tourism industry, which has recently been referred to as "new tourism".

The implementation of cross-border transport is an important tool for regional development.

The concept of public service is defined by the European Union as a dual concept, according to which the concept applies both to the organization providing the services and to the services of general interest provided by them. It divides public services on the basis of economic and social interest, according to which transport falls within the scope of services of general economic interest, as it is a commercial service with general economic utility, where the state undertakes to finance any losses. Public services are a means of promoting territorial equalization, which suggests that they are a state task.

From the point of view of regional development, the public transport service is important from the point of view of territorial accessibility, it is especially important in peripheral areas, such as the border region, however, in these areas, the implementation of cross-border transport is hindered due to the lack of an organization entrusted with the organization of transport.

On the website of the Hungarian Tourist Agency, you can find a map of the tourist areas approved based on the currently effective legislation - Figure 2. The map clearly shows that the Ipoly Valley, Cserhát and Karancs-Medves are like a white spot between the tourist area of Budapest and its surroundings and the Mátra-Bükk tourist area. The tourist areas do not follow the administrative borders, part of the western and eastern areas of Nógrád county are part of the two tourist areas. It is also clearly visible that, with the exception of the easternmost sections, the northern border region of the Northern Hungary region does not belong to any priority tourist region, but its role as a channel between the two neighboring priority tourist areas must be strengthened.

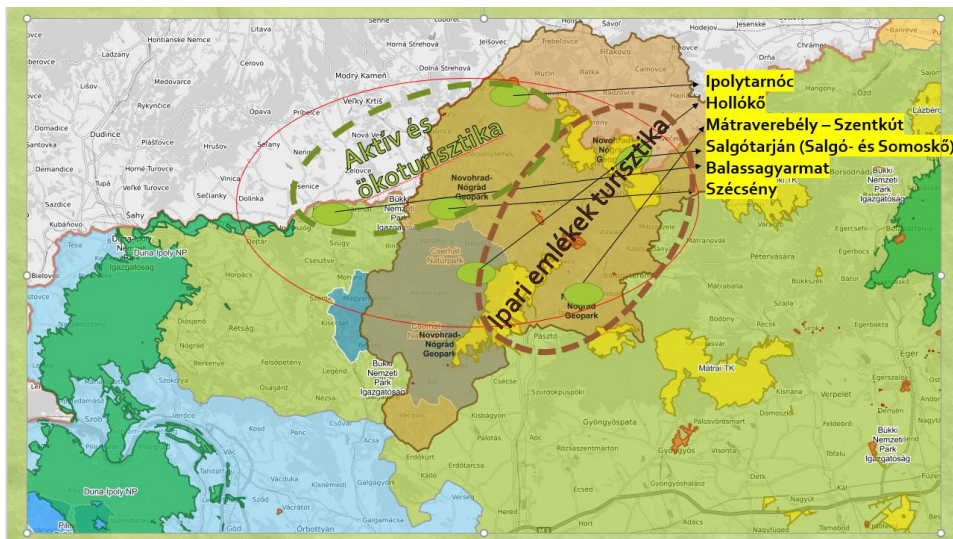


## 2. FIGURE TOURIST AREAS IN HUNGARY

Source: MTÜ

In the case of Nógrád county, the Ipoly valley creates a direct connection with the tourist area through the Pest county section, although it differs from it in one section in its geomorphology. In this case too, the river can play a connecting role, as shown in Figure 3. Karancs and Medves, which have similar landscape features as Börzsöny, Mátra or Bükk, can be reached by going upstream of the Ipoly river. However, in terms of tourist services, it is more similar to the services of Börzsöny - large hotels are not typical, and there are usually few accommodations available.

These are primarily places for one-day or nomadic relaxation before further development.



