

A PROPOSAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF SHKODRA (FREE ZONE)

Dr. Ilir Kaduku

SUMMARY**Geographical position:**

Shkodra is the biggest city in northern Albania; it is the administrative center of the district with the same name. In north and west it is bordered by Yugoslavia, in east by districts of Puka and Tropoja, in southeast by the district of Lezha, and in the south by the Adriatic Sea. The views of Shkodra are extremely different and full of surprising beauties. High and low relieves, fields, terraces, gardens, mountainous valleys and old forests, the mainly sandy seaside are combined with each other, coming down from the Alps towards the fields. It lays from the mountain to the sea, which means from the Albanian Alps to the Adriatic Sea. In the north and in the east the border is easily transformed through the river valleys and mountainous necks that are crossed by automobile roads. This makes it possible that Shkodra always has been an exchange zone between different regions of the country, neighbor countries, different cultures and economic, social and spiritual forces. The territory of Shkodra as a district includes a surface of 2528 km², which makes it the biggest district in Albania. Its surface equals the surface of the districts of Tirana, Durrës and Lezha altogether.

CLIMATE, FLORA AND FAUNA

The geographic position of the district, in the context of Albania, affects that the climate of Shkodra to be characterized as a Mediterranean climate with variations of the field, hill, pre-mountainous climate, conditioned by the morphological qualities and the relief forms orientation. Hot and dry summer, cold and wet winter with differences between low places and high ones, are the main characteristic of the region. The average annual temperature is 15 degrees C (Shkodra). The average of the coldest month (January) is -3.3 centigrade in the mountains and 4.7 centigrade in the city, while that of the warmest month is 16-17 centigrade in the mountains and 26 centigrade in the field.

The zone of the Mediterranean climate attracts thousands of tourists in the beaches by the sea, the lake and the rivers. This is mostly conditioned by the long summer with 2600 hours of sunshine per year.

POPULATION:

Entire population of Shkodra's District is around 250 000 inhabitants, from which 90 000 live in the city of Shkodra, 3 000 in the town of Koplik and 157 000 in the villages.

The number of villages is 190. The overall number of families is 60 400, from which 23 100 belong to the city of Shkodra, 700 to the town of Koplik and 36 000 to the villages.

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY:

Nearby the place where the rivers Buna and Drin get together, lays a high rocky hill (130 m), where since 2400 years ago the famous fortress serves as a loyal guard, and the city of Shkodra below. The information taken from the archeological diggings verify that the city of Shkodra was populated since the era of neoliths, to continue without being interrupted during the later periods. The object taken from underground are saved and exposed in the sector of the archeology of the city, in the National Historical Museum and in the Archeological Museum of Tirana, as well as in different museums of Europe.

Also the paleontologist's studies verify the presence of the man in ancient times, since the middle Paleolithic. The stone and bone object found in Gajtani cave, which are too

many, are saved in the laboratory of Human Paleontology in the University "Luigj Gurakuqi" in Shkodra, and are the only ones in Albania. The city of Shkodra was built on IV BC, by the hill, on the top of which was built the castle, where even today tracks of cycloid stonewalls, well laid and without plaster, can be noticed.

Culture traditions of the city:

Not rarely Shkodra is considered from many well-known personalities, as the "The cradle of the Albanian culture". This evaluation is deserved for many reasons, because of many important events of the Albanian culture, many important figures dedicated in different fields of knowledge like: Albanian language, national history, ethnography, arts, poem, music, sports, as: Marin Barleti, Zef Jubani, Pashko Vasa, Hodo Sokoli, Daut Borici, Luigj Gurakuqi, Gjergj Fishta, Kole Idromeno, Hile Mosi, Risto Siliqi, Mati Logoreci, etc.

SHKODRA AND FOREIGN VISITORS:

The city is connected with other cities by highways and railways. The foreign visitor after passes the Yugoslav border, at Hani i Hotit point, has to travel 35 km to Shkodra, and if comes from Tirana, he has to travel 117 km.

The beach, Velipoja, is only 32 km away. This 14 km sandy beach is almost unexploited.

The fine sand and the warm water, are healthy and curative to different kinds of diseases. Close to the beach there is a hunting reservoir, rich with many birds and wild animals. On the south side of the lake of the city, 6 km from the city, by the mountain Tarabosh, there is the picturesque village of Shiroka, well-known not only for the beach, but also for its own microclimate, for the healthy air which can cure asthma, allergies etc.

