

# Amazon of Europe Bike Trail as ecotourism development opportunity in the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube



Urška Dolinar





5 countries – 3 rivers – 1 biosphere reserve  
**MURA-DRAVA-DANUBE**

From the Austrian-Slovenian border Mura to the Danube,  
along 5 countries, in the heart of Europe

Vienna

Budapest

Zagreb

Belgrade

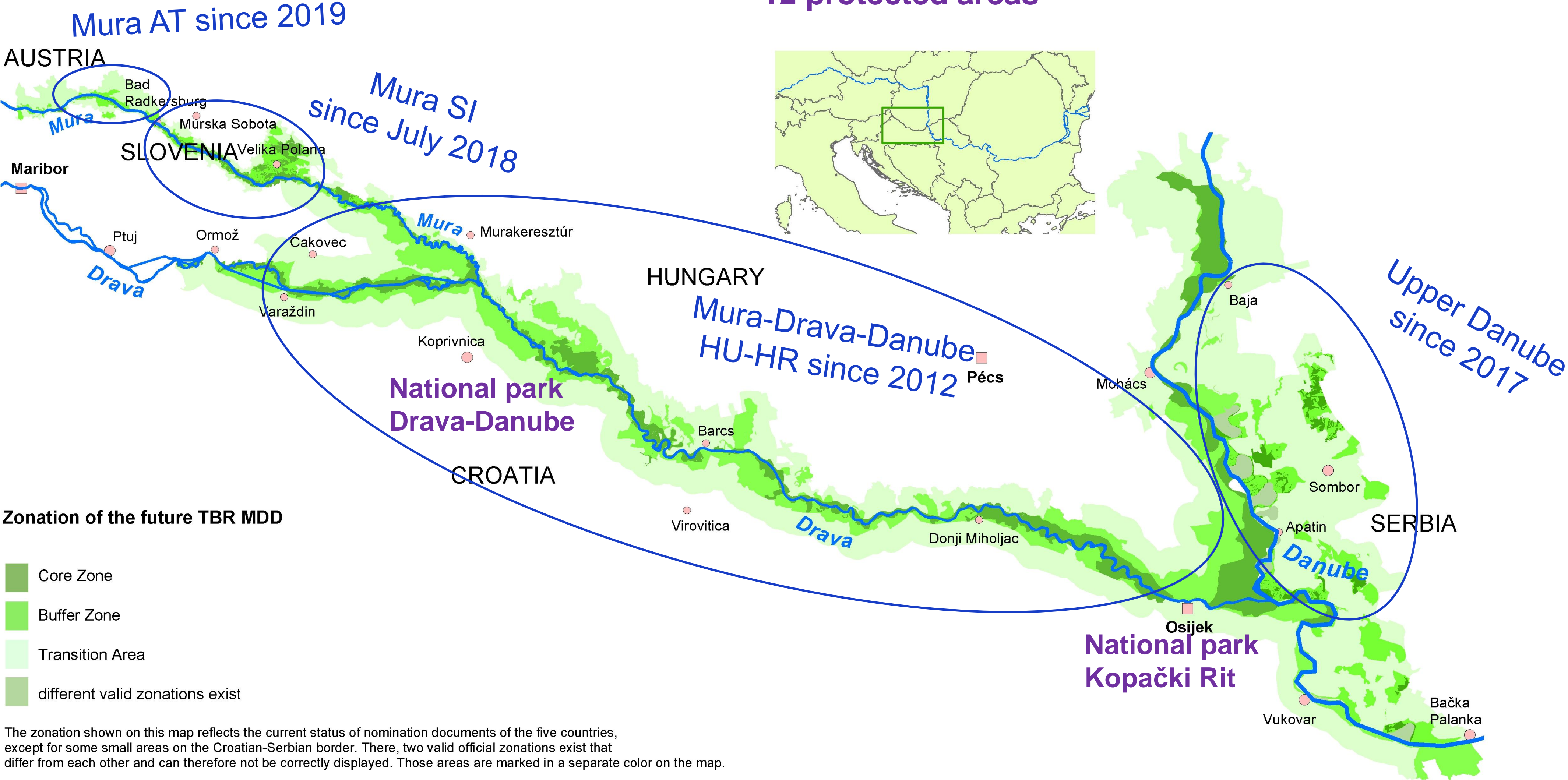




# Future Transboundary UNESCO Biosphere Reserve „Mura-Drava-Danube“ (TBR MDD)

4 Biosphere Reserves in 5 countries

12 protected areas



Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia: Existing (Transboundary) Biosphere Reserve

Austria: Nomination for Biosphere Reserve submitted in 2018, decision by UNESCO expected in June 2019



# Planned Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube

- First pentilateral Biosphere Reserve in the world
- Most preserved riverine system in Central Europe along Mura, Drava and Danube
- Known as **Amazon of Europe**
- Rare natural habitats: floodplain forests, river islands, gravel and sand banks, side branches and oxbows
- Flagship species: white-tailed eagles, little tern, black stork, beaver, otter, ship sturgeon

