

## POSSIBLE PATHS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN SREMSKI KARLOVCI

### POSIBILE CĂI PENTRU DEZVOLTAREA TURISMULUI ÎN SREMSKI KARLOVCI

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**Abstract:** Sremski Karlovci is an ancient town, a spiritual polis, situated in Serbia (Vojvodina). The town has a favourable geographical position for tourism. It is located along the Corridor X, 6 kilometres from Novi Sad, the capital city of Vojvodina, on the national road to Belgrade. Sremski Karlovci is located on the right bank of the Danube river, on the north-eastern slopes of the Fruška Gora Mountain. It has been declared a municipal town, the only one in the country, with 8,839 inhabitants. The main tourist resources of the town – the pillars of tourism are represented by the cultural heritage and nature (the Danube river and the Fruška Gora Mountain). Sremski Karlovci is a tourist resort with a potential that has not been used substantially. This paper will try to outline the possible ways for the development of tourism in this town.

**Key-words:** Sremski Karlovci, cultural heritage, the Danube, resources of tourism, the Fruška Gora Mountain

**Cuvinte cheie:** Sremski Karlovci, patrimoniu cultural, Dunărea, resurse turistice, Masivul Fruška Gora

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Urban tourism, as a complex form of tourism, records an increase in the entire world. Urban tourism can integrate all the potential urban destinations, according to the concept of integrated quality management (IQM). We would like to add – integrated quality of urban tourism management – IQUTM (Vidic, 2008). This concept provides more successful form of tourism on the extremely competitive tourism market.

The urban tourism of Sremski Karlovci, to which this paper is dedicated to, has not adopted this approach for the development of tourism. This has an immediate influence on the current situation of tourism in Sremski Karlovci. It can be concisely assessed as a controversy between a priceless and well-preserved cultural heritage and natural resources and the lack of their substantial tourist promotion.

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Writing about Sremski Karlovci is a very delicate job, because there are many things you will have to omit about a town with such a cultural and historic significance. This will happen in this paper as well, because it will show only the partial tourism significance of the cultural heritage of Sremski Karlovci and its natural tourist values. Conducting a research on Sremski Karlovci is a real challenge.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

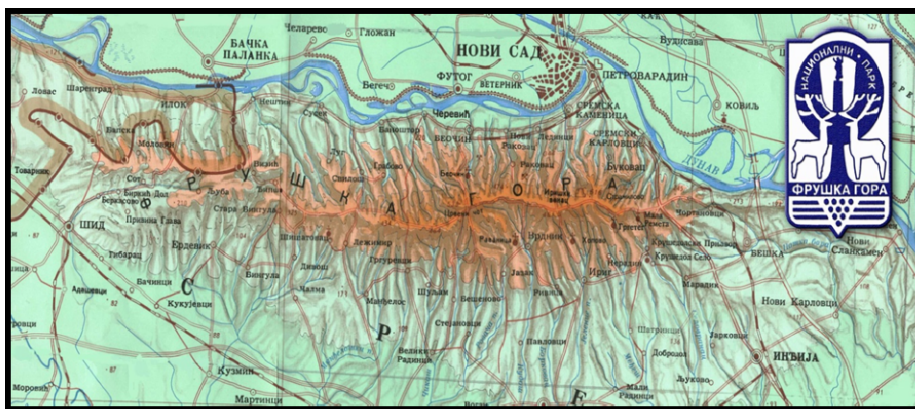
The purpose of this paper is to show the possible paths for the development of tourism in Sremski Karlovci.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODS

In this paper, we used the analytical and synthetic method. Available domestic and foreign resources have been used. We observed and analyzed the practice of tourism in this town. Synthetic method led to the evaluation, suggestions and conclusions.