**FIGURE 3 DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS OF NÓGRÁD COUNTY**

Source: OWN EDIT ON OKIR MAP

In the area of the "white spot" of Nógrád, there are a number of well-known tourist attractions, such as the Hollókő, which won the UNESCO World Heritage Award, Ipolytarnóc, and the entrance gate to the Novohrad-Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark. Among those who like nature and active tours, the water tours held in Ipolyon are becoming more and more popular, and they are mainly for those who like challenges. During low tide, the Ipoly River creates obstacles for kayaks and canoes, so it must be bypassed on land. There are favorable terrains for cycling along the river, and the county also has a development concept for cycling. Mountain climbing and rock climbing are available on the Karancs mountain.

Mátraverebély-Szentkút is an important place of pilgrimage for religious tourism, which is part of the spiritual heritage, where thousands of visitors come every year. Most of them come for religious reasons, but they are not exclusively pilgrims.

In addition to all of this, there are several, even less well-known special attractions waiting for those who come here. Worthy of mention are the traditions of Palóc, the literary legacy of Imre Madách and Kálmán Mikszáth, as well as the values of the least used and least recognized industrial heritage, which are still thrown aside today. Although the mining exhibition space of the Béla Dornyai Museum in Salgótarján, as well as the related exhibits, are of great interest in the settlement, they are not enough to establish tourism in themselves.

There is an increasing desire to save the industrial and mining heritage and to exploit it for tourism, since the eastern half of Nógrád County is a special area of our country, which only the youngest think of, not mining or industrial production. Although the natural features of the area would be favorable for taking advantage of active and eco-tourism opportunities, it is necessary to find the trend that makes it stand out from its surroundings. The mining and industrial heritage provides an opportunity for this.

## 5. SUMMARY OF NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

As the results of the investigation and as the goal of this thesis, the proposals for the development of the cross-border region can be formulated as follows.

**The first finding** is that, in accordance with the cross-border character of the geographical area, it is necessary to treat it as a unit, for this it is necessary to use the available – legal – tools. In order to create the closest cooperation and internal cohesion of the region with external, other organizations, the currently known optimal organization is the European regional association, which is described in 3.3.2. chapter contains.

The aim is to create an ETT that, in order to strategically establish and implement the development goals, is allowed by the regulatory environment, covers the entire vertical of regional development and transport along the development goals, and has competent and complementary membership on both sides of the border.

**A new result** is that, in the spirit of sustainability, it is necessary to plan transport developments in accordance with the needs of the local population, regardless of state borders, which contributes to the harmonious development of the region's tourism, economy and livability instead of conflicts - i.e. both the local population and tourists are satisfied with the results.

The tasks of the cross-border organization include tourism development and coordination, which can be used to ensure balanced development in the case of a well-functioning apparatus with a strong professional background.

**The second finding** is that the transport system affecting the region needs to be improved. In the relationship between transport and regional development, the external availability and accessibility of the region and the internal transport network are conditions for social and economic development.

**A new result** is the concept of barrier-free regional transport accessibility, which means that improving the accessibility of the destination is achieved by the quantitative and qualitative development of railway and road infrastructure and the complementary development and continuous monitoring of transport (public) services. In parallel with this, the development of the internal transport system will not be left behind, partly by connecting the national, regional and local infrastructure network, partly by further developing it and eliminating deficiencies.

Connecting the transport network is a condition for improving the amount of transport (public) services in the region, thereby providing a sustainable solution to the mobility needs of the local population for their daily activities. The transport network deficiency indicator can help to develop the infrastructure network connecting the border area.

According to **the third finding**, the economic development of a region and its transport system are closely related. The impact of the transport system on the social and individual quality of life can be divided into three levels by examining and classifying various phenomena, in which the investigation of transport poverty consists in mapping the conditions necessary to achieve transport prosperity.

**A new result** is the concept of transport well-being, which enables the necessary and available transport services at the current general technical level with an individual and social approach, with particular regard to environmental and transport safety, travel time and the costs of transport from the point of view of individuals. Traffic well-being can be examined at different territorial levels. Traffic well-being is an optimal state.

