

**KOBRA**  
**URBAN-REGIONAL COOPERATION BRATISLAVA**



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# 1. THE CHALLENGES OF KOBRA

As stated in international studies the development of the greater region of Vienna and Bratislava looks promising. Nowhere else in Europe two capital cities are located as close to each other. With a series of projects and joint initiatives, the Slovak capital Bratislava and the neighbouring Austrian region have entered into a process of intense cross-border co-operation to harmonise the development in the greater region.

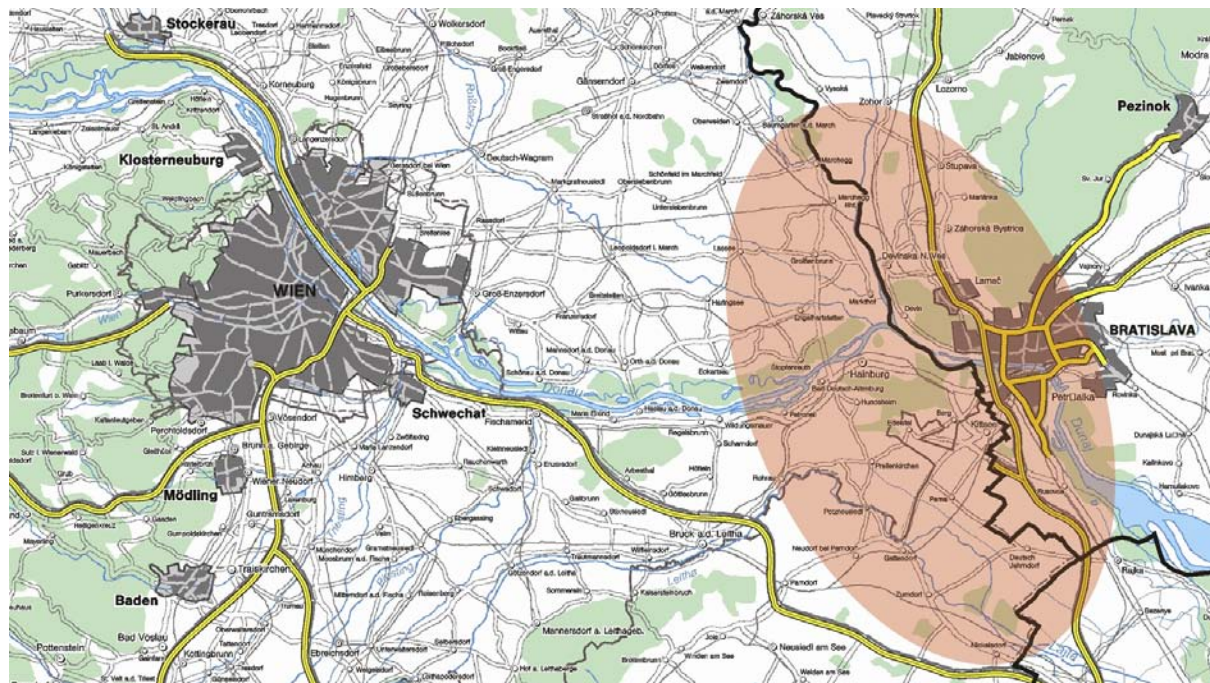


Figure 1: Overview of the KOBRA region

KOBRA region is located at the Austrian-Slovak border and covers 14 municipalities in the Austrian hinterland of Bratislava, in two Austrian federal states:

- Lower Austria: Bad Deutsch Altenburg, Berg, Hainburg, Hundsheim, Prellenkirchen, Wolfsthal, Eckartsau, Engelhartstetten, Lasee, Marchegg
- Burgenland: Deutsch Jahrndorf, Edelstal, Kittsee, Pama

