



Podkarpacie Province

One of the specialties of the Podkarpacie region is air transport, which is traditionally linked to the local infrastructure and industry and has been developing steadily over the past few years.

The population of Podkarpacie is just over 2.1 million. The unemployment rate is 14.1. The province capital is Rzeszów, with 175,000 residents, a city with ambitions to become the most important center in southeastern Poland. Rzeszów has 11 university-level schools, and nearby Przemyśl has another five. Thanks to this the region enjoys the reputation of a good source of highly qualified staff who find employment in newly established companies, including those in special economic zones.

Following the opening of the Rzeszów-Jasionka international airport in 2005, the capital of Podkarpacie became one of the main destinations where tourists from all over the world first came into contact with Poland, not to mention the large numbers of Polish emigrants returning to their native region after years spent abroad. It is worth adding that for decades the Podkarpacie region was the starting point for successive waves of Polish economic migration in the 20th century; due to family ties cultivated over the years and sentiment, emigrants who have been successful and plan to return to Poland in old age usually choose their native region. Researchers have long observed a wave of returns to Podkarpacie, chiefly from the United States. The local authorities have certain hopes for expatriate Poles' financial involvement in the development of the region's economy and infrastructure.

Rzeszów-Jasionka is a regional airport with the best location in terms of climate of all of Poland's airports, which means it aspires to be the leading standby airport for Warsaw's Okęcie international airport. The region's planned development strategy also provides for regular passenger flights within the next few years to U.S. cities,

and also for including Podkarpacie's local airports in a future network of air freight transport between Western Europe and America and between Central and Eastern Europe and Asia.

Consideration is being given to incorporating airports in Mielec and Krosno into the domestic and European air transport network. There are also plans to use the airfield in Turbia and another located within Wola Korzeniecka and Krajna in Bircza commune for sports, training and recreational purposes.

The region's aviation tradition dates back to prewar Poland. It was upheld in communist Poland when Podkarpacie's aircraft industry worked mainly for the needs of the Warsaw Pact air forces. After the communist system collapsed and the pact was dissolved in 1991, the sector found itself in a crisis that it began to overcome after another few years.

Today the aircraft industry again plays a dominating role in the innovation and hi-tech sector in Podkarpacie, especially as part of the Aviation Valley, where WSK PZL Rzeszów SA plays a leading role.

The Aviation Valley is an association of entrepreneurs from southeastern Poland's aircraft industry. It includes companies from Rzeszów, Bielsko-Biała, Mielec, Krosno, Świdnik and Sędziszów Małopolski, a total of 77 aircraft industry companies employing about 22,000 engineers and technicians, plus scientific research units.

Road and railway routes of regional, national and international importance intersect in the Podkarpacie region. The main east-west road transport axis runs across the province, including the planned A4 freeway, and also roads linking the Baltic states with the south of Europe.

The main railway transport route includes an international railway line carrying traffic from Western Europe to

Ukraine. There is a wide-gauge rail line (LHS), an 83-kilometer one-track route from the border with Ukraine to the Huta Katowice steel mill. It is compatible with the wide-gauge railroads running across most of the countries of the former Soviet Union. The region also has two narrow-gauge lines totaling 71 km which are used mostly for tourist traffic.

The province is among the least polluted in this part of Europe. It is home to protected landscape areas, scenic parks, numerous nature reserves as well as the popular Bieszczady National Park and Magura National Park. The former lies in the Bieszczady mountain range, far from industrial areas and large towns, and thus has long been popular as a place to relax among unspoiled nature.

Podkarpacie's assets also include rich sources of mineral water containing sulfur compounds as well as therapeutic mud, enabling health spas to operate here. Health resorts such as Iwonicz Zdrój, Rymanów Zdrój, Horyniec Zdrój, Polańczyk Zdrój and therapeutic waters in several other, smaller localities have long been famous among health spa patients and clients. New special-interest tourist routes have been set up over the past three years. Agrotourism is developing well—already about 600 farms are members of agrotourist associations. The region's rivers are among the cleanest in Poland, and Podkarpacie is among the least polluted regions in the country, with water of first class purity.

The pharmaceutical, IT and food processing industries are also well developed in the province. Many industrial facilities (with a total of over 20,000 jobs) have been springing up in the Mielec and Tarnobrzeg special economic zones. Another key issue for the region's development is the Podkarpacie Science and Technology Park in Rzeszów.



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