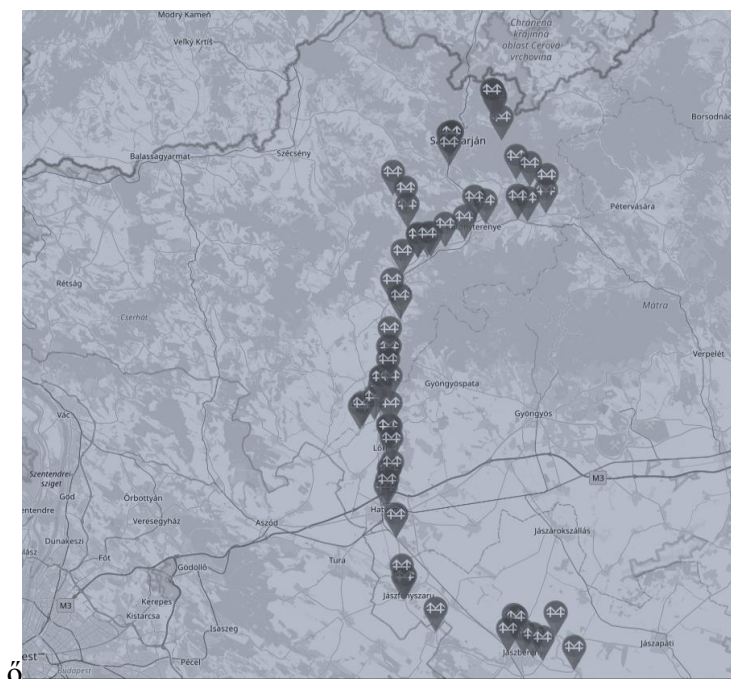
**The fourth conclusion** is that there is a need to re-establish many connections between neighboring settlements that bring the villages closer together, thereby improving the possibilities of the local economy, and social relations can be strengthened again.

**A new result** is the transport network deficit indicator, which is the quotient of the road distance between two neighboring settlements and the distance measured as the crow flies, in the event that the two neighboring settlements can be reached through at least one intervening settlement. The value is directly proportional to the justification of the intervention. The lack of transport network indicator is different - e.g. can also be applied to modes of transport between regions.

## 6. Summary

My research focused on how transport can help two neighboring disadvantaged areas. In what way can mitigating the dividing nature of the state border as a unified territorial unit on a development path instead of receding regions contribute to socio-economic growth.

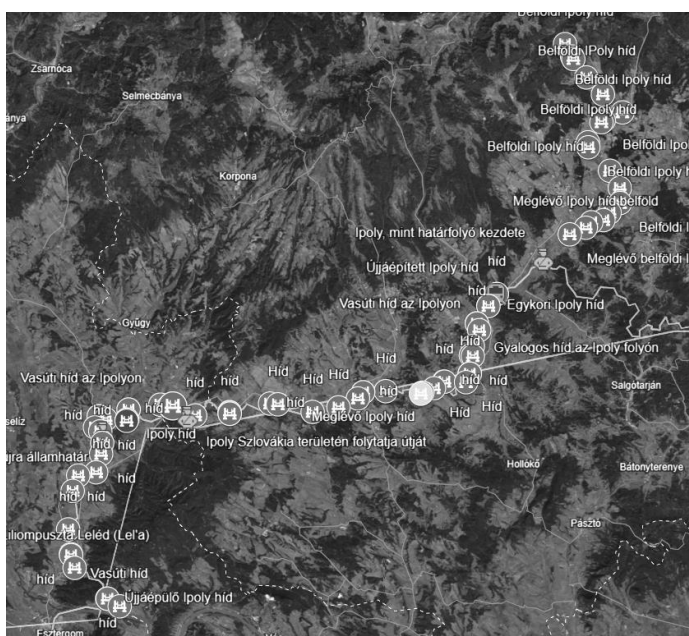
When the Ipoly was not a border, it was an inland river, similar to today's. Bridges were built where necessary, and the question of crossing was not a problem. What the Ipoly was like before it became a border river: in many respects, including its hydrographic properties, it is similar to the Zagyva River, also in Nógrád County, on which the crossing possibilities for the year 2022 are shown in Figure 4, so it also serves as the basis for my comparison.



