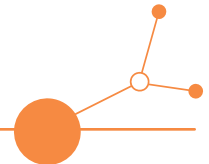


MUTABLE

Mobility Supply Analysis: Pomurje, Slovenia

Regional Fact Sheets (D.1.1.1)



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A. Introduction

Public transport systems in the MUTABLE partner regions generally provide an adequate level of service to central locations and larger towns. However, accessibility, service frequency and coverage are often poorer in rural and peripheral areas. This creates structural mobility gaps, particularly affecting people without access to a private car, such as young people, older residents, those on low incomes and people with reduced mobility. Alternative mobility solutions to conventional public transport remain limited, while dispersed settlement patterns, demographic change and long travel distances further increase the need for flexible, inclusive mobility options.

Therefore, the challenge lies not only in providing transport services, but also in improving the coordination of infrastructure, information, funding, public transport planning and user needs across large and diverse territories. In this context, mobility management can play an important role by connecting existing services more effectively, promoting alternatives to private car use and supporting flexible, demand-responsive transport solutions. It can also make sustainable mobility options more visible and accessible for residents, commuters, businesses and visitors.

Across the partner regions, three Pilot Demonstration Sites (PD) aim to test innovative, demand-responsive approaches that are adapted to local and regional needs:

- PD1 Adapting Existing Public Transport Lines to Local Demand north of Chemnitz, Germany
- PD2 Capitalising on Synergies Between Public Mobility Services in Paks, Hungary
- PD3 Mainstreaming of Public On-Demand Mobility Services in Tišina, Slovenia

The goal is to make better use of existing operational capacities, improve service availability and strengthen the cooperation of administrative bodies, transport providers and other relevant stakeholders. To develop a shared understanding of regional public mobility systems and to serve as a basis for establishing a mobility management role, a Regional Fact Sheet (Deliverable 1.1.1) has been created for each area as part of a joint Mobility Supply Analysis (Activity 1.1). The fact sheets provide a concise analytical summary of the current regional mobility supply at administrative and provider levels, identifying key challenges and development needs.

They also support the identification of untapped potential for innovation and transnationally developed conclusions, thereby acting as a basis for the preparation of tests in the PDs. Furthermore, the fact sheets provide a transferable knowledge base that can support the replication and adaptation of mobility management measures in other regions facing similar challenges.



B. Regional Analysis

1. Overview of the Pomurje Region and Pilot Area

Pomurje is one of twelve statistical regions of Slovenia and is located in the north-eastern part of the country along the borders with Austria, Hungary and Croatia. The region is characterised by low population density, dispersed settlement structure and predominantly rural landscape.



Figure 1: Location of the Pomurje region in Slovenia

The largest urban centre in the region is Murska Sobota, which is also the regional centre, while other important municipalities include Gornja Radgona, Lendava and Ljutomer. Daily mobility flows are strongly oriented towards regional employment centres where most employment, educational and healthcare services are located.

The region faces several demographic challenges. According to statistical data, Pomurje has an ageing population and lower population density compared to more urbanised Slovenian regions. These demographic trends increase the need for accessible and flexible mobility solutions, especially for elderly residents who often depend on external transport assistance.

The pilot activities within the MUTABLE project focus on rural municipalities and the development of public on-demand mobility services adapted to local needs.



The Municipality of Tišina is one of the pilot municipalities within the MUTABLE project. Tišina is a predominantly rural municipality located in the central part of the Pomurje region and consists of several smaller rural villages with dispersed population patterns. Similar to many other rural municipalities in the region, Tišina faces challenges related to limited public transport accessibility, dependence on private cars and an ageing population. Access to healthcare, administrative services, education and employment is strongly connected to mobility availability, especially for elderly residents and other vulnerable groups. Due to its rural characteristics and existing mobility challenges, the municipality represents a suitable environment for testing and implementing flexible, demand-responsive mobility solutions within the project's pilot activities.



Figure 2: Location of the Municipality of Tišina in the Pomurje region

2. Existing Mobility Structure and Services

Mobility in Pomurje is heavily dependent on private car use. Due to dispersed settlements, many residents rely on personal vehicles for daily activities. This trend is also evident at the national level. According to Eurostat data, there were 587 passenger cars per 1,000 inhabitants in Slovenia in 2024, compared with the EU average of 578 passenger cars per 1,000 inhabitants. This indicates a relatively high level of motorisation and dependence on private vehicles, particularly in rural regions such as Pomurje.