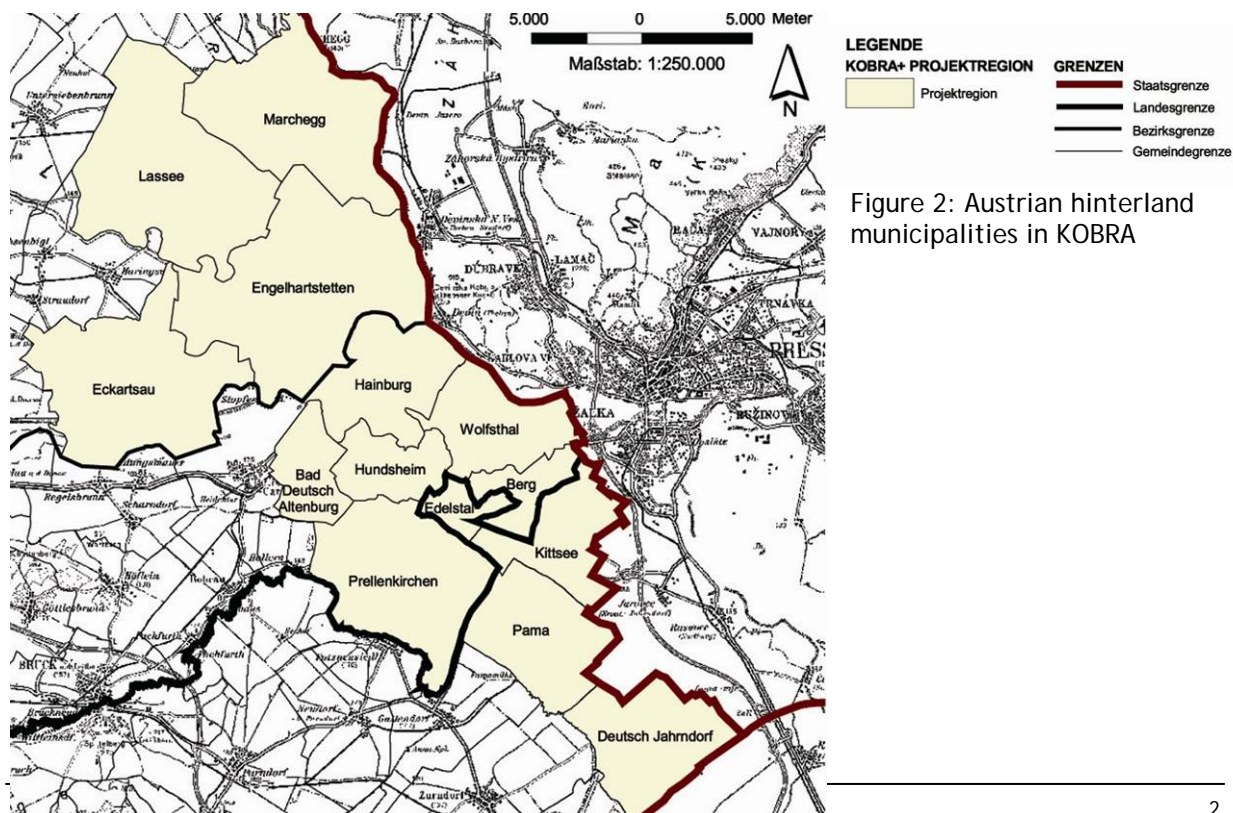


Figure 2: Austrian hinterland municipalities in KOBRA



Since acceding the EU and the Schengen agreement, this region, which is connected by a motorway since November 2007, is booming. A new European metropolitan region is developing here. Scenarios forecast an increase of population of more than 400.000 people over the next two decades. Cross-border cooperation is therefore essential.