**FIGURE 4 BRIDGES OF THE ZAGYVA RIVER**

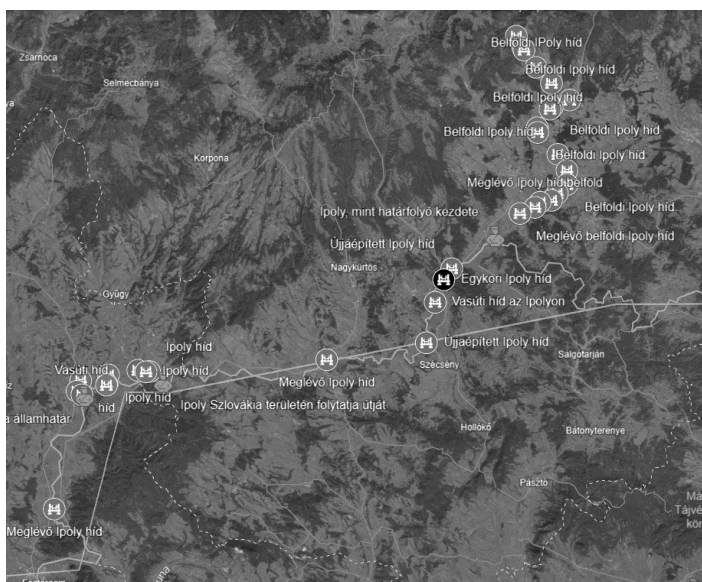
**SOURCE: MAGYAR KÖZÚT HÍDADATOK**

Figure 5 shows the points where a bridge once stood on the Ipoly, Figure 6 shows the permanent crossing options available on the border river in 2023. By indicating the bridges of the entire river section, it is very clear where the water flow is inland and where it is a border river.



**FIGURE 5 WHEN THE IPOLY WAS NOT A BORDER RIVER - RECONSTRUCTED PLACES OF CROSSING OPPORTUNITIES ON THE IPOLY RIVER WHEN IT WAS STILL "JUST AN INLAND WATERCOURSE"**

SOURCE: OWN EDITING BASED ON BENCE HAJÓS 2007



**FIGURE 6 IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE IS A HIGH DENSITY OF BRIDGES ON THE RIVER IN SLOVAKIA, WHERE THE STATE BORDER IS IPOLY, AND THERE ARE VERY FEW CROSSING POSSIBILITIES. THE SHARP CONTRAST BETWEEN THE**



**BORDER RIVER AND THE INLAND WATERCOURSE CAN BE CLEARLY SEEN AROUND IPOLYSÁG, WHERE - BETWEEN THE TWO "POLICEMAN" ICONS - A VERY HIGH DENSITY OF BRIDGES CAN BE SEEN AS A NON-BORDER RIVER.**

**FORRÁS: OWN EDITING BASED ON GOOGLEMAPS DATA**

The lack of crossings, and thus lack of transport options, hinders the operation of the region. The catchment areas of cities are distorted, without which cities can only partially fulfill their functions. Although this has been restored to a lesser extent by the use of private vehicles and individual modes of transport, the significant bypasses between settlements hinder the economy and social relations of local importance. In order to restore the connections between cities, it is necessary to restore the public and railway infrastructure, and to establish appropriate, modern public transport services on them.