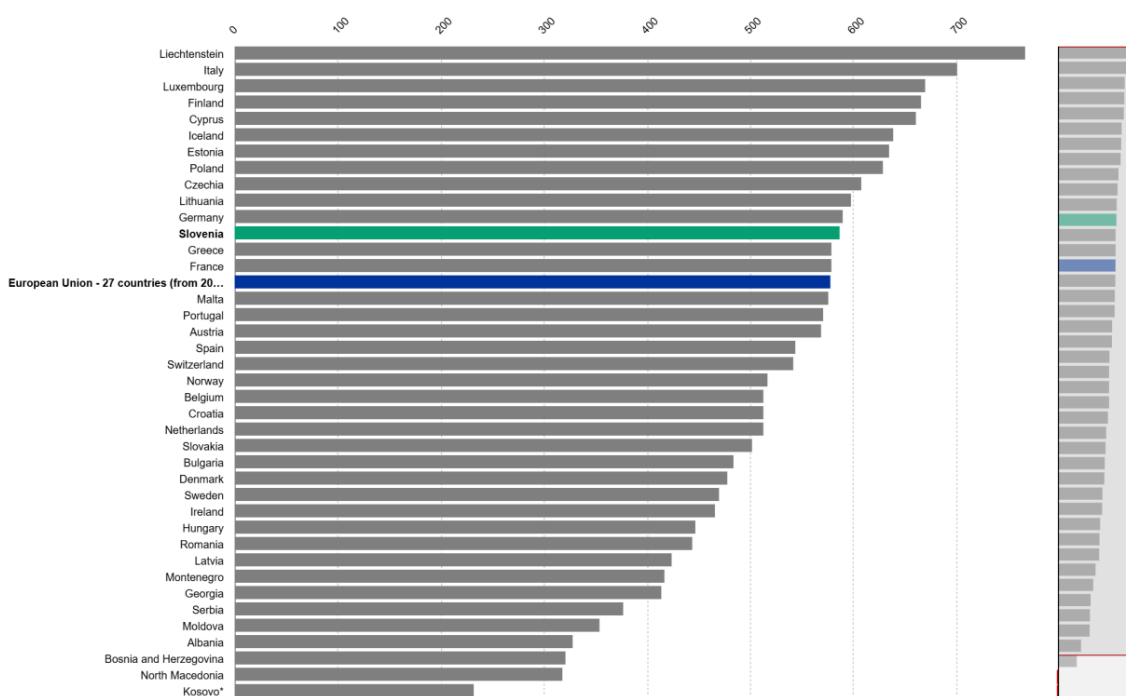


Figure 3: Number of passenger cars per 1000 inhabitants in EU Member States (2024)
(Source: Eurostat database, accessed June 2026)

The existing public transport system mainly consists of regional bus connections and railway services. However, public transport accessibility remains limited in many rural areas, especially during evenings, weekends and holidays.

Several municipalities in Pomurje have already introduced on-demand and community-based mobility services for vulnerable groups. According to regional data presented within the EMBRACER project, municipalities with existing on-demand transport services include Ljutomer, Murska Sobota, Puconci, Beltinci, Gornja Radgona, Šalovci and Lendava.

The municipalities implementing these services share common characteristics, such as sparsely populated rural areas and an ageing population.

One of the most important existing good practices in the region is the Prostofer service¹, organised in cooperation with Zavod Zlata mreža². The service is intended mainly for elderly residents who cannot use public transport independently.

3. Stakeholders and Governance

Several stakeholders are involved in mobility planning and implementation in the Pomurje region. Municipalities are responsible for identifying local mobility needs and implementing local mobility initiatives. Regional development organisations, support project development, stakeholder cooperation and regional coordination.

Public transport providers ensure regional bus and rail services, while healthcare institutions, schools and social care organisations represent important mobility destinations for residents.

¹ <https://prostofer.si/zlata-mreza/>

² <https://zlata-mreza.si/>



Bus transport services in the region are primarily organised by the company Avtobusni promet Murska Sobota (APMS - regional bus service provider), which provides regional and intermunicipal bus connections. Railway transport services are organised at the national level by the state-owned company Slovenske železnice (Slovenian Railways).



Figure 4: Main and regional railway lines (Source: Infrastruktura, Slovenske Železnice, accessed June 2026)

Existing on-demand transport services in the region are mainly organised individually by municipalities for their own residents. These services are adapted to local needs and are primarily intended for elderly people and other vulnerable groups.

Volunteer organisations and local communities also play crucial role in implementing on-demand transport services. Many existing mobility services in Pomurje depend on volunteer drivers and community engagement.

