

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY MUNICIPALITY OF SURČIN

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***Abstract:** The youngest of seventeen Belgrade municipalities, City Municipality of Surčin is located about twenty kilometers west of Belgrade city center. Due to its favorable traffic and tourist position, natural resources, cultural heritage and built infrastructure, City Municipality of Surčin has become more attractive in recent years for individuals and small groups of tourists, positioning itself as a tourist destination in the tourism market of Belgrade and beyond. This paper investigated the possibilities for sustainable tourism development based on the natural environment, cultural heritage, events, adventure, sport and recreation, authentic offer and local tradition as well as the parts of a short city break tour and cruising programs in the area of the City Municipality of Surčin.*

***Keywords:** sustainable, tourism, development, opportunities, Surčin*

## **Introduction**

The municipality Surčin is located at about 20 kilometers west of the city center. On the north it borders with the municipality of Zemun, while in the east it borders with the municipality of New Belgrade. The entire western border of the municipality is, at the same time, the administrative border with the province of Vojvodina, while the Sava River forms a natural border with the municipalities Čukarica in the south-east and Obrenovac in the south. The municipality Surčin is an integral part of the City of Belgrade, the capital of the Republic of Serbia. The seventeenth or the youngest Belgrade municipality was formed in 2004 from a part of the municipality of Zemun, where in the area of 28,485 hectares live about 42 thousand residents, according to the last census. The municipality comprises seven administrative villages: Surčin, Dobanovci, Jakovo, Boljevci, Progar, Bečmen and Petrovčić.

## **Tourist Destination Surčin**

Good geographical position of the City Municipality of Surčin is defined by the following directions: corridor Belgrade-Zagreb highway M1

(E70), parts of the Belgrade bypass M-22 (E763 or E75), the railway that connects international railway Belgrade-Šid -Zagreb and Belgrade-Bar, as well as regional roads that connect the municipality with New Belgrade, Zemun, Pećinci and Čukarica. Construction plan of “Sremska gazela” of the bypass around Obrenovca over the bridge in Obrenovac for the purpose of keeping the power plant from TENT Obrenovac towards Belgrade to Surčin and Dobanovci, where it connects with the regional road R-267 and E-70 highway, will contribute to a more efficient activating of traffic areas. The Sava River flows through the southern part of the municipality with a length of 46 kilometers, so the municipality has favorable conditions for the development of waterway traffic with its position on the river, near the confluence of the Kolubara River and somewhat further the confluence of the Sava and the Danube River. It represents a significant potential of exploitation of the waterway of the Sava River and its connection with the Danube river (European corridor VII). Fairway potentials are significantly expressed through inland waterways -a network of channels (Grupa autora, 2007).

**Picture 1.** The Map of City Municipality of Surčin in Serbia



Source: [http://www.wikiwand.com/sh/Opština\\_Surčin](http://www.wikiwand.com/sh/Opština_Surčin)

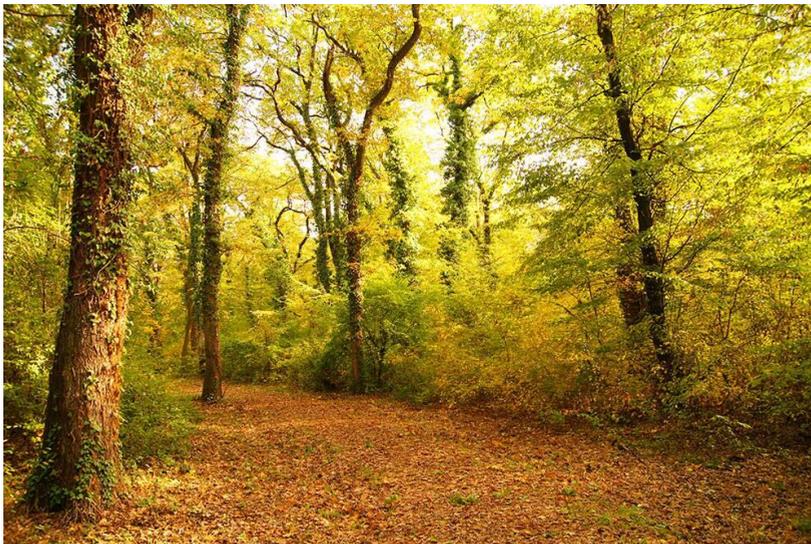
Located in the Pannonia Plain, on its southern edge along the Sava river, Surčin represents the most western part of the lowland area of the city of Belgrade, including the most fertile land in its area. The municipality covers the area between 44 ° 39 'and 44 ° 54' north latitude and 21 ° 38 'and 21 ° 51' east longitude. State roads pass through the municipality and connect it with Belgrade (New Belgrade) in the east, with Zemun (in the north), with Pećinci (in the west), with Čukarica and Šumadija part of Belgrade (in the southeast with the road bridge over the Sava). The municipality of Surčin is located within the traffic corridors that are ranked as the primary road network. Through the territory of the municipality pass the parts of European Corridor X, parts of the main railway network, the waterway of the Sava river, and in the north-eastern part of the municipality there is the most important national and international airport in the country, "Nikola Tesla" – "airport" of Belgrade (Grupa autora, 2012).

