

The background is an aerial photograph of a dense forest with a lake in the center. A large, stylized star graphic is overlaid on the image, composed of several overlapping shapes in shades of blue, yellow, and white with a dotted pattern. The star is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the image.

# VIDZEME

**PLANNING REGION  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
STRATEGY 2030**

# VIDZEME

MAZSALACA MUNICIPALITY

NAUKŠĒNI MUNICIPALITY

VALKA MUNICIPALITY

STREŅCI MUNICIPALITY

KOCĒNI MUNICIPALITY

BEVERĪNA MUNICIPALITY

SMILTENE MUNICIPALITY

APE MUNICIPALITY

RŪJENA MUNICIPALITY

BURTNIĒKI MUNICIPALITY

ALŪKSNE MUNICIPALITY

VALMIERA CITY

RAUNA MUNICIPALITY

GULBENE MUNICIPALITY

PĀRGAUJA MUNICIPALITY

PRIEKULI MUNICIPALITY

CĒSIS MUNICIPALITY

VECPIEBALGA MUNICIPALITY

JAUNPIEBALGA MUNICIPALITY

CESVAINĒ MUNICIPALITY

LUBĀNA MUNICIPALITY

LĪGATNE MUNICIPALITY

AMATA MUNICIPALITY

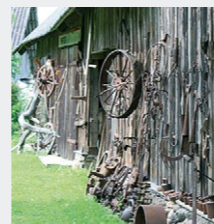
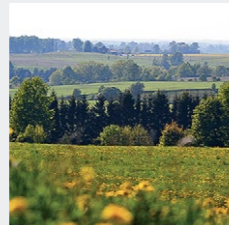
ĒRĢĻI MUNICIPALITY

MADONA MUNICIPALITY

VĀRAKLĀNI MUNICIPALITY

The booklet is financed by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism programme 2009–2014 No. LV 07 “Capacity-building and Institutional Cooperation between Latvian and Norwegian Public Institutions, Local and Regional Authorities” project No. 4.3–24/NFI/INP–002 “Increasing territorial development planning capacities of planning regions and local governments of Latvia and elaboration of development planning documents”





Authors of the photographs:

Agris Semēvics,  
Smiltene Municipality,  
Jurijs Smirnovs,  
Cēsis Municipality,  
Zane Butlere,  
Valdis Vanags.

Any development is based on vision, planning and adherence to targets. This is the way, which we are paving today in order to lay the foundation for future prosperity. We hand you **Vidzeme Planning Region Sustainable Development Strategy 2030** and **Vidzeme Planning Region Development Programme 2015–2020**.

These documents can be considered as a guide to strengthen intentions and abilities of people living and working in Vidzeme to promote sustainable and balanced development of the region. The strategic directions of the development of Vidzeme are, first of all, healthy, active and talented **people**, secondly, competitive **economics** and, finally, a **territory** suitable for families.

Let's implement these development solutions together! Let's work to be proud of our results, which will encourage the next generations to continue the good work!

Vidzeme – the only way is up!



Chairman of Vidzeme Planning  
Region Development  
Council

*Hardijs Vents*



# Activity and Functions of the Region

**Vidzeme Planning Region (VPR)** is one of the five planning regions in Latvia. Since 2006 it represents 25 municipalities and the city of national significance Valmiera at the national and international levels. VPR organises and implements regional spatial development planning, as well as ensures the regional and local representation in development of business, employment and social policy.

**VPR's mission** is to promote sustainable and well-balanced development of Vidzeme Region and to provide effective services to regional governments, businesses, NGOs and citizens for the achievement of the jointly defined development targets. VPR serves as a development platform for local governments of Vidzeme Region.

VPR has gained extensive experience in implementation of international cooperation projects.