At the national level, ministries and public agencies provide strategic guidance, a legal framework and financial support for the development of sustainable mobility.

4. Legal and Financial Framework

A significant milestone in Slovenian mobility planning was the adoption of the Integrated Transport Planning Act (Zakon o celostnem prometnem načrtovanju - ZCPN). The Act establishes the legal framework for integrated mobility planning at national, regional and municipal levels. It defines the objectives, principles and procedures for preparing transport strategies and strengthens the connection between transport and spatial planning. Furthermore, the Act introduces financial support mechanisms for the preparation and implementation of mobility strategies and sustainable mobility measures.



Under the Act, mobility planning is implemented through Comprehensive Sustainable Mobility Plans at national (DCPS), regional (RCPS) and municipal (OCPs) levels. These strategies must include an analysis of the existing situation, a vision, objectives, measures, sources of financing, implementation responsibilities and a monitoring framework. The Act also requires stakeholder involvement and public participation throughout the planning process.

The preparation of the Regional Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (RCPS) for Pomurje is part of a nationwide initiative to establish regional-level transport planning in Slovenia. Under the Integrated Transport Planning Act (ZCPN), all 11 statistical regions are currently preparing RCPS documents, which serve as strategic frameworks for coordinating mobility policies, infrastructure investments and accessibility improvements across municipal boundaries. The process builds upon lessons learned from a pilot regional strategy in the Koroška region, which enabled the development of national guidelines, methodological approaches and minimum standards for regional mobility planning. The preparation of the RCPS is co-financed through European funds and aims to improve accessibility, strengthen sustainable mobility solutions and coordinate transport investments across functional regional areas.

In parallel, Slovenia has established a network of Regional Mobility Centres (RCMs), supported by the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Energy (MOPE) and co-financed through the European Cohesion Policy Programme 2021-2027. These centres act as regional coordination hubs, providing technical support for integrated transport planning, promoting sustainable mobility, facilitating cooperation between municipalities and national authorities, supporting public transport development and cycling policies, raising awareness and ensuring the implementation of sustainable mobility measures at regional level.

Funding for mobility projects is provided through European programmes, national funds and municipal budgets. Interreg programmes are particularly important for testing innovative mobility solutions in rural areas.

Financial sustainability remains one of the key challenges for municipalities implementing on-demand mobility services. Existing examples from Pomurje demonstrate significant differences in operational models and annual costs.

According to the collected data, Murska Sobota allocated approximately 8.455 € for transport services in 2023, Puconci allocated approximately 10.215 € for vehicle purchase, insurance and implementation costs and Šalovci invested more than 33.000 € in vehicle purchase for the implementation of on-demand transport services. These examples show that sustainable financing models are essential for the long-term operation of rural mobility services.

5. Ongoing Efforts and Challenges

Municipalities and regional stakeholders in Pomurje are actively implementing various activities aimed at improving sustainable and accessible mobility in rural areas. Current efforts focus on improving accessibility for elderly residents, strengthening sustainable mobility solutions and testing more flexible transport systems adapted to dispersed settlement structures.

One of the most important ongoing activities in the Pomurje region is the preparation of the Regional Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (RCPS), which aims to establish a more coordinated and sustainable regional mobility system. The region also participates in several international and cross-border projects focused on mobility, sustainable regional development and social inclusion.

A key focus is the development of on-demand and community-based transport services for elderly residents and other vulnerable groups. One of the most successful examples is the Prostofer initiative, organised in cooperation with Institute Zlata mreža, which improves access to healthcare, public institutions and other



essential services for elderly residents in rural areas, thereby contributing to greater social inclusion and quality of life.

In the Pomurje region, on-demand transport is primarily implemented through door-to-door transport services. These services operate based on user requests and provide direct transport from a passenger's home to a specific destination, such as healthcare facilities, pharmacies, public institutions, shops, or other essential services. As a result, the concept of on-demand transport in the region differs from the more conventional understanding of demand-responsive public transport, which is often used to provide flexible connections to public transport hubs and existing transport networks. Instead, the focus is on ensuring accessibility and social inclusion for elderly residents and other vulnerable groups living in rural and dispersed settlements. According to regional data collected within EMBRACER project in 2024, municipalities with existing on-demand transport services in Pomurje include Murska Sobota, Beltinci, Gornja Radgona, Puconci, Lendava and Šalovci. The municipalities implementing these services share several common characteristics, including sparsely populated rural areas and ageing population.