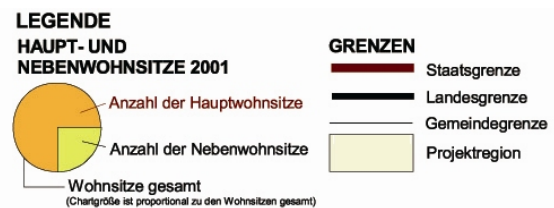
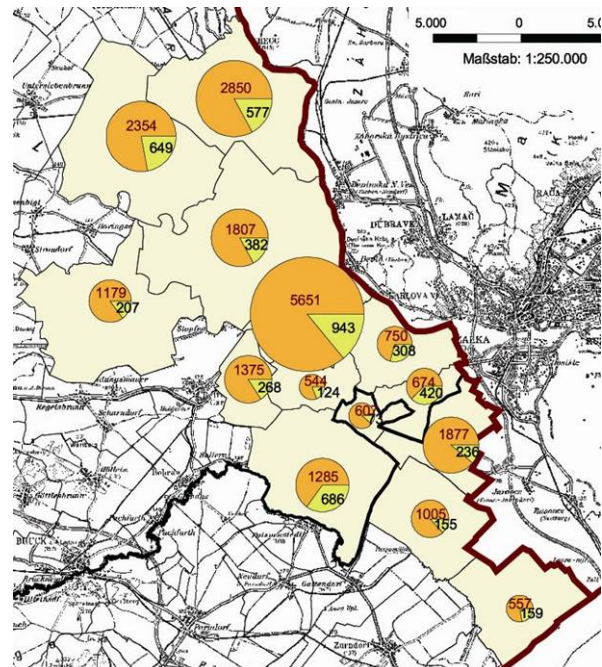
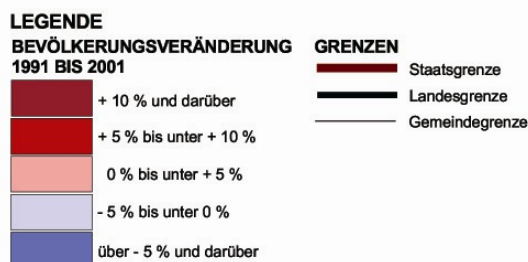
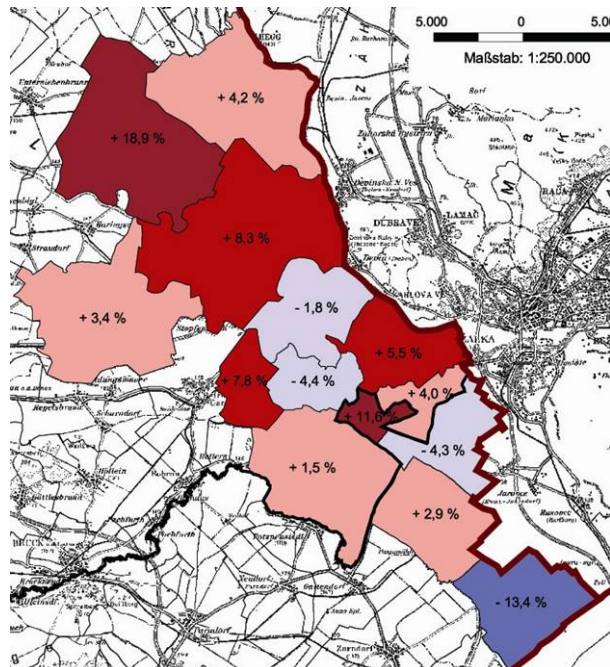


Figure 3: Population growth/decline 1991-2001

Figure 4: Share of secondary residences 2001

Following effects of recent developments can be observed in the Austrian hinterland of Bratislava:

- **Building land gets more expensive** as the demand increases rapidly. In Bratislava building land is already more expensive than in the neighbouring municipalities of the hinterland in Lower Austria and Burgenland. The strong demand is caused by the high quality of life, security and the short distance to the Slovak metropolis.
- **Urbanisation of rural municipalities:** Many rural municipalities have to think about their identity. Do they want to turn into a "Simmering" or "Grinzing" of Bratislava? In most municipalities kindergartens and schools can only be financially ensured if new inhabitants move in.
- **Will the river March remain an insuperable barrier?** 100 years ago several bridges crossed the river March, but only a few of them remained. Schloßhof, a tourism highlight also for citizens of Bratislava, thus lost half of its hinterland. A bicycle path to the Slovak capital is missing as well as a bridge for pedestrians or an efficient connection of the Marchfeld-Schnellstraße across the river.
- **Public transport connection to Bratislava** is getting more important: For the Austrian hinterland the connection to Bratislava is as important as to Vienna. The municipality of Wolfsthal was already included into the public transport network of Bratislava.
- **Austrian municipalities benefit:** The increasing Slovak interest in Austrian residential building land generates new impulses. A growing number of inhabitants ensure the financial

maintenance and extension of communal infrastructure. As a result everyone benefits. Furthermore new chances of development are possible. The municipalities can influence ongoing processes in the metropolitan region Vienna-Bratislava.