Projects have been implemented in various areas:

- **strategic and spatial planning,**
- **business,**
- **vocational education,**
- **culture and tourism,**
- **landscape conservation and management,**
- **environment and energy,**
- **information technologies,**
- **development of public transport and others.**

# General Information about the Region



## Area

**15 245,43** km<sup>2</sup>  
23.6% of the total  
area of Latvia  
/CSB/



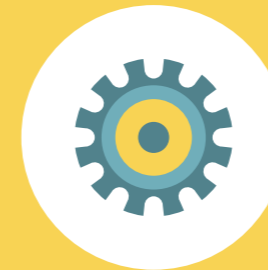
## Population

**199 027**  
10% of the total  
population of Latvia  
/CSB, 2015/



## Active companies

Among innovatively active companies  
Vidzeme Region ranks  
**third** with its 10.8% of innovatively  
active companies right after Rīga and  
its suburbs



## The highest number

of citizens with vocational  
education  
/CSB/



## The longest

road network  
/CSB/



## Wide

internet coverage  
/Latvia State Radio and  
Television Centre/





# Special Values of Vidzeme

Vidzeme is the northern region of Latvia. Territorially it is the **largest** region in the country, occupying 23.6% of the territory. The impressive features of this place are splendid nature, fresh air, extensive forests, beautiful cities and towns, and a unique cultural landscape.

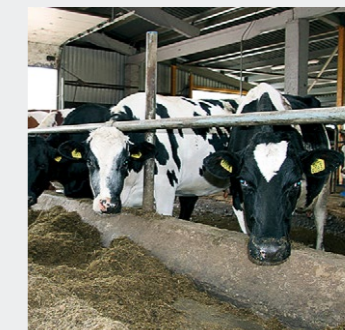
Vidzeme is known as the **cradle of the Latvian culture**. There is a diverse and rich cultural and historical heritage, which represents not only Latvian, but also European cultural values. **Vidzeme is the exact place of origin of the national flag of Latvia and the tradition of the Song Festival.**

Vidzeme is the place where talent, creativity and knowledge can grow and realise in an outstanding natural and cultural environment. The picturesque **old valley of the Gauja river**, national parks and nature reserves are the values that have developed and have been preserved for many centuries.

Vidzeme is rich in **scenic tourist routes**. The ecologically clean environment, high biological and landscape diversity and significant natural and cultural heritage make the region attractive for tourists who look for recreation and entertainment.

VPR is closely connected with Rīga City and the Riga Planning Region, providing a link with the capital city as an administrative centre of the state and transportation hub, as well as access to the Vidzeme seaside, ports and the Riga International Airport.

## Vidzeme Region

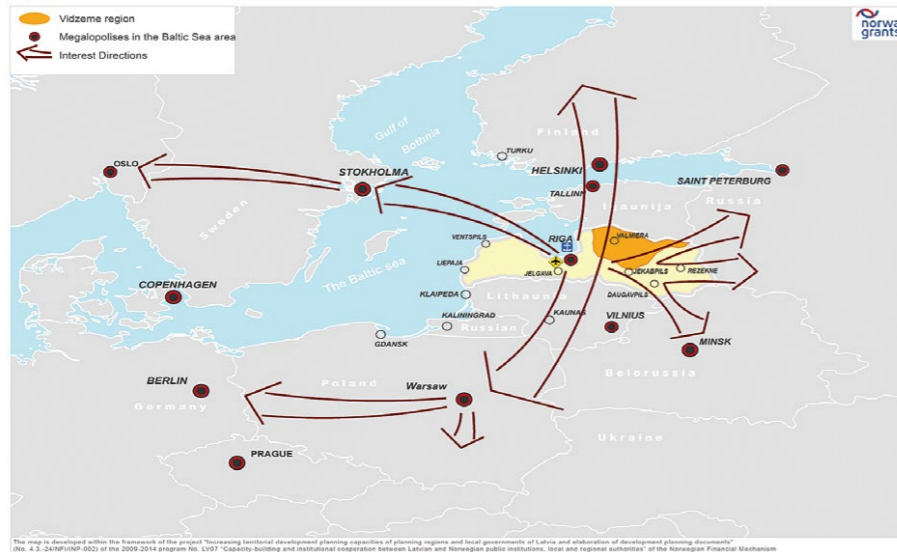


Authors of the photographs:  
Kocēni Municipality,  
Smiltene Municipality,  
Ērgļi Municipality,  
Nils Sokolovs,  
Ziedonis Pētersons,  
Farm "Leviņas",  
Vidzeme Planning Region.





# The Region's Role in Latvia and the Baltic Region



Vidzeme is the **European Union's border region**. The borders with two countries – Estonia and Russia – are the advantage of the region, since the experience of cross-border cooperation can be successfully used in the implementation of cross-border cooperation projects and development of transit services.

The situation between the major development centres in the Baltic region – Riga and Tartu – has contributed to a consistently high level of cultural and educational value in the society.