The restoration of a single, strategically important section of the railway network's infrastructure would open up transport opportunities of regional importance beyond local intercity connections. Since there is no large city of decisive importance in the region, the railway infrastructure will not be overcrowded with passenger trains even if the public service is implemented, so it will be one of the key factors in the railway freight transport in the West-East. One of the major problems of the European Union rail freight transport project CORCAP is that it tried to integrate the Hungarian section of the European rail freight corridor into the existing railway infrastructure during planning, but which was overcrowded due to traffic in big cities, which would require the construction of new tracks. After modernization, the Ipoly-Völgy railway can be included as an alternative freight route, which would greatly contribute to the improvement of the indicators of the peripheral area.

One of the success factors of cross-border developments is how close the two border areas are to each other, how accessible they become to each other. The aim of the very first territorial association established in Hungary is to establish the transport infrastructure, which today has really come alive not only by allowing passenger cars to pass through on a daily basis, but also by the fact that between Esztergom and Párkány (Sturovo) the daily regular, scheduled bus service, 6 pairs of services will operate according to the schedule valid from April 4, 2022. Similarly, in Komárom, the opportunity to use local and yet international bus services in relation to Komarno has opened, with 4 services departing every day, 7 more on weekdays a bus service departs every 24 hours, i.e. 11 pairs of services provide transportation on weekdays. The unhindered operation of bus transport is made possible by the fact that both Hungary and Slovakia, with their membership of the European Union - by accepting the Schengen acquis - removed the

obstacles to free movement at the internal borders, which thus no longer appear only in private transport, but in local terms, but in terms of their nature yet it remained international. All of this does not affect the travel experience of travelers, at most they can travel on more comfortable, more modern flights due to the stricter regulations imposed on international flights.

In contrast to all of this, taking into account the border area of Ipoly and Northern Nógrád, there is only one international flight from Ipolyság, which, however, was not implemented with a schedule and lines designed for the needs of people living in small localities, but instead offers passengers departing from Ipolyság the opportunity to get to Budapest.

Some of the small towns accompanying Ipoly and their settlements belonging to their catchment area are located beyond Ipoly, but their connection with bus services was not realized, despite the fact that it would greatly facilitate the convergence of the two banks of the river. On the one hand, the connection would mean real rapprochement and availability, and on the other hand, it also carries symbolic significance.

The towns of Ipolyság, Balassagyarmat, Szécsény and Losonc located next to Ipoly are not connected by public transport to the surrounding villages, but on the other side of the river - despite the accessibility provided by the bridges, and between each other only on the territory of their own state. Parallel traffic has developed alongside the river: there is a Losonc – (Slovak Colony) – Ipolyhídvég – Ipolyság route in Slovakia, the peculiarity of which is that for a long time Ipolyhídvég – 632 enthusiastic settlements – was the terminus. Ipolyhídvég is not only the western border of the Nagykürtös district, but also the border of the Besztercebánya district. The organization of Slovak public transport is the responsibility of the county government, so it has the right to organize transport within the borders of the county. Based on the needs of the local population, the route of the flight was extended to Ipolyság, so city services and workplaces became available. The Ipolyság - Losonc bus route can still be found today, although according to the locals, there is a lack of an express route, which, although with fewer stops, allows for faster travel.

Line No. 355 (Zebegény) – Szob – Hont – Drégelypalánk also exists - strictly - parallel to the state border, which allows the residents of the small settlements at the northern foot of the Börzsöny to travel and to reach the railway stations of Szob and Drégelypalánk. Szobon is an international flight, and a so-called "zoning" train can be used in the direction of Budapest, from Drégelypalánk you can also reach Budapest-Nyugati on line 75, and you can travel by train in the

direction of Balassagyarmat to Ipolytarnóc. Here, the infrastructure would make it possible to reach Losonc by train, but the service is currently not in operation.

It can be seen that there is currently a bus route between Kemence, Bernecebaráti, Hont and Drégelypalánk, but despite its proximity and accessibility to Ipolyság, it is avoided. The infrastructure in this case is given at the existing border crossing, but it is possible to develop it by renovating the former access road.