## 2. WHAT WERE THE KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE KOBRA INITIATIVE?

The Austrian municipalities in the surrounding area of Bratislava are increasingly turning into hinterland municipalities of Bratislava. Only cooperation among them can meet these challenges. Individual municipalities will not be taken seriously in discussions about the future development. Therefore visions for the development of these municipalities were drafted during the last years to prepare them for the changes they will face in future.

The “spatial concept - framework concept KOBRA 2010” acts as “framework of reference” for future developments. As the rivers March and Danube form natural barriers, the municipalities north of the Danube are not as far affected by the urban sprawl as the ones south of the Danube, especially Wolfsthal, Berg and Kittsee. By means of this “framework of reference” the municipalities can coordinate their future development and in succession cooperate with the City of Bratislava.

Whilst the development to **typical suburbs of Bratislava** seems possible for Berg, Wolfsthal and Kittsee, due to their close location to the city centre, planners recommend the **enhancement of rural living** e.g. in Prellenkirchen, Hundsheim, Pama or Deutsch Jahrndorf.

## 3. WHICH GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS HAVE BEEN HELPFUL IN ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING KOBRA?

The “Planning Community East” (Planungsgemeinschaft Ost) together with the State Governments of Burgenland and Lower Austria as well as partners in Bratislava and the Austrian municipalities prepared the ground for an expert discussion of existing local and regional plans to define and map functional zones and regional focus measures. Especially the mission statement on the “Biosphere region and green centre” was considered and advanced, by assessing areas and sites for their special relevance – with regards to ecology, settlement development, raw material extraction, agriculture, industry - from a national, regional and community perspective.

## 4. THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS OF KOBRA

The most important actors in the process have been:

- 14 Austrian hinterland municipalities: Bad Deutsch Altenburg, Berg, Hainburg, Hundsheim, Prellenkirchen, Wolfsthal, Eckartsau, Engelhartstetten, Lasse, Marchegg in Lower Austria and Deutsch Jahrndorf, Edelstal, Kittsee, Pama in Burgenland
- PGO Planungsgemeinschaft Ost
- City of Bratislava
- Regionalmanagement NÖ - Büro Weinviertel and Büro Industrieviertel
- Regionalmanagement Burgenland
- Land Niederösterreich - Abteilung Raumordnung und Regionalpolitik (federal state Lower Austria - planning department)
- Land Burgenland - Landesamtsdirektion, Stabsstelle Raumordnung und Wohnbauförderung

## 5. KOBRA ENHANCES THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE REGION

Over the last years the idea of a joint region was established, due to following economical reasons:

- **Low accessibility decreases economic profit:** The municipalities north of the Danube are less affected by urban sprawl than the ones south of the Danube, but the benefit they gain from Bratislava’s economic power is less, too.
- **You get better together:** Each decision for investment on one side of the border has effects on the other side. An individual municipality cannot represent its interest effectively, therefore the cooperative performance of all municipalities in the Austrian hinterland is essential to influence decisions on infrastructure projects (road, railway) or debate about future residential, industrial and commercial areas.
- **Think and act beyond the borders:** The cooperative urban-regional process coordinates different interests for the common benefit of everyone. For maintaining a high quality of life projects concerning road construction, residential building, settlements of companies, nature conservation and transport have to be coordinated. The plan for open space, recreation and tourism (Masterplan Grünraum, Erholung, Tourismus) is basis for the urban-regional cooperation.

## 6. RESULTS AND BENEFITS OF KOBRA

A spatial concept defined possible roles and functions of the municipalities in the agglomeration of Bratislava. The municipal visions of development were presented in a separate plan for open space, recreation and tourism (Masterplan Grünraum, Erholung, Tourismus).

