



# GREEN SCHEME OF SLOVENIAN TOURISM

## THE REPORT ON GREEN/SUSTAINABILITY INDICATORS OF KOPER AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

*In 2018, the Municipality of Koper joined the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism (ZSST) with the aim of establishing a sustainable tourism model with an internationally recognized tool for the development of green destinations, which will evaluate the potential (natural, social, cultural) and combine it into a unique offer of a tourist destination. In 2021, the municipality has been renewing the previously acquired Green Destination mark and is again collecting data based on improvements from the acquisition of the mark to the present day.*

In the Indicator report, the destination again met more than 60 indicators and highlighted the key features, which are briefly summarized below. In the next period, we will monitor the situation and systematically maintain or improve it in the long run by taking appropriate measures.

In accordance with the Strategy for Sustainable Growth of Slovenian Tourism 2017 - 2021, the Municipality of Koper is one of the leading destinations within the Mediterranean Slovenia macro-destination. Koper is the second largest city in Istria (on the Istrian peninsula) and the largest in Slovenian Istria. It is the centre of the eponymous municipality, the coastal-karst region and the coastal urban agglomeration (Koper - Izola - Piran - Portorož), and it is also home to the only Slovenian cargo port. The area is inhabited by people from the Italian ethnic community, and in addition to Slovene, Italian is also the official language.



### MUNICIPALITY OF KOPER IN NUMBERS

*(data from 2020)*



*The municipality has 52,630 inhabitants.*



*It covers an area of 311 square kilometres, which ranks it 4th among Slovenian municipalities in terms of area.*



*The highest point in the municipality is Slavnik with 1,028 metres above sea level.*



*In terms of the destination, 70 percent of the territory of the municipality is made up of natural landscape.*



*Nature protection areas cover 67.3 percent of its total area.*



Koper is rich in cultural heritage, as traces of settlement in the Koper area date back to the Middle Paleolithic and Neolithic age. This is evidenced by numerous cave discovery sites on the Karst edge. The first settlement of the island of Koper dates back to the Roman republican period. Recent archaeological finds from the 3rd to 1st century BC date back to the time when the ancient Greek settlement of Palada, later Aegida, was mentioned in written sources in the wider Koper area. The cultural heritage and preserved documents eloquently testify to the fact that Koper has followed the taste of Venice and the Italian space in general for centuries; in addition to foreign master craftsmen, artists and architects who have left a visible mark on the city, the city can also be proud of its own artists and achievements, especially during its greatest cultural boom between the 15th and 18th centuries.

The image of the old town with its specific structure is still a valuable urban monument in the **Mediterranean area** to this day. A walk through the old town reveals the style of different periods and the active continuity of creative desires that have shaped this interesting and attractive seaside town throughout the centuries. Renovated buildings, streets and squares, in particular the **Prešeren and Carpaccio** squares, and above all the **central town square** with the restored **Praetorian Palace, Loggia and cathedral**, with its gothic, renaissance and baroque shapes, inscription plates and rich heraldic decoration, still maintain a high-quality and valuable artistic ambience, which arouses the attention, curiosity and admiration of visitors from near and far.

The city experienced its greatest economic and cultural prosperity during the Venetian Republic (13th to 18th century); this period is evidenced by the still preserved urban architecture, while the image of the island began to fade away with the shrinkage of the salt pans (these were finally decommissioned in 1912). It is known for its tradition of fishing, shipbuilding, winemaking and olive growing.



Today, Koper is a lively Mediterranean city and first and foremost a tourist destination, as since 2004 it has become increasingly established as a stop for passenger ships. The advantage of Koper is that the passenger terminal is just a stone's throw from the city centre, so when the passenger ships arrive, the atmosphere in the city and in the countryside is very lively.

The municipality also boasts the **Skocjan Inlet nature reserve**, which lies on 122 hectares and is an ecologically important special protection area (Natura 2000 site) and a **botanical, zoological and ecosystemic natural resource**. It is considered to be the largest semi-saline wetland in Slovenia. Due to the intertwining of semi-saline and freshwater habitats, the inlet is home to various plant and animal species. The area is important mainly because of the bird diversity (253 different species live in the area), but you can also see old Istrian or Podolian cattle and Camargue horses there (children can ride horses). There is a circular learning trail with observatories in the reserve.

