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GEOGRAPHIC AND TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT OF PAKLENICA NATIONAL PARK

GEPROMETNA VALORIZACIJA PROSTORA NACIONALNOG PARKA "PAKLENICA"

"Paklenica", na 3617 ha, pripada po površini u skupinu naših manjih nacionalnih parkova. Smještena je na primorskoj padini južnog Velebita u blizini Jadranske magistrale i naselja Starigrad-Paklenica. Najbliže gradsko (veće) naselje je grad Zadar udaljen od nacionalnog parka "Paklenica" cestom oko 45 km. Pomorski put prema Rijeci i Zadru iz Starigrad-Paklenice Podvelebitskim kanalom, odnosno Paškim i Virskim prolazom, ne koristi se za javni promet (stalne trajektno ili brodske linije). S istočne je strane prostor Nacionalnog parka obrubljen visokim velebitskim hrbatom od Rujna do Svetog brda. Prometni pristup "Paklenici" je najpogodniji iz niske obalne zone na južnom rubu naselja Starigrad-Paklenica.

Glavna je pristupna prometnica za Nacionalni park "Paklenica" Jadranska magistrala ili cesta s oznakom E-65.

1. GEOGRAPHIC AND TRAFFIC LOCATION OF PAKLENICA NATIONAL PARK

The geographic and traffic position of Paklenica National Park depends on the broader geographic position of the Republic of Croatia itself. Undoubtedly, it should be regarded as European and Mediterranean, or Adriatic, position. Paklenica National Park location is also characterized by its position in a very attractive European immissive tourist area of the Eastern Adriatic.

In this context, relatively favourable distance from stronger emissive tourist centers of South, Middle and Central Europe should also be mentioned. The National Park area can be relatively easily reached. It is a day's journey by the most popular tourist means of transportation, by car. On the other hand, bearing in mind the Park's specific recreational and tourist elements, the possibility of visitors coming from greater distances than a day's journey should by no means be disregarded, espe-

cially if a means of quicker transportation, such as air transport, is introduced.

It is also significant that Paklenica National Park is situated along the direct route of the third Croatian traffic corridor, the maritime-Adriatic corridor, which is expected to acquire greater economic and traffic importance in near future.

2. GEOGRAPHIC AND TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT OF TRAFFIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND ROUTES

Paklenica National Park is part of the broader European road network. This fact should provide basis for the Park's future development and orientation. Paklenica is a Croatian national park, but its significance spreads beyond Croatian national borders, which is one of its advantages and a necessary prerequisite for its future development.

Paklenica's traffic communication is centered primarily around road traffic. One of the 19 main European international road arteries, the E-65 Highway, runs directly by the Paklenica area itself. The E-65 is a basic European road traffic route of referential type, starting in Malmö in Sweden and ending in Chania in Greece, connecting Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, SR Yugoslavia and Macedonia. This road is significant because it enables the Park to connect directly into trans-European road network, providing an easy access to it from all parts of Europe through main road referential directions, by intermedial roads of lower rank and by secondary European international roads of the third, or the lowest, rank.

The traffic along this road today is small, due to well known geopolitical reasons and direct war consequences. Before the aggression against the Republic of Croatia, the Adriatic Highway used to be one of the more heavily used roads in Croatia.



Chart 1 Geographic and traffic accessibility of Paklenica



COASTAL ROAD CORRIDORS

Agenda

- Main coastal corridors
- - - International ferry-boat corridors
- | — "Blue Arteries" - longitudinal coastal corridors
- Ferry-boat lines

Chart II Paklenica National Park position in coastal Adriatic corridors

After the liberation of the Novska Passage (Novsko ždrilo) and its surrounding area, and since the pontoon bridge near Maslenica was built, the traffic is gradually returning into this area. Last year, in some aspects it came very close to being the same as in the pre-war years.