Vidzeme is crossed by several major international transport corridors, providing Vidzeme with a direct connection to major regional centres in neighbouring countries – **Tartu** and **Tallinn** in Estonia, as well as **Pskov**, **Novgorod** and **St. Petersburg** in Russia.

# Economic Specialisation of Vidzeme Region

In the coming years, Vidzeme needs to pay particular attention to development of research and innovation for the needs of local businesses in fields, where the region has the highest potential for SMART SPECIALISATION<sup>1</sup>.

National specialisation areas	Vidzeme's smart specialisation areas
Knowledge-based bio-economy	High value-added wood products
	Production of healthy food and beverages
	Use of biomass for chemical processing and energy production
Biomedicine, medical technologies, biopharmacy and biotechnologies	Rehabilitation and health-care services
Smart materials, technologies and engineering	Smart materials
ICT	Information and communication technologies
Smart energy	Recreation and sustainable tourism
	Cultural and creative industries
	Remote work and services

By 2030, entrepreneurship development will be observed in the field of cooperation between researchers, entrepreneurs and educational institutions. High value-added production will be advanced in the traditional fields of the region, and manufactured products will be introduced to domestic, EU and global markets. Development of clusters of the region and strategic internationalisation will play an important role, as well as the development of new clusters and integration of regional companies in other strong industry clusters in Latvia.

<sup>1</sup> Smart specialisation is a strategic approach to economic development, developing research and innovation for the needs of local businesses, in order to enhance innovation and productivity growth in areas where the region has a competitive advantage and innovation potential.



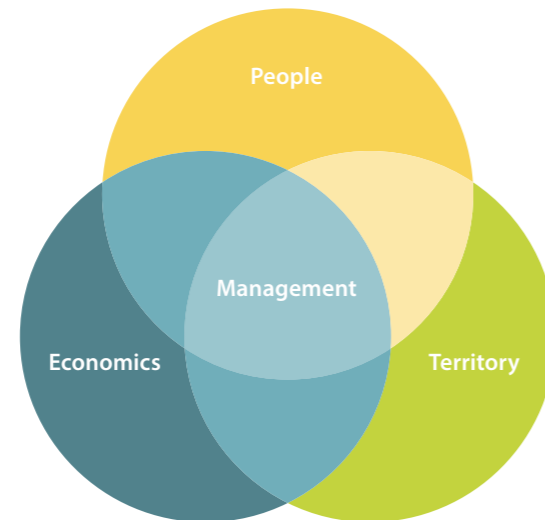


## Vision 2030

Vidzeme is a well-connected, internally integrated and secure region that attracts talented and active people and is able to adapt easily to challenges. It is competitive and strives for excellence in certain areas of regional smart specialisation.

The vision of Vidzeme is based on three interrelated strategic directions:

- PEOPLE: healthy, active, talented, courageous and open to cooperation;
- ECONOMICS: competitive, excellent in certain niches and capable of adapting to external challenges;
- TERRITORY: well-connected and internally integrated home for large and happy families.



**VIDZEME'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:** to promote balanced social, economic and territorial development of the region by implementing a flexibility-oriented policy of integrated cross-sector development that ensures use of the region's economic and territorial benefits for welfare of the population and the increase of securitability.

## Objectives and Priorities

The development planning documents also state three horizontal principles to be followed in order to achieve Vidzeme's strategic targets and priorities:

1. ACCESSIBILITY – performance of purposive actions for identification, establishment and development of reachability solutions;
2. MANAGEMENT – by 2030, effective and innovative public management solutions oriented on the regional area specifics will be introduced in the region. Invitation of different involved parties and institutions for joint actions will have become a common practice;
3. SMART SPECIALISATION – Vidzeme will especially focus on the development of smart specialisation areas, ensuring compliance of activities in all the priorities.

### Objectives 2030

### Long-term priorities 2030

#### Strategic direction: PEOPLE

To improve legal capacity and quality of life of citizens of Vidzeme Region.

IAS1: High-quality, accessible and all-round education  
IAS 2: Social security and health care

#### Strategic direction: ECONOMICS

To increase Vidzeme Region's economic value by improving the business environment and increasing economic sustainability.