The lake of Shkodra, the river of Buna is very suitable for exercising water sports, especially canoe.

If the visitor likes climbing, speleology, or skiing he should go to the tourist village of Rasma (41 km), and if he would like to fish or to enjoy the noise of the waterfalls, he should go to the very heart of the Alps, at the very attractive village of Theth (76 km). It is surrounded from tops over 2000 m, and permanent forests. But Theth is not the only one with such nature privileges, because Vermosh (110 km),

Lepusha (90 km), Boga (45 km), Fusha e Zeze) and Vukli are similar to it.

Also the city offers institutions that can introduce the history of the city and its many traditions. Close to the main hotel "Rozafa", there is the city museum, and a few meters away lays the theatre "Migjeni". There are museum houses dedicated to important events or well-known figures of the town, some of which are characteristic houses of the city. Also the castle "Rozafa" could fulfill any appetite to know the history of the old city, where there is the museum too. Shkodra is very well known for welcoming the guests. In the guest room they used to hang a curtain with the words: "Welcome dear friends!"

Today Shkodra repeats that wish to every guest.

THE ECONOMY

Shkodra, as one of the oldest cities has always been an important economic center even for the political, administrative unit around it. Having its own currency since 230 B.C shows that it used to have intensive trade relations for years.

The main feature of the economic development has been handmade products and trade, which covered all Balkans, up to Venetia. An indicator of this level is the number of the shops, which was more than 2500.

The communist system that lasted for more than 5 decades left Shkodra in very poor conditions. The economic structure was based upon a very old technique coming from the east. The great possibilities and chances that our district offers to them, are as following:

- INDUSTRY:

1. **Mineral industry.** Shkodra is very rich with mineral resources. In its territory there are:

Cooper, which is one of the biggest richness.

Titan-magnet.

Kaolin: located in Vig, 40 km fare from Shkodra

Magnetite: is located in Dush-Gomsiqe, about 30 km from Shkodra

Asbestos: is located in Kaftalle, around 45 km from Shkodra
Dolomites: is located in Rasek, about 11km from Shkodra

Siliceous: is located in Vilze, 21 km fare from Shkodra

2. **Energy Industry:**

Our district is the first one in the energy production, which is represented with two hydro-centrals: Vau i Dejes and Koman.

Vau i Dejes: was built on 1970 with French machineries, made in China. Its capacity is 1.120 million kWh, fulfilling the needs of the district, and feeding other district too. Half of the production is exported in Greece, Yugoslavia and Italy.

Koman: was built on 1985, based on French machineries, with an annual capacity of 1.400 million kWh. Its energy is used for export too.

3. **Construction Industry:**

In our district are operating 70 construction companies. Since the industry for basic material almost doesn't exist they have to ensure them from other districts: like cement, while our district has very good resources as.

The investment for a cement factory has these advantages:

- There is no such a factory in northern Albania where the need are considerable,

- There are needs from Montenegro and other ex-Yugoslav Republics.

Also there are many plants in our district as the following:

Electric cables plant: the only one of this kind in Albania, produces bare wires, wires isolated with PVC, cables of different types and sizes. The cooper is provided from the plants in our country. Its production is used for internal use and some of it for exports in Eastern countries.

Electro-mechanic Plant: produces different electro-motors 3.5kw, 12.5kw, 20.6 kw, dynamos, spare parts, etc. in general the technology and the equipments used are old. Since the plant owes a wide the application of new technology and equipments would raise the quality and the number of the products.

4. **Wood Industry:**

This type of industry is very profitable, because Shkodra is surrounded by forests, and has a very good tradition in making furniture and other wood products. There are 94600 acres of forests, or 37.4% of the territory including today in Shkodra.

There are 5 enterprises that use wood as the basic material, which are all located in new buildings, but the technology that they use is old, which has caused the reduction or stopping the production.

The investment with new technology is very profitable to the investor because for such product the market is still good.

INVESTMENT POSSIBILITIES:

Shkodra represents a very comfortable and a very profitable area for investments. It offers good chances for starting and enlarging any level of businesses in different fields of the economy, especially in tourism, industry, and agriculture.

Another social advantage of this approach is that, the main perception of the population of the district is that everybody, tourist or businessmen, are welcomed in this beautiful and noble city.