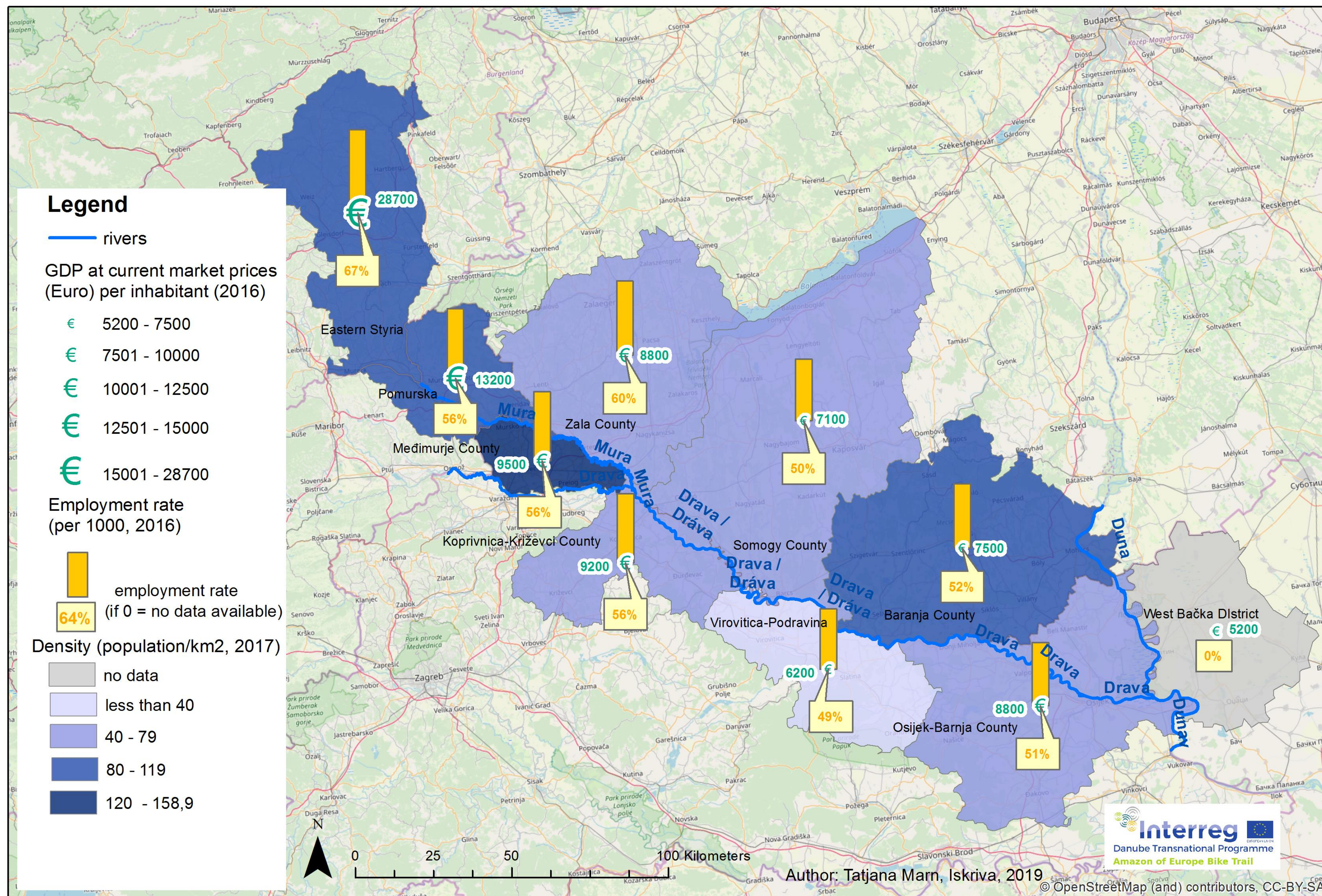


*White-tailed eagle, ©  
by Danilo Djerkovic)*





## Population density, GDP and employment rate in the Amazon of Europe area by NUTS 3 regions



## BIOSPHERE RESERVE PROFILE

- 10 NUTS 3 regions
- 8.500 km<sup>2</sup> (BR only)
- 12 protected areas, 2.280 km<sup>2</sup>
- 2 mio inhabitants (NUTS 3)
- Crude rate of net migration: -6,9 per 1.000 inhabitants (2017)
- GDP/inhabitant: 10.420 € (2016)
- National GDP/inhabitant average: 17.660 EUR (2016)



# Planned Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube

## Presentation movie





# Amazon of Europe Bike Trail – flagship project for a joint tourism product



Acronym:  
**AoE Bike Trail**



**5 countries**



Duration:  
**36 months**



**15 Project Partners (PP)**



Start – end:  
**1 June 2018 – 31 May 2021**



**10 Associated Strategic  
Partners (ASP)**



Total budget:  
**3,176 mio €**



**3 rivers – 700 km**



**Interreg**



Danube Transnational Programme  
**Amazon of Europe Bike Trail**

**AMAZON  
OF EUROPE**  
MURA-DRAVA-DANUBE

PROJECT CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION FUNDS (ERDF, IPA)





# The partnership





# Expected results



**International cyclists,  
booking the on-line  
flagship product for  
AoE Bike Trail**



© J. Schmidt

**Improved skills and  
knowledge of the local  
inhabitants  
New work opportunities in  
tourism  
Boosted regional economy**



© G. Šafarek

**Benefits for nature:  
developed model for  
returning the profits  
for financing protected  
areas**



# Amazon of Europe Bike Trail

*Discover Amazon of Europe by cycling along Mura, Drava and Danube*



Distance: over 1.250 km



27 stages, 11 on the North Route and 16 on the South Route



Planned first world UNESCO 5-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube, almost 1 million hectares



Start point: Mureck, Austria (close to Graz/Vienna)



2 routes: North Route (550 km) and South Route (700 km)



End point: Mohacs, Hungary (close to Pecs)