IAS3: Sustainable business and innovation environment  
IAS4: Sustainable and energy-efficient economy

#### Strategic direction: TERRITORY

To improve Vidzeme Region's accessibility, approachability and attractiveness.  
To maintain and develop Vidzeme's unique cultural space.  
To build a sustainable and well-functioning Vidzeme urban network based on mutual cooperation and complementarity principles.

IAS5: Accessible region  
IAS6: Attractiveness of places





# Long-term Priorities



## LONG-TERM PRIORITY 1: High-quality, accessible and all-round education

By 2030, high-quality all-round education will be available for the whole population of the region of any age. Educational content will be adapted to regional specialisation, the number of population with higher education will be increased. Educational process will be based on innovative teaching methods, promoting acquisition of necessary work skills, creativity and entrepreneurial abilities. Residents will be motivated to become not only employees but also employers.



## LONG-TERM PRIORITY 2: Social security and health care

By 2030, every citizen of the region will have high-quality health and social services oriented on early diagnostics and timely aid. The region will have an efficient and regular health prevention system available for everyone. Transport and mobile solutions will facilitate the provision of social services closer to the place of residence. The society will adhere to a healthy lifestyle. Social integration and care issues will be resolved through coordination.



## LONG-TERM PRIORITY 3: Sustainable business and innovation environment

By 2030, various support means will be available to entrepreneurs that will allow to develop and improve products and services and to introduce them to the market. The proportion of products and services of regional origin will be competitive in the domestic market and foreign markets. Cooperation between businesses, educational and scientific institutions and the public sector will improve, which will be evidenced by an increase in the proportion of innovative products and services in specialisation areas of the region.



## LONG-TERM PRIORITY 4: Sustainable economy

By 2030, the region's economic sustainability will be increased. The number of companies that develop new services, technologies and products through efficient and sustainable use of local resources will be multiplied. More companies will be implementing sustainable, environmentally friendly and socially responsible businesses.



## LONG-TERM PRIORITY 5: Accessible region

By 2030, the accessibility of services and population centres will be improved owing to investments in the region's roads, smart transport systems and other innovative service solutions that will effectively complement the public transport system. Throughout the territory, it will be possible to use high-quality communications that will allow residents to work at home, as well as to provide and receive remote services. The daily rate of velomobility will increase in the neighbourhood of Vidzeme's largest towns and centres.



## LONG-TERM PRIORITY 6: Attractiveness of places

By 2030, in Latvia and abroad, Vidzeme Region will be associated with an attractive living environment and availability of quality services, high-quality business environment and leisure opportunities. The cultural and natural capital potential will be thoughtfully used, meanwhile initiatives aimed at the preservation and development of Vidzeme's cultural and natural capital and community-building activities will be successfully implemented. Particular attention will be paid to the development of a sense of belonging, loyalty and patriotism in the society.