The main products of tourism at the destination are active Mediterranean holidays, discovering culture and nature, gastronomy and various events.

The main products are based on events, outdoor tourism, culture, nature experiences, countryside, nautical tourism, sports tourism, circular trips and special interests. The products are presented in more detail below.





## GENERAL INFORMATION, NATURE

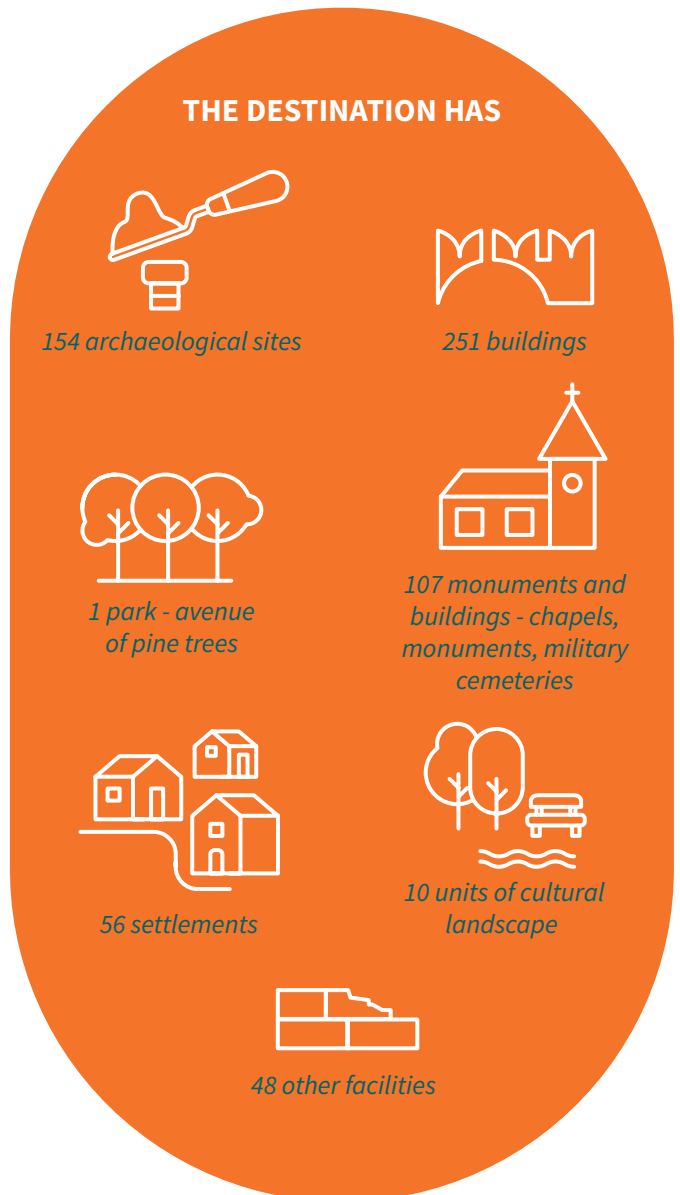
The municipality of Koper is located in the southwestern part of the Republic of Slovenia, is part of the Coastal-Karst region and has an area of 311 square kilometres. The municipality borders the Municipality of Ankaran, the Municipality of Izola and the Municipality of Piran in the west, the Municipality of Hrpelje - Kozina in the east, Italy in the north (Milje and Dolina municipalities) and Croatia (Istria County) in the south. The municipality is divided into 22 local communities and 104 settlements. There are three major rivers in the area of the destination, namely Rižana, Badaševica and Dragonja, of which the first two have their source and estuary in the municipality, while the river Dragonja only has its source in the Koper municipality. Apart from Piran, the Bay of Koper is the largest bay in the Slovenian sea. It is a small part of the Gulf of Trieste, the northernmost part of the Adriatic Sea. Due to the strategic position of the Port of Koper (Luka Koper), which is one of the main Adriatic ports and the main cargo station for a large part of Central Europe, it is one of the most economically developed areas in Slovenia.