### **Natural resources in the City Municipality of Surčin**

Among the natural resources in the City Municipality of Surčin, the following stand out: Bojčin forest reservation and areas with natural values Živača, as well as Military and sports recreation center in Surčin "Grey Heron" ("Siva čaplja"). Bojčin forest represents a protected natural resource of national importance, with the surface of 672 hectares. It's a real swamp forest between the Sava river and canal Jarčina, which has the status of permanent, compulsory purposes. In the woods, the following species dominate: oak, ash, Turkey oak, lime and hornbeam, and also dogwood, hawthorn, elder and wild roses are present. Bojčin forest was used for generations by residents of Progar used for livestock production, which moved in packs freely around the woods and fed themselves with acorns. Today it is an attractive resort with a part that is equipped with outdoor furniture, summer stage and catering facilities. In a part of the forest there are pit-houses and two memorials (partisan bases from World War II). Through the forest, there is a decorated trim path 1,800 meters long with 16 obstacles, and in 2008 a large summer stage was built with 500 seats, where every year a manifestation is held called "Cultural summer in Bojčin". In the area of Surčin municipality there are two, out of three, fenced hunting grounds of the Belgrade administrative area: Dobanovački preserve and Crni Lug. The hunting grounds are intended for breeding, protection and use of noble big and small game: deer, rabbit, pheasant and quail on open hunting grounds and deer and wild boars in Crni Lug, and apart from them the deer and musk ox in Zabran. In the area of Surčin municipality there are more ponds and abandoned meanders Galovice (Ugrinovačka pond,

Petrača, pond Živača, Fenečka pond). Natural pond “Bečmenska bara”, which consists of three ponds, total area of 53 hectares, provides an opportunity for practicing fishing or waterskiing (Štetić, Petrović, Stanić, 2012).

**Picture 2.** Bojčin forest



Source: <http://surcin.rs>

Terrains in the area covered by the borders of the municipality of Surčin, are located in the alluvial plain of the Sava and include parts of the Zemun loess plateau. Moderately continental climate, characterized by short and rainy spring and autumn, with longer sunny and warm periods, benefits the development of tourism. In terms of hydrology, area of Surčin municipality belongs to the basin of the river Sava, which has international significance as it connects the municipality Surčin with the region. It represents an important water resource for the development of nautical and transit tourism as well as sports and recreational activities on the water. Municipality Surčin belongs to crop-livestock macro region with elements of livestock, fruit and vineyard characteristics. In the Pannonia Plain, north of the river Sava, biome steppe and forest steppe are laid out and their potential natural vegetation consists of steppe-sub-Mediterranean oak and žestika forests, vegetation of forest-steppe, meadow-steppe vegetation of salt marsh and vegetation of reeds. In the municipality of Surčin under forest there is 3500 hectares. Large areas of forest (Bojčin forest, forest Gibavac), hunting grounds (Black lug and Dobanovački reserve), and the water

surface of the pond (Bečmen ponds, Fenek pond), the river Sava and channels abound in variety of flora (oak, ash, Turkey oak, linden, grab) and fauna (fish: carp, grass carp, silver carp, catfish, perch, pike, Prussian carp, as well as wildlife: deer, wild boar, rabbit, pheasant, quail and others), and biogeography characteristics of the area represent a rich resource basis for the development of different forms of tourism (Stanić, 2013).