3 rivers: Mura, Drava and Danube

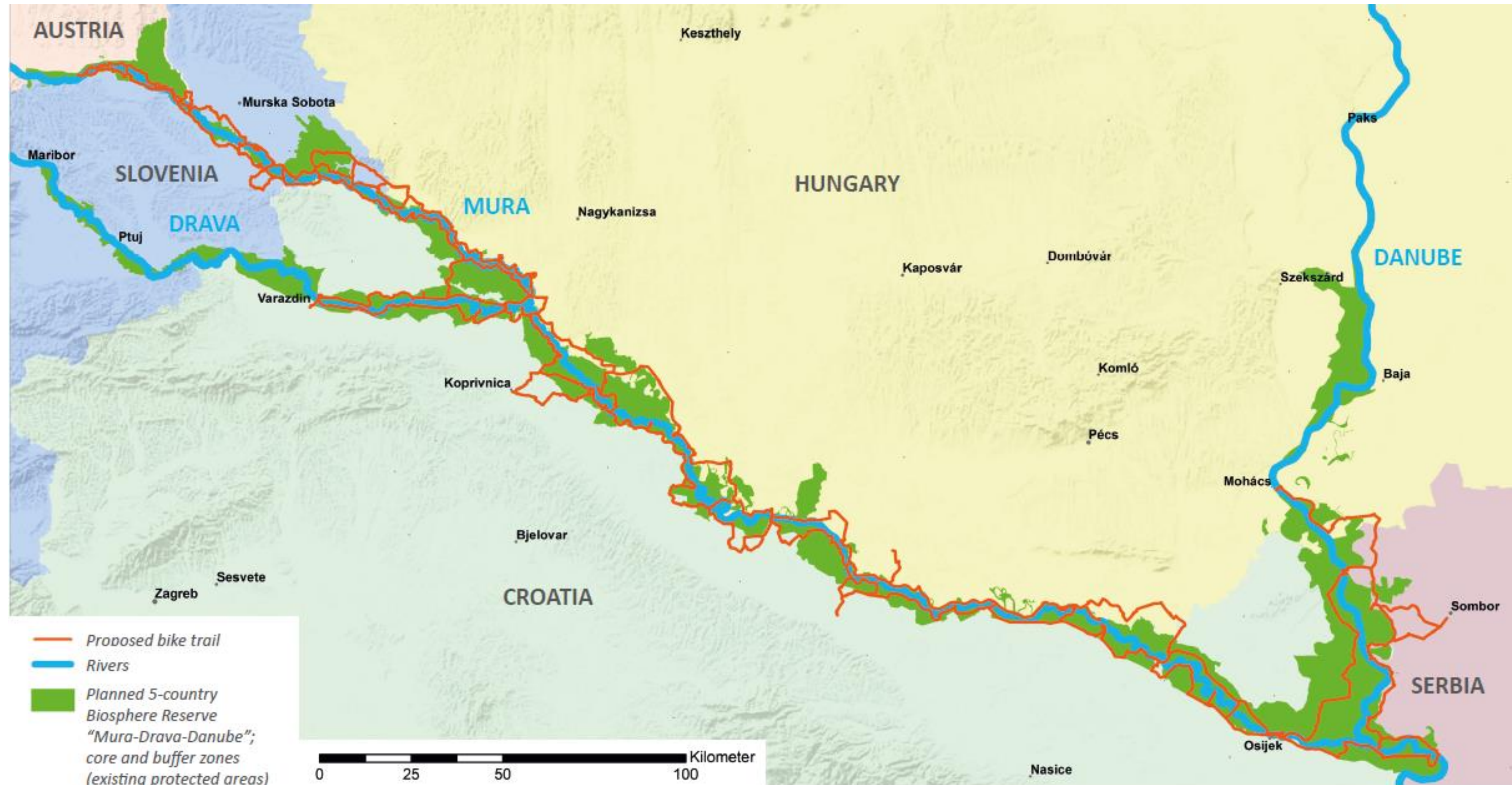


5 countries: Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia



# Proposed Amazon of Europe Bike Trail

## 1.250 km along both sides of rivers





# Unspoiled nature & unique experiences



*Kingfisher (©Petar Sabol)*



*Waiting for fish stew to be cooked (©Apatin)*



*Croatian "Sahara Desert" Djurdjevački pijeski near Đurđevac, Croatia (©Črnja Tours)*



*Fish otter (©H. Orsanic)*



*Rafting on the Drava river*



*Drava Mura confluence (©Dubravko Lesar)*



*World famous Naïve art painted on Easter eggs in Drava area near Koprivnica, Croatia (©Drava info)*



*Toasted bread with garlic and mince at the Island of Love on the Mura river, Ižakovci, Slovenia*