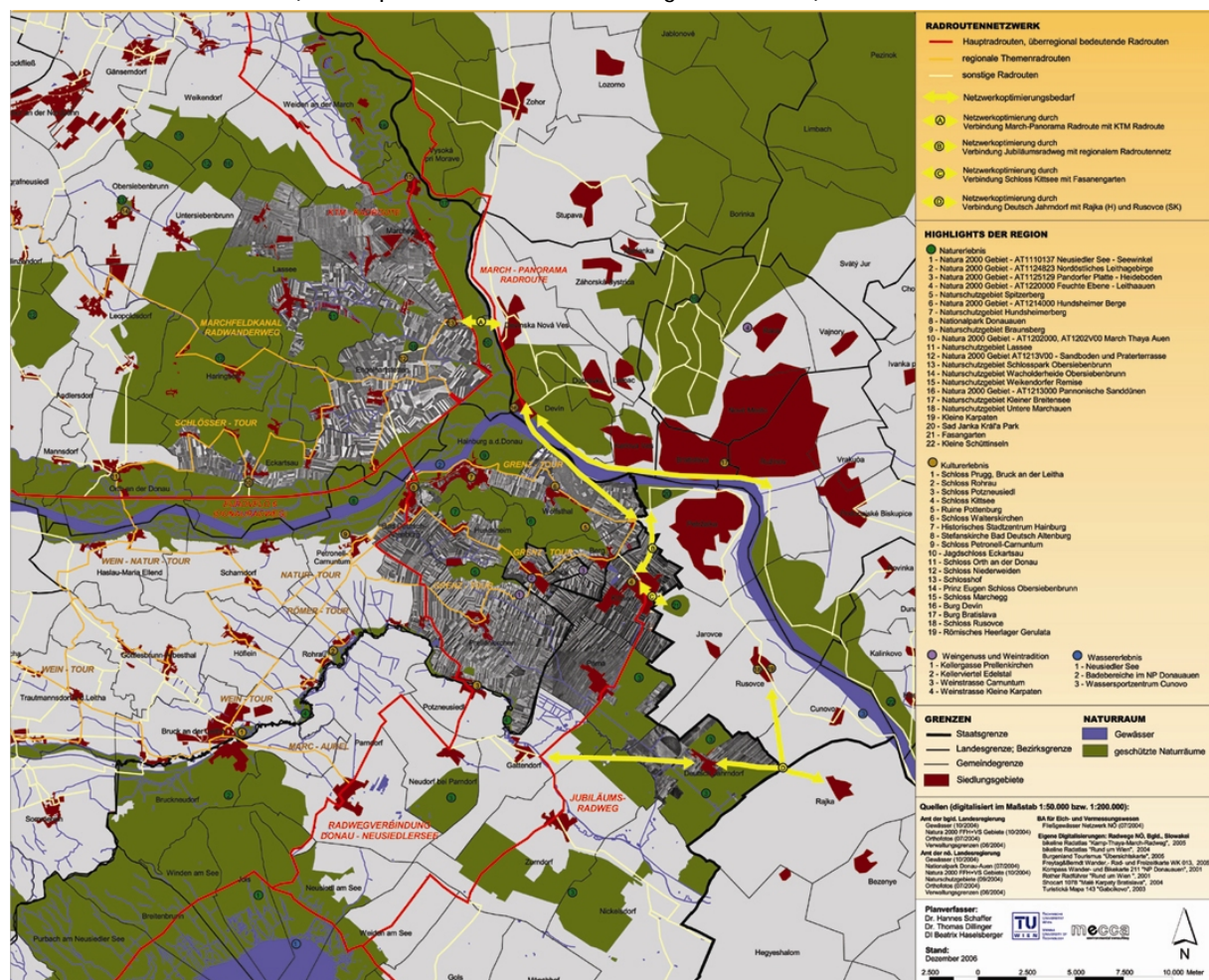


Figure 5: Masterplan open space, recreation and tourism

Three recommendations to improve the quality of life in the border region were made:

- Networks of bicycle paths offer sportive activities and the connection of important recreation areas. The following bicycle paths should be extended:
  - Connection between the March-Panorama bicycle route (SK) and the KTM (Kamp-Thaya-March) bicycle route (AUT) by means of a new bridge between Schloßhof and Devinska Nova Ves