### **Cultural Resources in the City Municipality of Surčin**

In the area of Surčin, cultural heritage has been preserved and it has been developing since the prehistoric period until today. Out of the established cultural goods, nine are cultural monuments, two are archaeological sites and one famous place. Out of the goods under the previous protection status, there are 2 buildings of folk architecture, two architectural objects of urban architecture and 34 archaeological sites. There are reliable data that say that the current urban territory of Surčin was inhabited at the time of the Celts, as evidenced by the bronze and silver coins found in this area. The first written record of the settlement in this area is from 1404, when the Royal Charter bestowed it upon feudal family Morović. Under Turkish rule it fell together with Belgrade, in 1521. After the peace in Požarevac in 1718, it became a part of the Zemun estate of Count Schönborn, and since 1745 it is included in the military frontier. When it comes to cultural and historical properties in the municipality of Surčin, Fenek Monastery occupies a significant place. This, today, male monastery dedicated to St. Paraskeva, belongs to a group of monasteries of Fruška Gora, although it is spatially dislocated. According to legend, in the second half of the 15th century it was built by Stefan and Angelina Branković, while the first written record dates from the 16th century (1563). The monastery chapel was built in 1800 in place of the old one, over the well, which is believed to be built by Angelina Branković, and in the monastery, as a great relic, the relics of St. Petka are kept. Records from the 18th century attest that the old monastery church was built in the second half of the 15th century in the spirit of Serbian medieval architecture. The new church was built in the period from 1793 to 1797 and consecrated at the time of prior Vikentije Rakić, who wrote the history of the monastery. In the late 18th and early 19th century, the monastery of Fenek was at the center of several historic events. In World War I, the monastery was set on fire, and in the second in 1942, it was almost entirely destroyed. On the right side of the road that leads from Jakovo to Boljevcı, there is the Golden Cross. This stone monument, rectangular, rounded at the top, two meters high is the cornerstone of a former monastery Fenek estate set in 1747. The

name comes from the legend that the range of the Turkish canons that hit the Serbs who fled across the Sava river into the Habsburg monarchy ended exactly at this point. When it comes to evidenced cultural property in the municipality Surčin there is the Museum of Aviation, actually Museum of Yugoslav war and military aviation, founded in 1957, which today offers the visitors a chance to walk through a century of aviation. By the number of values of exhibits it is classified in 10 leading institutions of its kind in the world. It has more than 200 aircraft, 130 aero engines, more radars, missiles, aviation equipment, over 50 types of original aircraft and other exhibits (Stanić, Dražić, 2013).

**Picture 2.** Museum of Aviation in Surčin



Source: [www.muzejvazduhoplovstva.org.rs](http://www.muzejvazduhoplovstva.org.rs)

### **Material basis for the sustainable tourism development in the area of City Municipality of Surčin**

In the territory of Surčin there is the following accommodation capacity: Nautical village “Pearl” (“Biser”) in Boljevci (capacity: 33 beds in 13 houses); chalets in Bojčin, bungalows of art colony in Progar (capacity: 12 beds in six bungalows); Apartments of the club “S” in Jacovo (capacity: 90 beds in 30 rooms); Apartments of “Queen” pools in Dobanovci (capacity: 42 beds in 5 bungalows and 11 rooms); Motel “Malinjak” in Surčin (capacity: 70 beds in 35 accommodation units); Apartments “Zlatibor” in Surčin (capacity: 200 beds in rooms and apartments). None of these properties passed through the system of categorization which indicates that in the area of Surčin, categorized accommodation units do not