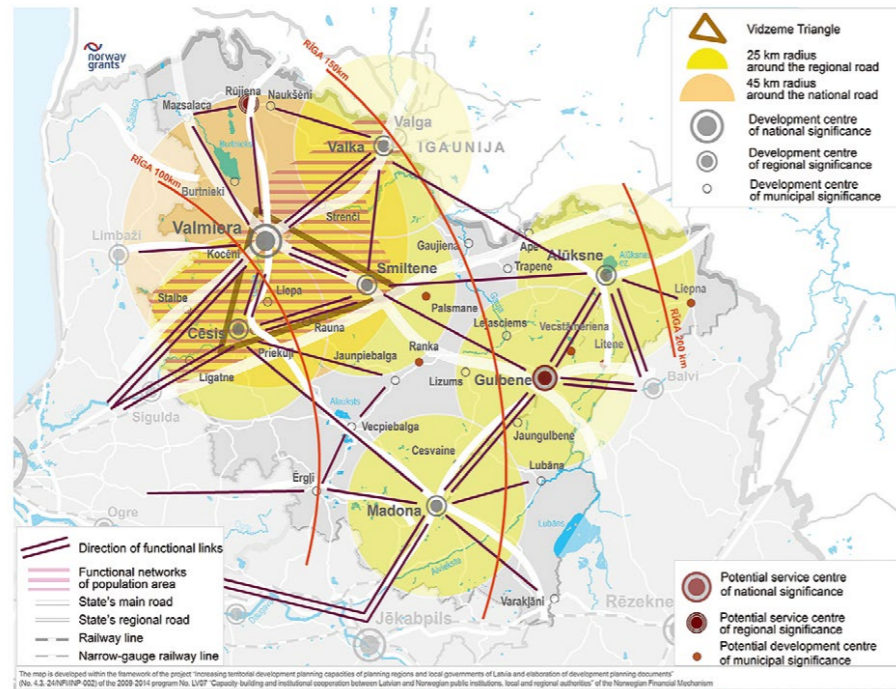
KEY LONG-TERM CHANGES 2030

# Development Centres, Functional Accessibility, Functional Networks 2030

## Long-term changes 2030

A sustainable and well-functioning network of cities based on cooperation, mutually supplementing its functions with jointly developed services. The cities and towns of Vidzeme will successfully compete with cities of other regions in Latvia and the Baltic States. Small towns and rural settlements, particularly in peripheries and special Vidzeme's border areas, will become the local centres of economic, social and cultural support that will cooperate with each other using the potential of each location and promoting the availability of services.

In Vidzeme Region, there is a polycentric settlement structure among **Valmiera** as a development centre of national significance, **Smiltene, Valka, Cēsis** and **Madona** as development centres of regional significance, Gulbene as a potential administrative service centre of national significance, Rūjiena as a potential service centre of regional significance, centres of municipal significance, and support centres of local significance, including farmsteads. The centre of concentration of the region's social and economic activities is **Vidzeme Triangle** – Cēsis–Valmiera–Smiltene – and the adjacent rural areas.

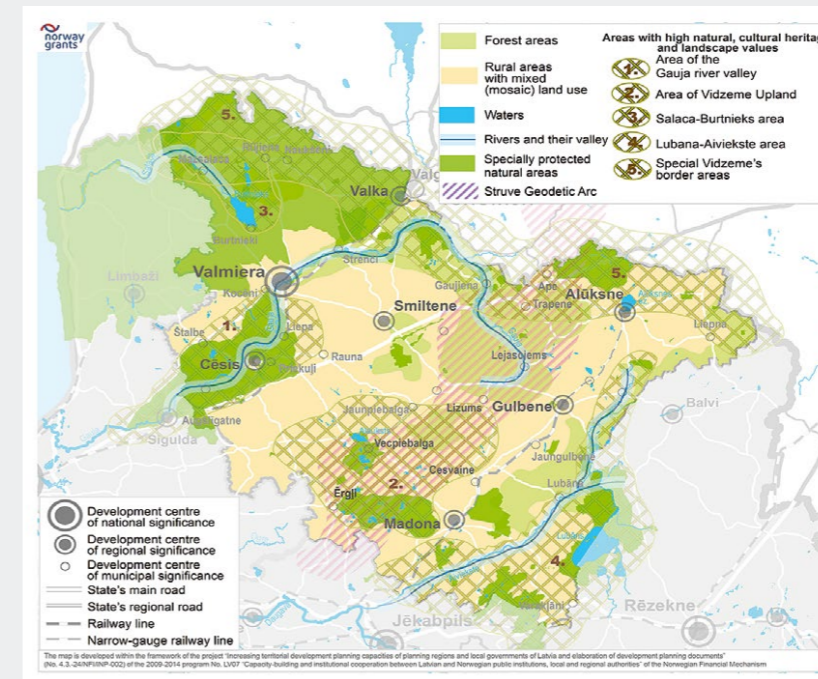


The map is developed within the framework of the project "Increasing territorial development planning capacities of planning regions and local governments of Latvia and elaboration of development planning documents" (No. 4.3.24/NP/ISP-022) of the 2009-2014 program No. LVDF "Capacity building and institutional cooperation between Latvian and Norwegian public institutions, local and regional authorities" of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism

# Areas with High Natural, Cultural Heritage and Landscape Values 2030

## Long-term changes 2030

In the rural areas, there will be preserved viable landscapes that are typical for Vidzeme, as well as the traditional lifestyle and cultural environment. Throughout the region, along with traditional types of cultivation and processing of agricultural products and food production, organic farming will be developing. Diverse and environmentally-friendly operations will be supported in the rural areas with mixed mosaic land use. The region's forest areas will be preserved and restored by increasing productivity of forest stands. The waters will be used for ecosystem function, as well as they will serve as an important resource for development of the cultural landscape, recreation facilities and tourism. Active water tourism will be developed on the major rivers of the region: the Gauja, Salaca, Brasla, Abuls, Seda, Amata and Pededze. Areas with high natural, cultural and historical and landscape values will be integrated in the rural environment and included in the joint tourism movement. Crafting skills typical for Vidzeme will be retained and strengthened, promoting perfection and inheritance of the cultural heritage and traditions.



