



Cserhatalja LAG, Paszto-Kozard, Hungary Along the Cserhat Mountains

25 villages and Paszto, a rural town between the Western slope of Matra Hills and the gentle Cserhat Mountains. This is what we call „Cserhatalja” – „The bottom of Cserhat”. The area, which is part of the indigenous Palóc Land, an interesting Hungarian ethnic-cultural-religious traditional area, which overlaps the Hungarian a Slovakian border.



TRADITION AND RENEWAL:

The Southern gate of Cserhat begins just 60-70 km North-East from Budapest. Generally it is an agriculture area with nearly 30% forest cover. Local farmers grow wheat, barley, oilseeds and some maize. Following the EU accession, sugarbeet and



vegetable plantations all disappeared. New fruit orchards, however, bring new feature and create picturesque, artistic landscape. Few dairy and beef farms, some sheep flocks and horse studs can be found in the neighbourhood

DEMOGRAPHY AND POPULATION. The LAG Cserhatalja consists of **26 settlements with 34,500 inhabitants**. Villages are different in size, starting from 180 up to 2000, while the regional town, Paszto counts slightly less than 10,000 people. The demographic trend is declining, since the GDP in this micro region is among the lowest in the entire Hungary. Unemployment is above the national average, due to decline in rural and industrial jobs in local companies. Many workers have to commute to Budapest and other regional industrial zones. The area has a growing gipsy/roma population, where unemployment is far above the average.

RURAL ECONOMY: Paszto is the most industrialized town in the micro-region, followed by Jobbagyi and Kálló. The rest are typical agriculture and rural villages. Beside crop production, fruit orchards have been established around Palotas, Paszto and Kozard, where the **Kozard Apple Valley is now well-known by its cherry, apricots, plum and apple production**. Cserhat is famous about its broad-leaf tree forests, which offer ecotouristic locations with many old



and new walking passes and trails. Part of the LAG territory has rich plant and animal genetic resources, with protected biosystems, protected landscapes, wildflowers and forest berries.

CULTURE, TOURISM: The region enjoys lively cultural life, starting from the real Paloc architecture in many villages. Beautiful Paloc folk dresses can be found in Bujak, while Slovak minorities keeps their dressing traditions as well as singing, dancing and social contacts in Vanyarc and Palotas.

TOURISM AND GASTRONOMY: Palóc dishes are



equal with long-standing tradition... which couples with extraordinary rich folklor. Calm, rolling landscapes nice forests, genuine hospitality give the strength of rural and ecotourism around the Cserhat slopes. Forests with rich and diverse wildlife, farms with local chicken, indigenous mangalica pigs, Hungarian grey cattle, traditionally produced

sheep and goat cheese, kozard fruit jams and palotasi honey are among popular local products of the micro-region. Mushrooms and even truffles from Bujak forests add-on to the gastronomic delights. Village tourism already well established and new projects are funded from EFARD through the Hungarian RDP.

Several villages had joined the **Nograd Geopark Association** in order to explore the attractiveness of geo-miracles of the region, such as the bazalt rocks of Bér, the sandstone-rock site of Bujak and the so-called „Kozard-formation” with the andezit mine.





Rural art and handicraft making is another representative activity, which include the egg-blacksmith in Vanyarc, the pottery ceramists in Tar, Paszto and Alsótold.

FESTIVALS, MUSEUMS, GALLERIES: From spring to autumn Cserhat festivals invite tens of thousands of tourists, starting with the Apple Flower Fest in Kozard, followed by Zsigmond Day in Paszto, Singing Forest concerts in Cserhat and Matra forests in July, village days in Tar, Alsótold, Palotas, Hehalom, the Noodle Festival in Vanyarc, the Veteran Tractor Show and the Aprilia Bokor Kupa for the radio-controlled model cars in Bokor are nice events for relaxation and tasting local food. The festival season is closed with the Hungarian



Flavours gastronomy and fruit festival and LEADER products fair in Kozard around late September.

Paszto is the best place to find museums open for tourists. Bujak offer Paloc painting Gallery by Oszkar Glatz, Kisbagyon hosts the unic African Hunters Collection, while Kozard always keep one or two art galleries open for tourists all year round.

CHURCHES, CASTLES and FOLKLORE are marking village shapes all around the micro-region. Each villages has one, two or more churches, while the Szirak and Erdotarcsa Castles are known by tourist even far away from the region. The Paloc folklor is unic, ladies dresses in beautiful costumes on religious and social occasions.



COOPERATION PROJECT PROPOSALS by **Cserhatalja:** The Cserhatalja LAG is actively preparing cooperation projects in rural and ecotourism. Please ask for project proposals:

1. „Along Birds’ Routes”,
2. „Walking at the Maria Pilgrimage Trail”
3. Local energy supply from renewable energy
4. Village development plans.

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Nógrád A VARÁZSLATOS VILÁG

25 villagesn 1 town
35.000 inhabitants

Alsótold, Bér, Bokor, Buják, Cserhátszentiván, Csécse, Ecseg, Egyházasdengeleg, Erdőkürt, Erdőtarcsa, Felsőtold, Galgaguta, Garáb, Héhalom, Jobbágyi, Kálló, Kisbagyon, Kozard, Mátraszőlös, Palotás, Paszto, Szarvasgede, Szirak, Szurdokpüspöki, Tar, Vanyarc

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EFARD: Investing to the Rural Europe
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LEADER LAG, HUNGARY



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