The municipality celebrates its holiday on 15 May, in memory of the Marežige Uprising, one of the first anti-fascist revolts in Europe (15 May 1921).

## CULTURE AND TRADITION

The destination has a rich movable, immovable and intangible heritage. A detailed inventory of the cultural heritage is recorded in the Analysis of the Condition of Cultural Heritage.

In addition to the officially protected units of cultural heritage, the destination has hundreds of preserved private elements of traditional architecture, which give this area a special charm and a strong mark. There are several museums at the destination.





## TOURISM

In addition to cultural tourism, active holidays is one of the main pillars of the tourist offer of the destination. The Tourist Information centre directs visitors and locals to marked cycling and hiking trails and encourages them to visit sights. In addition to the centre of Koper, the surrounding places in the countryside are getting increasingly recognisable and visited by tourists.

The destination has 515 accommodation options (rooms, apartments, hotels, private lodging providers). We are extremely proud of the **Houses of Slovenian Istria in Truške, which received the Slovenia Green Accommodation mark as an accommodation provider.**

Due to the extremely favourable climate, geostrategic location and diverse offer, the destination has excellent conditions for the development of year-round tourism. Already, 80 percent of all the visits are spread over eight months (from April to November), which is evident from the attached work report (the calculation is made with the data in the Takse program). The destination is working systematically on the year-round aspect of tourism, as stated in one of the key goals of the new tourism strategy.

There are several tourist, cultural and sports associations in the Municipality of Koper, which are, together with the Municipality and the Institute for Youth, Culture and Tourism of Koper, nurturing tradition and jointly co-hosting numerous events.

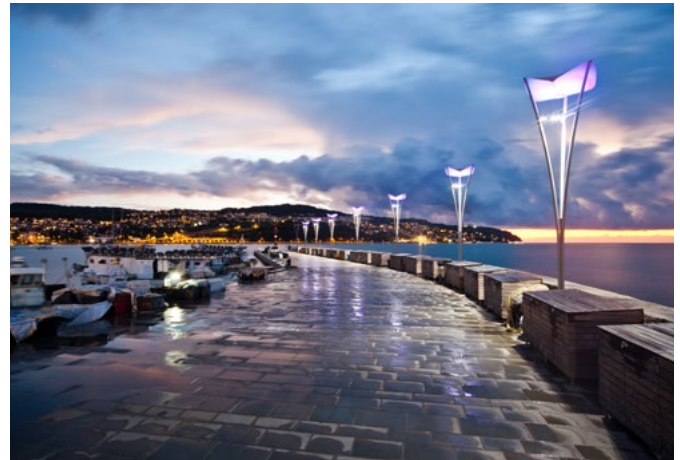
Visitors have many opportunities to experience unique fauna and flora first-hand, as the destination is characterised by exceptional biodiversity, the Škocjan Inlet Nature Reserve and marine flora and fauna, while the countryside is dominated by pastures, forests and greenery. Koper's green countryside is also known as extremely friendly to cyclists and hikers and other active explorers, as it offers many well-kept and marked trails for spending leisure time and exploring cultural and natural heritage.

The destination of Koper is easily accessible and extremely safe. It encourages environmentally friendly, carbon-free travel within the municipality and between neighbouring destinations. There have also never been any recorded cases of illegal hunting or trade in protected animal species.

We are aware of the green-blue richness, which we have also written down in our tourism strategy. We want to preserve this valuable heritage for future generations through sustainable development in all areas, including tourism, by taking into account the guidelines of the Green Scheme of Slovenian Tourism.

Based on the establishment of indicators in the Green Scheme, we will highlight some key ones, monitor them regularly and publish the results on the destination's website annually.

Green coordinator



### OUR MISSION

*Through tourism, we revive the historic core and the green countryside, in innovative and bold ways, we connect people and ideas, tradition and modernity, history, present and future. Together we write positive stories and grow together.*

***Koper, my destination for sun, sea and nature!***

*Sporty, active and healthy – just like us who live, work or come here. Tourism is our way of life.*