## 4. SREMSKI KARLOVCI – THE TOWN ON THE DANUBE RIVER, ON THE SLOPES OF THE FRUŠKA GORA MOUNTAIN

The name of Sremski Karlovci hides its geographical location. The town is located on the north-east part of Srem in Vojvodina, Serbia (Fig. 1). Its geographic position is extremely favourable for tourism, because it is located along Corridor X, on the Fruška Gora Mountain slopes, on the right bank of the Danube river, in the Fruška Gora Danube basin (Fig. 1). Its location is a significant element for the development of tourism. This town in the Danube Valley is six kilometres from Novi Sad, to the north, along a very busy road (Corridor X), 57 kilometres from Belgrade and 70 kilometres from the airport in Surčin. The town is also situated next to the international railway Budapest – Novi Sad – Sophia – Athens (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1. Tourism and geographical position of Sremski Karlovci – the Danube Valley and the Fruška Gora Mountain (Source: Vidic, 2007, p. 58)**

The urban structure of the town develops from the right bank of the Danube river towards the Fruška Gora Mountain and follows partially the Ešikovac brook. The city, in fact, is 'climbing up' on the Fruška Gora Mountain and its urban matrix, to the east of the Danube, has a mountainous character. It provides a specific characteristic of the urban area and a specific experience when going sight-seeing on foot along the streets of Sremski Karlovci.

Today, Sremski Karlovci is a municipal town with a community of only 8,839 inhabitants. The area of the municipality is 5,054 ha.

## 5. THE BASIC PILLARS OF TOURISM IN SREMSKI KARLOVCI

These basic pillars refer to the following elements:

- Cultural heritage – the First Pillar of Tourism and
- Nature – the Second Pillar of Tourism (Table no. 1)

**Table no. 1**

### **Basic pillars for the development of tourism in Sremski Karlovci**

The First Pillar of Tourism			The Second Pillar of Tourism	
Cultural Heritage			Nature	
Public buildings and their spiritual value	Museum Permanent and thematic exhibitions	Events	The Fruška Gora - horst mountain	The Danube River and its bank

#### *5.1. Cultural Heritage – the First Pillar of Tourism in Sremski Karlovci*

"Sremski Karlovci was first mentioned as a castle named Caron in 1308. Sremski Karlovci experienced a spiritual revival after 1713, when the seat of Eparchy was moved from the Krušedol Monastery to Sremski Karlovci by the decree of King Carl II and it was granted the rank of Patriarchy until 1920, when the seat was moved to Belgrade." (Vidic, 2007). This was a golden period for Sremski Karlovci, when it became a significant earthly and spiritual center. It was a real spiritual polis. The First Serbian Grammar School was opened here in 1791, the Seminary and churches were built alongside impressive architectural edifices, that were preserved until the present day.

The most representative architectural edifices were built during the 18th and 19th centuries. The following ones can be singled out because of their architectural impressiveness and cultural significance:

- The Patriarch's Court (1892-1894), (Photo 1), used to be the seat of the eparchy, and today it is the summer residence of the Serbian Patriarch and the seat of the Srem Eparchy. It comprises the Treasury of the Museum of Serbian Orthodox Church and the Museum of Serbian Orthodox Church (Photo 1); the Seminary (1794), the most impressive building and our oldest seminary; Stefaneum Palace (1903), dormitory for the students of the Seminary, which is now the headquarters of the Institute of Serbian People; Sremski Karlovci Grammar School (1791), the oldest Serbian grammar school; The Orthodox Cathedral of St. Nicolas (1762); the Upper Church, dedicated to the Entrance of the Holy Mother of God into the Temple (1746); the Lower Church of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul

(1719); the Roman-Catholic Church of the Holy Trinity (1768); Ilion Palace of the Patriarch Josif Rajačić, today is the Heritage Museum (1848); Drinking fountain "Four Lions"(1799). In the Peace Chapel (1817), it was signed the world famous Treaty of Karlowitz on the 26th of January, 1699. The building was built in the form of rotunda, with four doors positioned in the four cardinal points, and the talks were organized at the round table so that all negotiators were treated equally and since then the term "round table" has been introduced into the world of diplomacy (Vidic, 2007)<sup>2</sup> (Photo 2).