exist. In Boljevci, on the left bank of the Sava river, 35 km upstream from Belgrade, is where the first, and in many ways unique, nautical village in Serbia is located. *Nautical village "Pearl"* is a complex of 16 modernly furnished houses on the water standing in a row and are reminiscent of pearl jewelry coast. They represent a place of perfect harmony for all lovers of the river, athletes, recreationists, hunters and fishermen. The apartments are air-conditioned, and heating provided for cold weather. The houses are equipped with a double and single bed, bathroom with showers with massage jets, the accessible covered terrace and upper terrace ideal for sunbathing that has a view of the river. Within the tourist complex Nautical village "Pearl" in Boljevci there is a raft restaurant "Sava terrace", situated in a natural atmosphere of the river basin within the Nautical Village "Pearl". A restaurant can be reached by land and water, as the restaurant is located along the marina for boats, and in front of the restaurant is a parking space. Nautical village "Pearl", in the context of additional facilities, has a reception and conference hall, which serves as a place for holding scientific and professional seminars, conferences and congresses and can accommodate up to 50 people. Marina with berths for boats is intended for guests of Nautical village "Pearl" with their own vessels, as well as those who want to leave their boat in storage throughout the year. The capacity of the marina is 70 sites. On the opposite bank there is a natural resort with 12 hectares of old forests with massive trees, a park for children, summer houses, beach volleyball and football, summer stage, archery courtyard and others. (Štetić, Stanić, 2014).

**Picture 2.** Nautical village "Pearl" in Boljevci



Source: <http://www.kcsurcin.org/nauticko-selo>

In the forest of Bojčin, a protected natural area full of trees (oak, linden, Turkey oak and hornbeam) next to restaurants, jogging paths, an equestrian club, an outdoor stage and art colony are located *Chalets of Bojčin*. The complex of wooden houses modernly furnished with double beds, with appropriate support facilities, heating and air conditioning, a fridge and a bathroom. The capacity of the cottages or bungalows of the art colony is 12 beds in 6 houses. They present the ideal place for a holiday in the natural environment of the forest of Bojčin in Progar. Every year during the summer months, the art colony is organized. Tourist complex *Club "S"* represents a modern natural oasis complete with luxurious amenities. Apart from accommodation in luxury suites and comfortable bungalows and restaurants of the Club "S", guests have at their disposal: tennis courts, fields for football, handball, basketball and beach volleyball; arranged playgrounds for children; outdoor and indoor swimming pools and spa center, which includes a salt cave, Jacuzzi, steam bath, sauna, gym and a floating capsule. On the loop of the highway Zagreb-Belgrade at Dobanovci, 12 kilometers from Belgrade, there is a complex "*Queen*". On a surface of two hectares there are pools that cover an area of 13 acres, next to which 900 chairs and a canopy are located. Apart from apartments and bungalows, a restaurant with 180 seats, there is also a hall for weddings and other celebrations with capacity of up to 580 guests. In the middle of the swimming pool there is a cave with a bar, ideal for summer celebrations. Aqua Centre "*Živković*" is located on the road to the sports center in Surčin. It has a semi-Olympic outdoor pool for swimming and recreation, as well as a small pool for children. The surroundings of the pool are decorated with lounges, summer houses and VIP booths. With summer cafe, toilets, large parking space and playground for children, it is an interesting place for day and night swimming, promotions and celebrations. "*Stajko's house*" is located in Boljevci, a village in Srem, which has about 4,500 residents, Serbs and Slovaks. Ethno house "*Stajkov*" in Boljevci is an exhibition space that shows the culture of life of Serbs and Slovaks from the beginning of the last century represented with the Slovak and Serbian rooms, kitchen, room of memories of Boljevci, old barn, shed and courtyard with tools for work, furnace and shadoof (đeram). Permanent exhibition called "A house in Boljevci of the early twentieth century" consists of two rooms: Serbian and Slovak, as the two nations differ precisely in color, folklore and costumes, and everything else that can be seen they have in common, from kitchen to the room of rural memories, old barns, sheds, kotobanja for corn with tools and barns as old courtyards with đeram and furnace. Winery "*Sekulić*" for years has been producing wines in the traditional way they are

