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Iron Gates Region in Serbia as a Role Model for Sustainable Cultural Landscape

Iron Gates is the longest gorge and probably the most picturesque area along the Danube. In Serbia, this region is known as Đerdap and it is appreciated by its incredible and unique landscape. Bearing the myriad of cultural and natural assets, the whole area is protected at national level as a national park. However, Đerdap region has bigger, European significance and it possesses many features to be considered as an exceptional cultural landscape thereof. Despite this view, it is still underestimated internationally and it is not officially included in the list of cultural landscapes by UNESCO.

This obstacle has left an impact on the current state of Đerdap region, which has faced negative socio-economic problems for decades. For comprehensive regional development, the most noticeable problem is that the protection of the area has been adequately supported with sustainable space-related regional development. As a consequence, the region is marked with the sharp decline of population, overall isolation and the weak interconnection of its main localities.

The aim of this paper is to research possibilities to enhance the spatial dynamics of Đerdap through the implementation of the postulates of sustainable cultural landscape. This concept will be examined by using the different strategies for the sustainable development of cultural landscapes. The most important are based on the mixed-use of territory, rational protection of space, proper integration of different stakeholders into decision-making process and decentralisation of territorial governance from state to region. The final intention is to determine how these postulates can uphold local socio-economic perspective. Even more, Đerdap can become a role model for the development of regions in Serbia that are recognised by cultural and natural heritage. It will be given in the form of recommendations to shape the better future of the Đerdap region.