**Photo 1. The Patriarch's Court**  
(Source: [www.tixik.co](http://www.tixik.co))



**Photo 2. The Peace Chapel**  
(Source: [www.tixik.com](http://www.tixik.com))

This town has a very specific location for all the monuments because they are located centrally in the old part of the town, i.e. the Branko Radičević Square and the Karlovačka Mitropolija Square. In our country, a town setting with such an outstanding cultural value and impressiveness exists only in Sremski Karlovci.

Sremski Karlovci builds its cultural identity on the basis of the entire architectural and spiritual heritage and not on the individual cultural monuments, which is the case in most towns.

Whereas other towns are building their cultural identity, the cultural identity of Sremski Karlovci is represented by its cultural personality, it is unique. Its cultural personality can be observed in the fact that all the establishments in Sremski Karlovci have kept their original purpose since their construction.

All the visits and tours in Sremski Karlovci are organized in the center of the old town. So many impressive buildings on such a small area can represent a problem for the organizers of the sightseeing tours. Because of the fact that all buildings are close together, tour operators have to make a selective itinerary including only some of the spiritual establishments. The spirituality of this town has such a power that sometimes even visitors themselves are requesting the

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<sup>2</sup> The Treaty of Karlowitz was signed on the 26th of January 1699 concluding the Great Austrian-Ottoman War (1683-1699). The Treaty was signed by The Ottoman Empire on the one side and the Holy League (Austria, Poland, Venice with the mitigation of England and Holland) on the other. On the 21st of January 2009 there was a celebration of the 310th anniversary of the Treaty in Sremski Karlovci. There were present the representatives of all four parties signing the documents.

programme to be shortened, overwhelmed with the strong spiritual impressions and the abundance of information.

Sremski Karlovci is also the town of events: "Brankovo Kolo" – literary event; School of Serbian Culture; Spiritual School "In Memory of Kornelije", The Christmas Celebrations in Sremski Karlovci; The Art Colony of Watercolours; Sremski Karlovci Art Salon; The Danube Art Colony; "Sremski Karlovci Grape Picking", The Kuglof Festival.

In addition to Heritage Museum, a significant touristic value can be attributed to the Museum of Bee Keeping "Živanović".

The town also has galleries: the Gallery of the Cultural Centre; the Gallery of the Institute of the Serbian People Stefaneum; the "Palette" Gallery; The "Under the Csarda" Gallery.

A continuous cultural development of Sremski Karlovci has been preserved in its original authentic form for several decades.

In the close vicinity of the old town, the Patriarch Rajačić opened the Court Garden – Arboretum with trees from all over the world. This is an open-air classroom for the grammar school students of Sremski Karlovci. The town also has a well-equipped sports and recreational center.

The first pillar of tourism in the urban tourism of Sremski Karlovci, which is the cultural heritage, is a prevailing motive of all forms of tourism: cultural tourism, educational tourism, event tourism, religious tourism, excursions and transit tourism.

The first pillar of tourism in Sremski Karlovci also comprises the cultural heritage sites outside the town, but belonging to its surrounding area. These are the monasteries of Fruška Gora: Gregeteg, Krušedol, Hopovo, Jazak (Fig. 1).

#### *5.2. Nature – the Second Pillar of Tourism in Sremski Karlovci*

The second pillar of tourism of Sremski Karlovci includes two significant natural entities: the Fruška Gora Mountain and the Danube River with its banks.

##### *5.2.1. Sremski Karlovci and the Fruška Gora Mountain*

The north-eastern slopes of Mount Fruška Gora give a partial mountainous characteristic to the urban structure of Sremski Karlovci, which has been described before (Fig. 1). This mountainous characteristic of the town can represent one of the possible paths of its tourism development since its tourism resources are not exploited enough.

Some resorts present attractiveness and have a tourist activity, among which the most famous is Stražilovo. It features the grave of the famous poet Branko Radičević who lived in Sremski Karlovci, which is visited by people as if they are going to a pilgrimage. The visitors are usually young people.

Stražilovo is situated at 4.5 kilometres distance from Sremski Karlovci. The visitors can find accommodation in modern bungalows and have their meals in the "Brankov čardak" restaurant (seating capacity: 50 guests inside and 100 guests outside).