produced in Srem, but with a distinctive and very pleasant aroma and bouquet. Wines are drained from the finest varieties of grapes -Chardonnay, Sauvignon and Riesling, grown in Srem at 45 degrees latitude. In the Winery “Sekulić”, promotions and tastings of wines and brandies from our own cellar with snacks (homemade bread with lard and red pepper with Srem cheese and tiny cracklings) are organized. All this is happening in ethno complex with summer house set amidst vineyards. At the heart of Srem, on the slopes of the forest of Jakovo there is the authentic corner of Srem's environment - the Farm “*Stremen*”. Within the farm, next to the walkway zone, parks for children and gardens under the open sky, there are ethno restaurants and Stremen and Equestrian Club Stremen. The visitors can stay in nature, enjoy the specialties of Vojvodina's cuisine, have training riding, pony riding for kids, horse-drawn carriage rides and also they can enjoy the events that the farm successfully organizes every year (Stanić Jovanović, 2015).

### **Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism Development in the City Municipality of Surčin**

The Sava River, the preserved biodiversity and cultural and historical monuments of past era with tourist events, are the basis of the tourist offer in the City Municipality of Surčin. Tourism infrastructure in the area of Surčin municipality has good traffic conditions, because you can reach Surčin by air, land and water. In addition to airports and inland waterways, the Sava is in Surčin, Jakovo, Boljevci and Progar setup for accommodation of tourists who come by river. In these places there are piers, floating platforms and tracks that are at the same time a beach on the water and docks for small vessels, boats and jet skis. Nautical village “Pearl” in Boljevci is a unique tourist complex on the river Sava, which consists of a house on the water for accommodation, restaurants, conference halls, marinas with berths for boats and landscaped picnic areas with sports facilities. It represents an excellent basis for the development of nautical tourism. In the hunting grounds called “Crni Lug” there are organized breeding and commercial hunting of deer and wild boar, while carp pond “Živača” in the road Boljevci-Progar of the capacity of about 100 tons of carp fish and the pond “Bečmenska bara” across the surface of 53 hectares in Bečmen, which consists of three divided lakes, represent a good deal for fishermen. Stajko’s house, along with ethno houses “Dačević” in Progar and “Smiljanić” in Boljevci, aiming to break away from oblivion the life of the rural population in the past in this area represent a genuine offer for the development of ethno tourism. Fenek Monastery in Jakovo with the Golden

Cross and numerous Orthodox, Catholic and evangelical churches arranged in seven villages of Surčin is the basis of the offer for the development of religious but also cognitive, cultural and school tourism. Stable Surčin, SRC Surčin, along with the offer of equestrian clubs “Stremen” and “Bojčin” and water sports club “Marina-Progar” kayak-canoe club, a club for waterskiing “Skalar 2000” in Bečmen, as well as volleyball, football and other sports clubs, represent a good basis for the development of sports and recreational tourism. “Cultural summer in Bojčin” is the most important event that is held every weekend from May to September on the summer stage in Bojčin forest, whose program consists of theater performances, music concerts and other forms of stage performance. And many other events (“Theater festival of small form” in Boljevci, “Sremački preskok” in Jakovo, “Carriage festival” (Fijakerijada) in Dobanovci and Progar, “Cake with poppy seeds fair” in Boljevci, “Old crafts fair”, “Pumpkin festival” and “Green almanac” on the farm “Stremen”, “Pearl mane of Lower Srem”, “Strašilijada” and “The middle ages in nautical village” in Nautical village “Pearl” in Boljevci), attract visitors and represent an interesting basis for the development of event tourism. Winery “Sekulić” in combination with the nearby wineries of Fruška Gora is an interesting place in the path of wine tours; while Aqua centers “Živković” and “Queen” with pools and summer houses provide an opportunity for the development of summer beach tourism. The proximity of the international airport “Nikola Tesla” is an opportunity for the development of tourist destination Surčin. Namely, as Surčin is the only Belgrade municipality on whose territory there is the international airport, the faster development of the so-called low cost airline companies and their collaboration with major European and international tour operators will contribute to a more efficient positioning of Surčin municipality in the European and global tourism market. Furthermore, the completion of the Sremska gazela and Belgrade Bypass, as well as the revitalization of the traffic on the river Sava and inclusion in mainstream of European Corridor VII (waterway), will affect the rapid development of nautical, transit and excursion tourism in Surčin. Organization of the harbor in the nautical village “Pearl” in terms of its enabling for big, modern and equipped ship hotels that cruise the Danube, and the emergence of organized cruises that would be possible after revitalization of the fairway on the Sava, would affect the faster development of nautical tourism product. The realization of major infrastructure projects in the nautical village “Pearl” in Boljevci, such as setting up gas stations for motorized vessels, adaptation and expansion of sports facilities, expansion of tourist facilities, construction of additional accommodation facilities, landscaping