*Spa in Barcs, Hungary*



*City beach in Apatin, Serbia (©Municipality of Apatin)*



# Full service for cyclists

## Amazon of Europe Bike Trail cycling holidays

- unique individual travel planning and booking with online trail booking system
- accommodation in best rated local hotels and bed&breakfasts,
- half board with focus on local cuisine
- fabulous services such as luggage transport, shuttle services and transport back to the starting point
- visit of most interesting local attractions, experiences and festivals
- top advice from an experienced and competent team





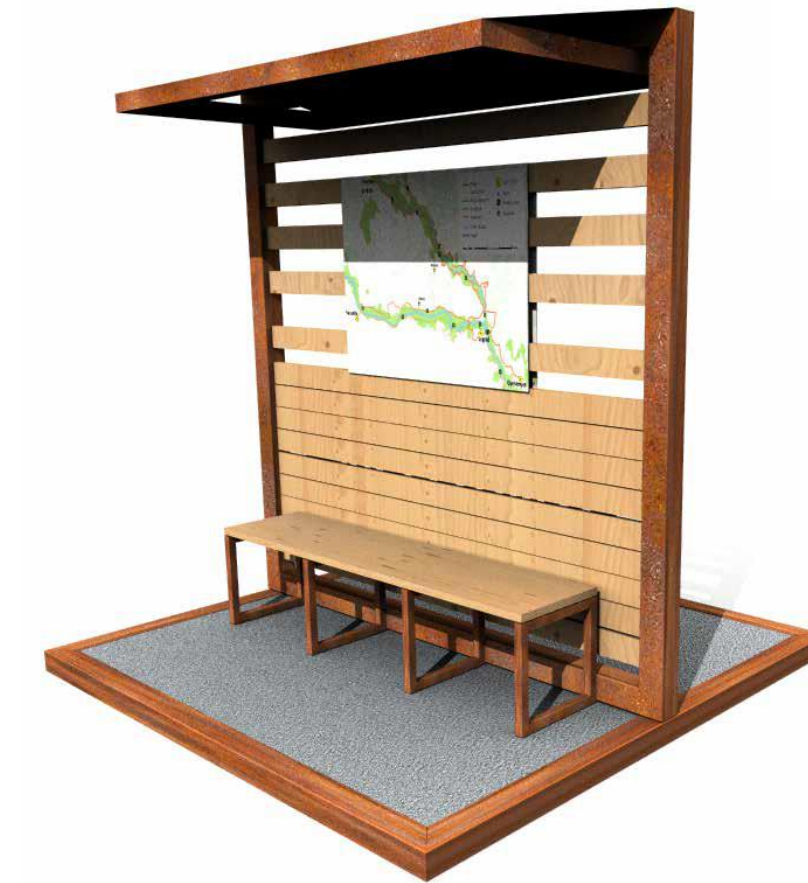
# Joint branding and equipment



▲ Example for possible signage by using labels on an existing signpost (photomontage)



▲ „Amazon of Europe” Platform – basic element of info-facility (photomontage)



▲ Example for possible signage by using newly produced signposts (photomontage)





# TBR Mura-Drava Danube – vision for the future

- Responsible green destination Amazon of Europe – attractive for inhabitants and visitors, developing high quality tourism products → developing competences and skills, green jobs
- Fossil fuel free area → challenges in mobility
- Participatory cooperation between 5 countries → joint management structure
- Polygon for education and research
- Strong member and contributor to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, sharing tested approaches and methods



# Invitation to the Amazon of Europe Bike Trail Networking Event

- Apatin, Serbia
- Special Nature Reserve Upper Danube
- 10-12 June 2020
- First networking event for Amazon of Europe Bike Trail stakeholders, eco-tourism experts and enthusiasts



*Special Nature Reserve Upper Danube , Serbia (© Vojvodinašume)*



*Ortodox church in Apatin, Serbia (©Municipality of Apatin)*



# Thank you for your attention!

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/amazon-of-europe-bike-trail>

<https://www.facebook.com/AoEBikeTrail/>

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