The map is developed within the framework of the project "Increasing territorial development planning capacities of planning regions and local governments of Latvia and elaboration of development planning documents" (No. 4.3.24/NP/ISP-022) of the 2009-2014 program No. LVDF "Capacity building and institutional cooperation between Latvian and Norwegian public institutions, local and regional authorities" of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism

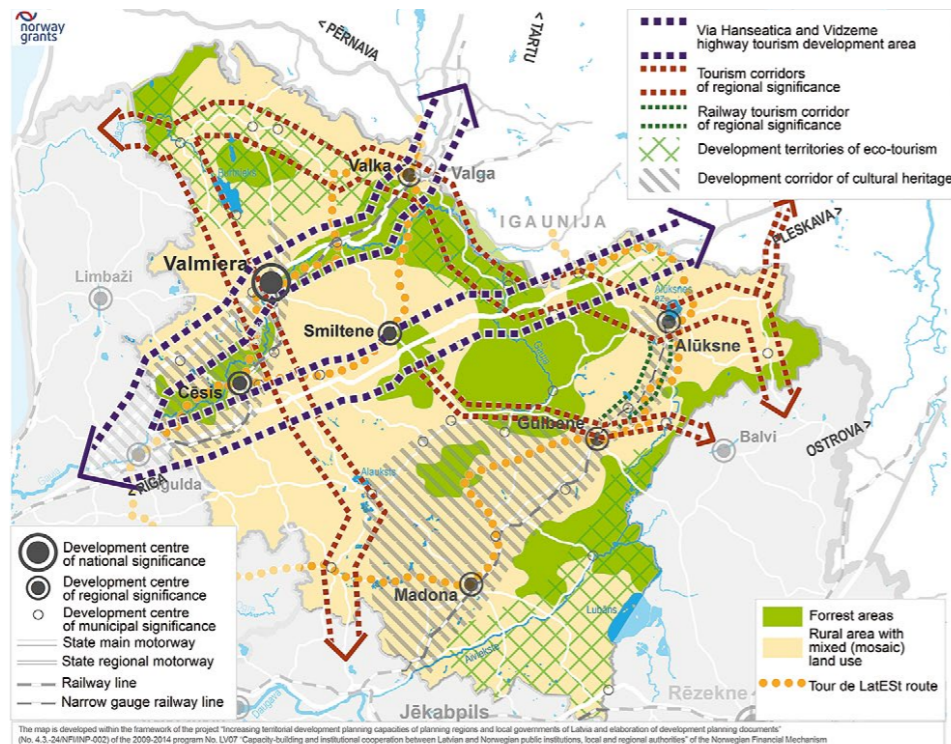




# Tourism Development Areas 2030

## Long-term changes 2030

Vidzeme Region will be recognised as a key tourism and eco-tourism destination. All facilities of tourism infrastructure will be improved and developed, along with creative industries, crafts, tourist packages for different target groups, and diverse high value-added tourist services, by integrating them into a joint economic development of the region. The Gauja National Park tourism cluster will be actively operating in the territory of the region. Tourism cooperation in VIA Hanseatica Development Zone will be promoted. The North Trail project will be implemented, developing tourism services and promoting economic activity in the borderland. Development of the borderland area will be balanced with development of the areas of Vidzeme regional centres.



# Transport Infrastructure and Accessibility 2030

## Long-term changes 2030

Minimum mobility will provide the opportunity to get to the municipality centre by public transport on a daily basis. The service Transport on Demand will be introduced in Vidzeme, facilitating accessibility of rural areas. Bicycle paths connected with tourist routes will be built around population centres and along highways. Quality of the roads providing inter-regional and regional connection will be advanced. Multi-modal transfer points will be established in order to ensure compatibility of different modes of transport at the regional level. The parish centres and closest service [municipality] centres will be reachable by paved road. Ring roads will be built around the development centres of regional significance, thus diverting freight traffic outside the cities. Direct connections of public transport among development centres of regional importance will be established.