In the case of Balassagyarmat and Szécsény, the connection of the surrounding small villages will play a role in the availability - and strengthening - of city services, and will also promote a change of attitude in transport. During the mapping of cross-border relations, the development of public transport is justified primarily by work-related commuting, secondly by access to shopping and education. The population of the settlements along the Ipoly River in Slovakia mostly go to Vác (Göd) and Balassagyarmat to work, as well as the Nagyoroszi caravan factory, Ipolytölgyes, and Esztergom. In Slovakia, Ipolyság and Nagykürtös are the primary employer cities, followed by Párkány and Bratislava, but due to access to education, Kassa and Komárom are also important destinations.

Connecting the cities (Esztergom) - Ipolyság-Balassagyarmat-Szécsény-Losonc and with a small view Salgótarjá, as the county seat, promotes interactions between cities and contributes to easing the situation in the center of Budapest.

The idea of directly connecting the cities of the Ipoly valley has already taken shape in the restoration of the former Ipolyság-Balassagyarmat-Szécsény-Losonc railway, the need is well-founded, however, the restoration of railway transport may involve significant costs, and the currently missing connection carries with it uncertainty. The start of the bus service has significantly lower cost implications, can represent a favorable alternative for the population, and can prove the real need of the people living here for transportation in the area.

As a special public service, school buses will be available in 15 places from the next school year, which will help students get to Hungarian schools. As part of the support provided by the Rákóczi Association, in addition to the purchase of the school bus, the association also ensures its operation, which can help Hungarian children get to Hungarian educational institutions and expand the range of stakeholders.

The formulated proposals are primarily justified based on the needs of the local population, with the aim of using them during everyday activities such as going to work, accessing education, shopping, and spending free time. The conditions also promote trips for tourist purposes, the better accessibility and passability

contribute to the fact that those arriving here can get to more places by using public - and thus environmentally friendly - transport. Among the potential developments considered, rail transport is more of a touristic nature, a good example of which is the Balassagyarmat-Losonc route, which will be operated on May 1, 2022. The touristic use of railway transport contains a significant, not yet adequately explored potential, which enables the implementation of trips lasting even several days that also satisfy sustainability aspects.

In the region, there is a clear need for the settlements to keep in touch with each other without borders, and for the services of the "other side" to become available to those residents who cannot or do not want to travel by private transport.

During the development of transport services, it is necessary to strengthen the regional approach, which is above the interests of the localities, whose relations both towards the localities and towards the governmental organization are direct and decisive. The development of transport infrastructure and the provision of transport services are important regional development activities, which, taking into account - and considering the specific situation of the border region - the Mötv. in view of the provisions of they serve to balance the tasks and competencies between its actors.

The Tftv. in order to establish and maintain international relations, as well as to coordinate, organize and institutionalize cross-border developments, it would be reasonable to examine the possibility of European Territorial Associations being named and institutionalized, similarly to the named territorial development local government associations.

In the examined border area, the greatest demand was expressed in

-for the local development of public road transport between villages and towns that belong to an agglomeration, but are separated by a border - and where necessary, the renovation and replacement of the infrastructure, thus ensuring the accessibility of Esztergom from the settlements of the Szob district; Availability of Ipolyság from the area of Eastern Pest County and Western Nógrád County, creation of international bus transport between small towns in Central and Eastern Nógrád County and Losonc, there is a need for meso-regional connection Rétság – Esztergom (via Ipolyság), creation of connection Esztergom – Ipolyság – Balassagyarmat, Szécsény – Provision of Losonc and Salgótarján – Losonc connections

- rail transport regarding passenger transport and freight transport regarding rail transport between Ipolyság – Balassagyarmat – Szécsény – Losonc, the

implementation of which will help people coming from the direction of Vác to reach Ipolyság by rail.

