

Split-Dalmatia County, Croatia

The Island of Vis

General overview

Split-Dalmatia is the largest county in Croatia. Located centrally on the Adriatic coast, it covers a total area of 14 106.40 km² of which 4523.6 km² is land surface (8% of that of the country) and 9576.4 km² is sea surface (30.8% of that of the country) (1). Most of the land-surface area consists of the hinterland (59.9%) and the islands (19%). The Split-Dalmatia County stretches from Vrlika in the north to the furthest-reaching Croatian island of Palagruza in the south, and from Marina in the west to Vrgorac in the east. According to the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2014, 48.7% of the population of the County (454 798), were men and 51.3% women. The average age of the population was 40.8 years; 23.1% were over 60 years of age (2). In 2012, overall life expectancy at birth in Croatia was 78 years (3).

The Split-Dalmatia County borders to the north with the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the east with the Dubrovnik-Neretva County, and to the south with Croatian territorial waters. It is divided into three geographical subunits: (i) the hinterland, a sparsely populated and economically poor area in the continental part of the County, which is criss-crossed by mountains running parallel to the coastline; (ii) the coastal

area, a narrow strip along the coast between the mountain ranges and the sea, which is highly urbanized and economically developed compared to the hinterland; and (iii) the islands, which – though sparsely populated – are economically more developed than the hinterland, but, due to various circumstances, have experienced permanent emigration. The County has 74 islands and 57 islets and reefs. The largest, most populated of the islands are Brac, Ciovo, Solta, Hvar and Vis; other inhabited islands are Veli Drvenik, Mali Drvenik, St. Clement, Scedro Bisevo and St. Andrew.

The Croatian State is responsible for the overall provision of health care and social services and for the Croatian Health Insurance Fund. Medical care in the Split-Dalmatia County is organized at the primary and secondary levels. There are two hospitals in the County: Clinical Hospital Centre Split and Biokovka Hospital in the municipality of Makarska, the latter specializing in medical rehabilitation. Both hospitals are financed mainly from State county funds; income from private patients covers a small part of the expenditure.

Through participation in various initiatives and associations, Split-Dalmatia County, has

established coordinated, systematic cooperation with regions in Croatia's neighbouring countries and other countries in the European Union. Bilateral relations with influential regions and membership of important international organizations has led – over time – to fruitful collaboration in the economic domain, as well as to the development of specific projects related particularly to cross-border cooperation. Thanks to this collaboration, the Split-Dalmatia County and the Public Institution of RERA SD for the Coordination and Development of the Split-Dalmatia County participate actively in the preparation and implementation of EU projects carried out through partnerships among neighbouring regions (4).



Strengths

The strengths of the Split-Dalmatia County are:

- ✓ its Mediterranean climate and food (the well-preserved ecosystem of the Adriatic Sea enables the production of healthy food);
- ✓ its various natural resources (the sea, islands, mountains, lakes and rivers);
- ✓ its hospitals and Regional Health Centre, which are legal public entities financed by both the State and the County;
- ✓ the opportunities provided by tourism for intersectoral cooperation on tourism, health and sport;
- ✓ the large number of fitness clubs and gyms in the cities and tourist facilities across the County (especially on the islands and in the rural area by the sea).



Aspirations

The Split-Dalmatia County has the following aims:

- ✓ to enhance physical activity among elderly people by increasing their involvement in organized forms of physical activity aimed at improving their overall health status, their posture and ability to move and, thus, their self-confidence, independence and contribution to the community (5);
- ✓ to provide access to primary health care in rural areas and on the islands.

Challenges

These include:

- ✓ an ageing population;
- ✓ substantial differences in lifestyle between elderly people in rural areas and those in urban areas (the lack of fitness clubs and gyms in rural areas represents a big challenge);
- ✓ the need to further invest in transport facilities between the mainland and the islands.

Potential areas of collaboration

The Split-Dalmatia County is interested in collaborating with other regions on:

- ✓ cross-border health care for elderly people (exchange of experience; development of education programmes);
- ✓ cross-border exchange of good practice in increasing physical activity in elderly people;
- ✓ cross-border exchange of good practice in the establishment of optimal primary care in the rural areas and on the islands.

Working groups

The Split-Dalmatia County is interested in participating in working groups on:

- ✓ women's/men's health;
- ✓ health systems/primary health care.

People active in the Regions for Health Network (RHN)

Jelena Pausic

Vice Dean
Faculty of Kinesiology
University of Split
Email: jelenap@kfst.hr

Magda Pletikosa Pavić

Split-Dalmatia County Institute of Public Health
Split
Email: magda.pletikosa@gmail.com

References

1. Splitsko-dalmatinska županija [Split-Dalmatia County] [website]. Split: Split-Dalmatia County; 2018 (www.dalmacija.hr, accessed 25 March 2018).
2. Census 2011. In: Croatian Bureau of Statistics [website]. Zagreb: Croatian Bureau of Statistics; 2015 (https://www.dzs.hr/default_e.htm, accessed 25 March 2018).
3. Croatia: data and statistics. In: WHO Regional Office for Europe [website]. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2018 (<http://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/croatia/data-and-statistics>, accessed 25 March 2018).
4. International activities. In: Splitsko-dalmatinska županija [Split-Dalmatia County] [website]. Split: Split-Dalmatia County; 2018 (www.dalmacija.hr, accessed 25 March 2018).

Split-Dalmatia County, Croatia