swimming area on the river Sava, as well as equipping congress halls, it all contributes to positioning the nautical village "Pearl" as a significant tourist reception center for boaters, river lovers and other visitors who would stay in this part of Surčin municipality. Organization of regattas and other events on the river, as well as the implementation of the so-called Sava river rafting, and many other forms of promoting sports, leisure activities, amenities and activities you can do on the water, creates the foundation for successful, rational and sustainable use of the water resources of the river Sava basin. Popularization of adventure and specific sports such as waterskiing, which is developed on the pond "Bečmenska bara"; paragliding and paintball, as well as nurturing healthy lifestyles and recreational sports in nature (cycling, horse riding, trekking, basketball, football, volleyball, tennis, golf and other sports), represent significant opportunities for sustainable tourism development. The long tradition of horse breeding in the area of Lower Srem contributed to the emergence of farms and equestrian clubs in Surčin municipality. Horses, horseback riding, carriage rides, carriage festivals and horse-racing are a part of authentic tourist offer of Surčin municipality by which it is recognized. Project planning of bicycle routes from New Belgrade to Progar along the river Sava and its integration into Euro Velo would represent following modern trends in the development of tourist destinations when it comes to promoting cycling. Due to the strong rural character, the tourist offer of Surčin, as opposed to the city, noisy streets and shopping centers, can position itself as an authentic shelter in the city suburbs. The tourist offer of Surčin municipality is also an integral part of the tourist offer of the capital. Surčin area has the characteristics of picnics or a tourist destination suitable for half-day and one-day-visits. The attributes that characterize the tourism product of Surčin, which may serve as one of the bases for defining the market position of Surčin municipality, are authentic, rural, fun, and active. The tourist offer of Surčin is especially interesting as a part of the attractive program of city break tourism in Belgrade. The river Sava, the preserved biodiversity, large areas of forest, picnic places and ports, rural authenticity, vicinity of the airport, the existence of protected natural and cultural resources, as well as numerous developed tourist potentials (nautical village, farm, winery, aqua centers), form the basis of the offer for the sustainable tourism development in the area of Surčin. Following the modern trends in the development of tourist destination Surčin means focusing on the following key tourism products: excursions, tours, sports, recreation, transit, MICE industry, water activities, events, rural tourism.

## Conclusion

City Municipality of Surčin is one of the fastest developing municipalities in the previous period, and the development of which is dominated by the spatial, economic and functional relationship with the city. The current structure of the tourist attractions in the southern part of the municipality, which is located at about a half an hour drive from the city center, provides a good basis for establishing and strengthening the rural character of the shelters on the outskirts of Belgrade. In recent years, the City Municipality Surčin has made significant efforts in the development and regulation of tourist areas, making this the youngest Belgrade municipality positioned as a promising tourist destination in the tourism market of the capital. The preserved nature in the immediate environment of Belgrade, in the presence of anthropogenic tourist potentials and typical rural identity of areas, represent a good basis for the development of excursion, recreational, sports, events, cultural and other forms of tourism; while the Sava river, which flows through the southern part of the municipality, represents a significant resource for the development of nautical tourism. Following the changes in the development of tourist destinations in the world tourism market, and bearing in mind the nature and specificity of tourist products that dominate, Surčin is positioned as a sports and recreational destination for daily activities in the nature of the authentic character of the rural suburbs, with the possibility for the sustainable tourism development.

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