Croatia plans to strengthen development activities on its coastal Adriatic area. Having this in mind and looking from the geographic and traffic standpoint, developmental prospective of Adriatic seaside road corridors is very significant.

The immediate surroundings of the Paklenica National Park is, unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately), not going to be affected by road construction proposed in various traffic corridor projects. Due to many state reasons, the priority among the projects offered for the new Adriatic Highway is given to the continental route project which runs through the area of Lika. The Park would, however, profit even if that road is constructed because the exit point of this route to the sea is supposed to be at the Sveti Rok saddle through the Velebit Tunnel. In that case, the tunnel exit to the Velebit slope on the sea

dation facilities should be planned to be built along the Starigrad-Paklenica coast.

3. TRAFFIC, ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER FORMS OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE PAKLENICA NATIONAL PARK

Paklenica National Park traffic and accommodation infrastructure is very modest. A car road is opened up to 3 km (1.5 miles) into the Great Paklenica (Velika Paklenica) Canyon, accompanied by some smaller size make-do parking places along it. The Small Paklenica (Mala Paklenica) Canyon does not have even this kind of access road. All other access ways are just pedestrian paths.

The most significant accommodation facilities in the Park itself are offered by the mountain lodge called Borisov Dom.

As far as the Alan Hotel in Starigrad-Paklenica is concerned, it is not used much by visitors to the National Park, although its usage as the Park's accommodation facility was one of the elements in assessing the need for building the hotel in the first place. The majority of the Hotel's visitors are from seaside tourist groups, who used to visit the National Park only as an incidental side-stop of interest.

The idea of better and more complete utilization of the Paklenica National Park has been considered for some time. But, in order to start implementing it, a line of improvements should first be made in the traffic and accommodation infrastructure both in the Park itself and in its immediate surroundings.

One of the improvements might be the construction of a cable railway towards the higher areas of the Paklenica Park, an improvement which would not harm the natural scenery, nor destroy its harmony to any significant extent. Closely connected to the cable way construction, the building of new accommodation facilities on Velebit near the Park should also be considered. Bearing in mind the distance and weather conditions on the coast during the tourist season, these facilities might be also used by coastal tourists.

4. CONCLUSION

The geographic and traffic position of Paklenica National Park has a definitely European character. Basically, it is defined by its location in the vicinity of one of the more significant trans-European North-East road traffic routes (the E-65 Highway). It allows relatively easy access to the Park for quite a number of European emissive tourist areas, especially Italy, Slovenia, Austria, the Czech Republic and Germany. The quality of this road route in the technical and traffic sense, however, does not

meet required standards any more, which will become more and more evident with the increase of traffic on the Adriatic Highway in the changed geographic and traffic conditions.

We should therefore adopt prospective traffic solutions in the framework of the suggested corridor traffic policy in Croatia. We should also utilize new possibilities offered by combinations of road traffic with air transport and nautical tourism.

Possibilities of developing new traffic and technical systems connected with accommodation facilities in the immediate vicinity of the Paklenica National Park should also be seriously considered because the existing ones are inadequate.

SUMMARY

Paklenica National Park, covering an area of 3.617 ha, (1.447 acres) belongs to the group of smaller Croatian national parks. It is situated on the Southern slopes of Mount Velebit descending to the lower coast region, near the Adriatic Highway and the small town of Starigrad-Paklenica. From the National Park, it takes approximately 45 km (26 miles) by road to the nearest town of any size, Zadar. The sea routes from Starigrad-Paklenica to Rijeka and Zadar, passing through the Lower Velebit Channel (Podvelebitski kanal) and the Pag and the Vir Passages (Paški i Virski prolaz), are not used for public transport as regular ferry and ship links. From the East, Paklenica is closed by the high Velebit ridge running from Rujan to Sveto Brdo. Traffic access to the National Park is therefore easiest from the low coastal area from the Southern Starigrad-Paklenica suburb.

The main access route to Paklenica National Park today is the Adriatic Highway, or E-65 road.

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