In Murska Sobota, the Prostofer service has been operating since August 2020 and is intended for elderly residents with poor public transport accessibility, low incomes or without family support. Between May and August 2024, 102 rides were completed.

In Beltinci, the first Prostofer ride was carried out in April 2023. The service is intended for pensioners which cannot use public or paid transport services. In 2024, sixteen volunteers participated in the implementation of the service.

In Gornja Radgona, on-demand transport services have been operating since 2020 for residents older than 65 years. In 2024, nine volunteers provided transport services.

In Lendava, the service has been operating since January 2021. By 2024, more than 220 rides had been completed, with the service supported by one volunteer driver in cooperation with Zavod Zlata mreža. In 2024, the Municipality of Šalovci independently implemented the "Prevozi na klic" service as part of the Smart Villages for Tomorrow initiative. The service was intended for elderly residents, persons with disabilities and Roma communities.

These examples demonstrate that flexible and community-based mobility solutions already play an important role in improving accessibility and social inclusion in rural areas of Prekmurje. The implementation of such services also highlights the importance of cooperation among local stakeholders, volunteer engagement and locally adapted mobility systems.

Despite ongoing efforts and positive examples of good practice, the region still faces several important mobility-related challenges, such as high dependence on private car use, insufficient public transport frequencies, limited accessibility in remote rural areas, an ageing population, mobility exclusion of vulnerable groups, fragmented transport services, financial limitations of municipalities and limited integration between different transport modes.

The pilot activities within the MUTABLE project aim to address some of these challenges through the testing and development of adaptable, user-oriented mobility solutions for rural areas.



C. Mobility Management in the Regional Context

1. Introduction of the Mobility Manager role

The introduction of the Mobility Manager role represents an important opportunity to improve mobility coordination and strategic mobility planning in the Pomurje region. Due to dispersed settlements, an ageing population and limited public transport accessibility, rural municipalities face several mobility-related challenges that require coordinated and locally adapted solutions.

The Mobility Manager acts as a connecting element between municipalities, transport providers, public institutions, local communities and project partners. The role focuses on improving communication between stakeholders, identifying mobility needs and supporting the implementation of sustainable, user-oriented mobility measures.

Within the MUTABLE project, the Mobility Manager will play an important role in supporting pilot activities related to on-demand mobility services and strengthening cooperation between municipalities and other stakeholders involved in mobility planning and implementation.

The role is also closely aligned with the objectives of the emerging Regional Mobility Centre in Pomurje, contributing to long-term capacity building, stakeholder coordination and the implementation of sustainable mobility solutions beyond the project duration.

2. Expected added value to the regional context

The Mobility Manager role can provide significant added value to the Pomurje region, especially in rural municipalities where mobility services are often fragmented and insufficiently coordinated.

One of the key benefits of the role is improved coordination between different stakeholders involved in mobility planning and service provision. The Mobility Manager can support better communication between municipalities, public transport providers, healthcare institutions, social care organisations and local communities.

Another important added value is better identification of local mobility needs, especially for elderly residents and other vulnerable social groups. Through direct communication with users and stakeholders, the Mobility Manager can help develop mobility solutions that are better adapted to actual local conditions.

The role also contributes to the promotion of sustainable mobility, support for the implementation of pilot activities, development of user-oriented mobility services, transfer of good practices between municipalities, preparation of future mobility projects, improved accessibility for vulnerable groups and increased awareness of sustainable mobility options.

The Mobility Manager can additionally support long-term regional mobility planning and contribute to more integrated and sustainable mobility systems in rural areas.



3. Responsibilities and Opportunities

The Mobility Manager may perform several operational and strategic tasks within the region. Key responsibilities include:

- Coordination of mobility stakeholders,
- Communication with municipalities and residents,
- Support for pilot implementation,
- Organisation of workshops and stakeholder meetings
- Collection of mobility-related data,
- Promotion of sustainable mobility measures,
- Identification of local mobility challenges,
- Dissemination of project results and good practices.

The role also creates opportunities for future development of integrated and innovative mobility solutions in Pomurje. Potential future opportunities include:

- Expansion of on-demand transport services,
- Stronger regional cooperation between municipalities,
- Integration of digital mobility solutions,
- Development of mobility hubs,
- Better integration between transport modes,
- Transfer of successful pilot activities to other municipalities and regions.

The experiences gained through MUTABLE project may serve as an important basis for future regional mobility planning and the long-term development of sustainable mobility systems in rural areas.