The examination of border traffic was carried out within the framework of the CONNECT2CE program with the participation of the project partners, Hungary. The Hungarian-Austrian relations were mapped in the western border area of our country. An important difference in the border section is that the regulatory framework makes development much simpler in relation to the two countries, since the investments in the crossing options named in the government decree containing the border crossing points are not tied to an additional government-level agreement. In the Hungarian-Slovak border section, all cross-border developments, regardless of the existence of an agreement between Hungary and Slovakia, are subject to a separate intergovernmental agreement, which makes development difficult.

The border section in the western area has much more developed territorial indicators, cross-border interactions are more lively, which is due to the dense cross-country ability - found on average at a distance of 3 km. The fact that the development of the road network did not involve the construction of bridges, as there are no crossing watercourses, undoubtedly played a role in the revitalization of road connections, but this alone is not a sufficient reason. The existing, dense border-crossing option creates a perspective for reconsidering or reconsidering public transport, as it was shown in the CONNET2CE program that the proportion of passenger vehicles used in cross-border transport is significantly higher than in the country.

The European Committee of the Regions' (2017/C 207/05) opinion on missing transport links in border regions draws attention to the urgency of the developments, according to which "infrastructure opens borders".

A further research direction is the examination of regional differences in transportation quality of life and the continued exploration of transportation quality of life.

## 7. Publications

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1.

Feketéné, Benkó Kata

Die durch die Staatsgrenze geschaffenen rechtlichen und physischen Hindernisse bei der Entwicklung einer postsozialistischen Grenzregion im slowakisch-ungarischen Schengen-Grenzabschnitt

STUDIA MUNDI - ECONOMICA 11 : 1 pp. 43-54. Paper:  
<https://doi.org/10.18531/sme.vol.11.no.1.pp.43-54> , 12 p. (2024)

DOI Egyéb URL Teljes dokumentum

Szaccikk (Folyóiratcikk) | Tudományos[34976946] [Nyilvános]

2.

Feketéné Benkó, Kata

The reduced mobility of the population of Palócföld: Accessibility proposal for better traffic in the Ipoly Valley

STUDIA MUNDI - ECONOMICA 10 : 3 pp. 3-16. , 14 p. (2023)

DOI Kiadónál REAL Teljes dokumentum

Szaccikk (Folyóiratcikk) | Tudományos[34819684] [Admin láttamozott]

3.

Feketéné, Benkó Kata

A hazai falvak közötti növekvő „távolságok” az Ipoly-menti határtérség példáján

A FALU 3 pp. 49-65. , 17 p. (2023)

Szaccikk (Folyóiratcikk) | Tudományos[34294437] [Nyilvános]

4.

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A közlekedési infrastruktúra változásainak hatása az Ipoly-völgyének társadalmi kapcsolatrendszerére

STUDIA MUNDI - ECONOMICA 8 : 3 pp. 16-30. , 15 p. (2021)

DOI Kiadónál REAL Teljes dokumentum

Szaccikk (Folyóiratcikk) | Tudományos[32630481] [Admin láttamozott]

5.

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JOURNAL OF INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT 8 : 3 Paper: 3042 , 11 p. (2024)

DOI WoS Scopus Egyéb URL Teljes dokumentum

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6.

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OBLIK I FINANSY / ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE 94 : 4 pp. 129-136.  
Paper: 8 , 8 p. (2021)

DOI

Szaccikk (Folyóiratcikk) | Tudományos[32619911] [Admin láttamozott]

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7.

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Tudományos[35116378] [Nyilvános]

8.

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13.

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Könyvfejezet (Könyvrészlet) | Tudományos[33701067] [Nyilvános]

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15.

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18.

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22.

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Nem besorolt (Könyvrészlet) | Tudományos[32591085] [Admin láttamozott]

23.

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Nem besorolt (Egyéb) | Tudományos[32016414] [Nyilvános]

24.

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MTA REGIONÁLIS TUDOMÁNYOS BIZOTTSÁG HÍRLEVÉL (2021)

Recenzió/kritika (Folyóiratcikk) | Tudományos[32016410] [Nyilvános]

25.

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