The slopes of Fruška Gora above Sremski Karlovci feature the most famous vineyard area in Mount Fruška Gora having wines with geographic origin:

Karlovcí Riesling, Karlovcí Tovjan, Bermet, Ausbruch. The wines from Sremski Karlovcí were exported into European cities at the time of its development.

The wine cellars in Sremski Karlovcí became almost cult places for wine tasting and tourist visits and they are a motive for developing wine tourism and wine tours.

The area of Sremski Karlovcí is also famous for its well-kept orchards, which may also be a future tourism resource.

#### 5.2.2. Sremski Karlovcí and the Danube River with its Banks

There has already been mentioned that Sremski Karlovcí is located at the mouth of Ešikovac Brook into the river Danube. This means that the town is located in the extremely attractive area of the Fruška Gora Danube area (Vidić, 2007)<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 1).

Sremski Karlovcí was a famous river harbour on the Danube when it was a spiritual polis at the time of its spiritual height. However, the town is almost ignoring the existence of the river Danube and its bank from the points of view of traffic, industry or tourism. However, the authorities are almost ignoring the existence of the Danube river and its bank regarding the traffic, industry or tourism.

All the advantages of the river Danube as a hydrographical body and significant international European waterway and significant pan-European area were not part of the development concepts of the town. The river bank is not developed. The development concepts of the town did not include all the advantages of the Danube River as a hydrographical body and significant international European waterway and significant pan-European area, that is why the river bank is not developed.

The Danube bank features a hotel – the Hotel "Danube" (Photo 2, Photo 3) with 52 rooms and 105 beds. On the Danube bank there was built the "Danube" Hotel (Photo 2, Photo 3) with 52 rooms and 105 beds. This can be considered an important step in the activation of the tourism potential of the Danube in Sremski Karlovcí area and in the strengthening of the Sremski Karlovcí role in the Danube area. We consider this an important step in the tourism activation of the tourism potentials of the Danube in Sremski Karlovcí.

As a Danube town, Sremski Karlovcí still needs to create its international tourism position on the river Danube.

We think that in Sremski Karlovcí the Danube river and its bank should be the priority in the future tourism development of this town, currently being an unused and totally neglected tourism resource for the tourism of Sremski Karlovcí<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> "Fruška Gora-Danube area is defined as a geographical area along the right bank of the Danube where the north part of the Fruška Gora foothill touches the Danube, its alluvial and inundation area. The length of this area is 81.4 km". This represents 7.22 % of the length of the river Danube in Serbia (Vidić, 2007, p. 58).

<sup>4</sup> The Municipal Assembly of Sremski Karlovcí accepted a document: "Urban development plan of the river bank area – the area of sport and recreation – one of the development potentials of the Municipal Assembly of Sremski Karlovcí in the area of tourism, April, 2007". The document plans the development of the bank area, sports and recreational complex with marines. The Master Plan of Fruška Gora and Sremski Karlovcí was also developed.



**Photo 2. The "Danube" Hotel**



**Photo 3. The Restaurant of the "Danube" Hotel on the Danube river in Sremski Karlovci**  
(Photo: N.Vidic)

#### 6. TOURIST SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIPS IN SREMSKI KARLOVCI

The Tourism Organization of the Municipality of Sremski Karlovci, centrally- located in the old town, offers basic tourist services. In addition to its informative and promotional function, the Tourism Organisation of Sremski Karlovci organises visits, prepares and realizes tourism programmes with an extremely professional guiding service.

In the future tourism development of Sremski Karlovci, more attention should be focussed on better positioning of all activities, including local partner organizations in the field of tourism.

This, above all, includes the activities of the Society for the Preservation of Traditions and the Development of Sremski Karlovci. The members of this Society are people who mainly come from Sremski Karlovci or they want to help the development of the city, from Serbia and abroad. Here is a list of some of their activities:

- Summer School of Church Music "In Memory of Kornelije", which has existed for fifteen years,
- "Let's preserve beautiful houses and gardens",
- Collecting donations for the conservation of cultural heritage,
- Developing and arranging public green areas,
- Organizing concerts, theatrical performances, discussion forums, book promotions, art colonies,
- Awarding the November Charter,
- International Volunteer Camps whose actions helped arranging the town areas<sup>5</sup>.