D. Transferability and Synergies

The conclusions gathered in the MUTABLE mobility supply analysis across Central Saxony in Germany, Tolna County in Hungary and the Pomurje Region in Slovenia show that rural and less densely populated regions face remarkably similar mobility challenges, even though their institutional frameworks, service models and implementation capacities differ. Across all three regions, private car use remains dominant and continues to shape everyday mobility patterns, reflecting dispersed settlement structures and limited alternatives.

At the same time, buses remain the basic public mobility offer and are therefore central to any strategy that aims to improve accessibility, reduce car dependency and strengthen social inclusion. However, the usability of bus services is often limited by reduced service levels outside peak hours, especially in the evenings, at weekends and during holidays. This limits the usability of public transport for daily life, not only for commuting. Therefore, the MUTABLE supply analysis confirms that mobility planning in rural regions must be closely linked to accessibility and social inclusion, rather than being understood solely as the provision of transport services.

Despite these shared challenges, significant differences can be observed in the maturity of policy frameworks, institutional structures and service models. Germany and Slovenia already show more advanced legal or strategic frameworks to support mobility planning, including funding mechanisms. Slovenia, in particular, is developing structured instruments such as Regional Mobility Centres, supported by national and European funding. In the Tolna County, the focus is linked to the practical integration of existing transport resources, f.e. the connection between employer-based transport and municipal public transport.

Governance emerges as a decisive factor to translate mobility objectives into concrete instruments, responsibilities and investment priorities. All three regions point to the need for stronger regional coordination, because mobility patterns do not stop at municipal borders. Mobility management requires a regional perspective, even when services are delivered locally.

The three regions also demonstrate that the approach does not necessarily lie in creating entirely new systems, but connecting existing services more effectively, closing operational gaps and making better use of existing resources. This applies both to operational integration, such as better connections between buses, rail and local services, and to institutional integration, including cooperation between municipalities, counties, transport operators, employers, civil society actors and, where relevant, national institutions.

Several best practice examples have been identified in the MUTABLE partner regions, demonstrating that rural mobility management can develop from different starting points and offering inspiration:

- In Central Saxony, the [Chemnitz Model](#) demonstrates the value of an integrated multimodal transport system by linking tram, rail and regional bus services into a coordinated network. The relevance of this model lies not only in the infrastructure itself, but in the principle of integration: services become more attractive when passengers experience them as one system rather than as separate modes.
- This principle is also reflected in the [call-a-bus service \("Rufbus"\)](#), which operates within the regular line-based transport infrastructure in Central Saxony. Although the current model still has clear limitations, including the absence of a digital booking option and restricted service times, its integration into the existing public transport framework makes it a practical basis for further development.
- In the Tolna County, the **integration of employee transport for the Paks Nuclear Power Plant** into the municipal bus network shows how employer-based mobility can contribute to public transport efficiency, higher vehicle utilisation and reduced car dependency. Employer-based transport is often treated as a separate system, but it can become a



strategic asset for the wider region. The example is particularly relevant for regions with major employers, industrial sites or large institutions that already generate regular transport demand.

- In the Pomurje region, the [Prostofer service](#) for vulnerable groups shows the potential of community-based mobility solutions. By organising on-demand transport for vulnerable groups with the involvement of local citizens, the model addresses accessibility gaps that conventional public transport cannot always cover. Its value lies in combining mobility provision with local engagement and social support.
- In addition, Slovenia's network of [Regional Mobility Centres](#), supported by national government and European funding, demonstrates how strategic capacity for mobility management can be institutionalised at regional level through specific policy instruments.

The transferability of these examples lies less in copying one specific model and more in adapting the underlying principles:

- Public transport should be planned as part of a wider accessibility strategy, not only as a transport service.
- Particularly for vulnerable groups or low-demand periods, flexible and on-demand solutions can complement regular public transport.
- Employers, municipalities and civil society should be considered active partners in mobility management rather than external stakeholders.
- Particular attention should be given to people who are at risk of mobility poverty, including older people, young people, people without access to a car and other vulnerable groups.

Concluding the joint MUTABLE mobility supply analysis, this underlines the need to move beyond a narrow focus on school and commuter transport and to understand mobility as a basic condition for independent living and equal access to essential services. Rural mobility improvement depends less on one single solution than on the ability to combine different instruments into a coherent system. Progress is possible when mobility is treated as a shared regional task and when existing structures are connected more effectively. A future-oriented mobility management approach should therefore focus on coordination, integration and accessibility, with the explicit goal of enabling participation for all population groups while reducing unnecessary dependence on the private car.



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