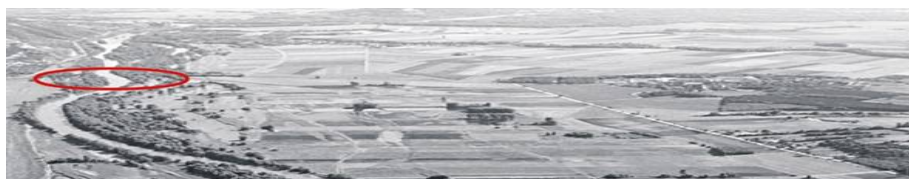


- Connection between the “jubilee” bicycle path and the regional bicycle path network in Austria and in Slovakia including the replanted tree-lined road (Lindenallee) between Kittsee and the national border
- Connection between Kittsee palace (AUT) and the castle of Bratislava (SK)
- Connection between Deutsch Jahrndorf (AUT) and Rajka (H) as well as Rusovce (SK) including the Garden of Sculptures
- Implementation of a landscape corridor along the Austrian-Slovak border south of the Danube. This axis prevents the abrupt and unregulated growth of settlements as well as the unplanned growing together of Bratislava and the Austrian hinterland. Furthermore it causes an enhancement of residential areas on both sides of the border.
- Construction of a bridge for cyclists and pedestrians across the March between Schloßhof and Devinska Nova Ves to connect Greater Bratislava with the castles of Marchfeld. Furthermore it closes the gap in the cross-border bicycle path network.
- Meanwhile these sleepy little villages near the Slovak border have blossomed into attractive places of residence. KOBRA as exemplary cross-border city-regional cooperation has won the EUREGIO Innovationspreis 2007.

## 7. KOBRA PROJECT PROPOSALS

### Bridge Schloßhof - Devinska Nova Ves

Already in 1771 a bridge across the river March was built between Schloßhof and Devinska Nova Ves. Since that time it was destroyed several times, finally in 1880. Rebuilding the bridge for pedestrians and cyclists is a lead project in the field of tourism infrastructure in order to connect Greater Bratislava with the castles of Marchfeld and to close the gap in the cross-border bicycle path network.



### Garden of sculptures

The garden of sculptures is an appealing example of “land-art”. It symbolises the necessity of humans to set aesthetical accents in order to underline and emphasise the uniqueness of the particular landscape. Adequate access paths have to be created for experiencing this outstanding site. In this regard the connections with the village centres of Deutsch Jahrndorf (AT), Rajka (H) and Rusovce (SK) through “landmarks” should be thought of.



### Water-Landmarks

Water exists in a range of different appearances in the region. The connection of existing and the creation of new “water-landmarks” (e.g. flooded gravel-pits in Kittsee) should contribute to the appreciation of the existing water elements by the region’s inhabitants.





### Lindenallee

The restoration of the historic tree-lined roads as distinctive connecting elements between Kittsee palace, the castle of Bratislava and the Fasangarten represents a major project in order to link all historic sites of the region. Only this distinctive interconnection of the separate palaces and castles points out the historic importance of the whole region. From an ecological point of view these green linkages also matter.



## 8. FUTURE TASKS TO ENHANCE THE COMPETITIVENESS

KOBRA will enhance the competitiveness of the region also in the future. Based on the spatial concept the urban-regional cooperation between the City of Bratislava and the Austrian municipalities near the border will be intensified. In this process the focus is on joint considerations regarding the handling of open space along the border, developing an accessibility concept (for tourism) as well as connecting the Austrian hinterland municipalities to the public transport network of Bratislava.

KOBRA is not a threatening scenario, but a scenario of chances to be developed. In future a joint platform of the Austrian hinterland-municipalities and the City of Bratislava will ensure the ongoing coordination in matters of development and regarding joint projects. Joint measures will be defined for the next years and the successful approach to the cross-border development of the city and its hinterland will be further extended, also with assistance of the European Union.

## 9. CONTACTS

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This project description has been elaborated by Hannes Schaffer, Christina Ringler and Klemens Pürmayr [www.mecca-consulting.at](http://www.mecca-consulting.at)