This old, historic town does not have adequate accommodation offer.

In the central area of the old town there are is the "Boem" Hotel and the "Danube" Hotel on the Danube river bank, as it has been mentioned before (Photo 2).

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<sup>5</sup> Participants of the camp were volunteers from France, Spain, Canada, Poland, Belgium, Macedonia, Germany, the Czech Republic and Slovenia.

It is certainly not possible to expect expansion in tourism development without major investments into total infrastructure and accommodation offer in Sremski Karlovci.

## 7. POSSIBLE PATHS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SREMSKI KARLOVCI

The complex attractive basis of Sremski Karlovci has an outstanding value which is not exploited enough for tourism purposes. We believe that the main reason for this situation lies in the tourism organisation elements.

The towns have museums, galleries, city halls. This town has all of them, and especially the following elements: the Seminary – the oldest one in the country, the impressive building of the Patriarch's Court and Stefaneum, the Peace Chapel and the oldest Grammar School in the country.

Urban tourism of the town is based on the first pillar of tourism – cultural heritage. However, the tourism of Sremski Karlovci has a small importance in the urban development of the town. This is confirmed by the figures representing the number of tourist visits. According to the Tourism Organisation of the Municipality of Sremski Karlovci, the number of tourists is constantly increasing. There were 24,508 tourists in 2005; 24,940 tourists in 2006; in 2007 there were 35,247 tourists, and in 2008, there were 34,736 tourists. These numbers are extremely small and not proportional to the presence of extremely valuable tourism resources. Tourists coming to Sremski Karlovci spend only a few hours during the sightseeing tour of the town. This is a very disappointing indicator of the tourism development level of this town.

Having analyzed the tourism resource basis of Sremski Karlovci, we think that the possible tourism development paths of the town should be:

- establishing integrated urban tourism management,
- tourism and thematic profiling of the programmes tailored according to tourism demand, in both pillars of tourism,
- defining and realization of the tourism programmes which will increase the length of tourist stay to several days, and not only for a few hours,
- activation of the tourism resource basis of the river Danube and its bank,
- activation of the tourism potentials of the Mount Fruška Gora through ample tourism programmes in the area of Fruška Gora,
- strengthening tourism infrastructure and superstructure,
- more expansive tourism marketing.

Sremski Karlovci is a town-museum, with a rich historic heritage, well-preserved and protected, with outstanding nature but lack of tourism development. However, the tourism resources of this town are its outstanding capital and tourism can bring a real rise growth for it.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

Sremski Karlovci is a town on the Danube river, a town-museum, in Serbia, Vojvodina, Srem. A rich cultural heritage of the town represents the first pillar of



tourism. This heritage is a basis for its cultural identity – its cultural personality. However, cultural resources of Sremski Karlovci are not well-promoted for tourism purposes. This is why there is a controversy between the pricelessly valuable and preserved cultural heritage and lack of its tourism promotion. In this paper, only the most impressive buildings were mentioned, which are the pillars of cultural tourism and are important for the perception of the value of cultural heritage in this town.

The second pillar of tourism in Sremski Karlovci is its natural surroundings: Mount Fruška Gora and the river Danube with its banks. This tourist attraction of Sremski Karlovci has been only a potential attraction so far. We think that its tourism activation is one of the priority paths of the future of tourism in the town.

Sremski Karlovci is an extremely significant town in the Fruška Gora-Danube area. The future paths of tourism development in this town should build the tourism position on the domestic and international tourism market.

A prosperous tourism development of Sremski Karlovci can be achieved on the conceptual basis of the integrated quality of urban tourism management – IQUTM. This concept should provide reaffirmation of the tourism territorial capital of Sremski Karlovci, on the suggested paths of tourism development and ensure its better tourism position on the extremely competitive tourism market.

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