Community and urban development and the improvement of ICT infrastructure in the city of Eger

Introduction

The city of Eger is located in the Northern Hungarian Region, an area anticipating dynamic development in the near future. Although Eger’s capital and investment attraction capability cannot compete with the economic geography and regional centre position of Miskolc, the city can still establish a unique and characteristic position in the region and can reasonably be expected to satisfy the newest demands and requirements.

Following the regime change in 1989-1990 Eger, like many Hungarian cities and communities has experienced significant economic and social changes. While the difficulties of the transition period have been overcome, and the main development processes and trends have already been defined, community development plans should place a higher emphasis on the utilisation of Eger’s permanent and regular assets in addition to providing a flexible response to the respective socio-economic demands. Today the tertiary and quaternary functions requiring innovation capability, flexibility, and a highly qualified labour force are assigned crucial priority along with the intensification of communication between people and institutions, and the promotion of personal networking. Communities and settlements meeting the aforementioned criteria gain a competitive edge and Eger should fully exploit its assets and intellectual potential in order to take advantage of the respective development options. In the next section I will assess those assets on which the future can be built and will evaluate the potential setbacks, disadvantages, and weaknesses accompanying the process of identifying the respective developmental trends.

Situational analysis, developmental strategy, priorities

STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES

The historical past, tourism

The numerous Baroque churches, parochial buildings, palaces, and residential homes achieving architectural monument status as the milestones of

* PhD Student 3. year. Budapest University of Technology and Economic Sciences
the city’s significant historic past make Eger the most beautiful Baroque town of Hungary. Due to the significant role of the eight hundred year old stone fortress, or the Castle of Eger in Hungarian history, the city has become not only one of the most favoured tourist destinations, but evolved into a site of historical pilgrimage. Furthermore in addition to the second largest church of the country, the neo-classic style Cathedral, the city’s architectural attractions include Europe’s northernmost Islamic monument, the Minaret built during the 16-17th centuries. Moreover, the other leading attractions include two outstanding examples of Baroque architecture and church building, the Liceum and the Minorite Church respectively.

**Wine making**

The gently, rolling wine plantations, the intricate wine cellars and catacombs located under the city have defined Eger’s appearance for centuries. Eger has always been famous for the wines produced from the grapes planted in the surrounding hills, and the Eger Bikavér made from a strictly regulated combination of the grapes of the Eger wine country is the best known product of the region. Also, the Valley of the Beautiful Woman with its over 200 wine cellars and numerous restaurants has been a favoured tourist destination for Hungarian and foreign tourists enjoying the wines and the region-specific cuisine in the spring and fall months.

**Thermal water**

Thermal baths are also important assets for the local tourism industry. Since medieval times Eger has been famous for its vibrant bath culture based on its abundant therapeutic waters, and curative warm water springs. In addition to the historic bath infrastructure preserved until the present day the historic records prove that the city was always a favoured and popular destination for bath tourism. One of the most famous monuments is the Turkish Bath, a presently functioning facility built during the Ottoman Conquest.

**Conference centre**

Eger’s favourable geographic position, the proximity of the neighbouring countries (Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania), the relatively easy accessibility for Western European tourists arriving from Budapest qualify Eger to be an optimal conference and convention town hosting numerous professional and business related events and forums.

**Educational centre**

At the turn of the twentieth century due to the definitive role of education in the life of the city, Eger earned the title of the Athens of Hungary. Indeed, Eger
was the only county seat in the first half of the twentieth century maintaining the highest number and greatest variety of colleges, secondary schools and other educational institutions including a theological college, a law academy, two parochial and one state-supported secondary schools, two teacher training and two commerce and secondary trade schools, three elementary schools, one apprentice school, and one public elementary school. Presently, more than 20,000 students attend the various educational establishments of the city.

Cultural centre

Next to its numerous assets Eger is proud of its centuries old cultural achievements Today the city enjoys a vibrant cultural life with such internationally acclaimed accomplishments and attractions of contemporary arts as the International Summer Film Academy, the Kepes Project, in addition to eurhythmics or motion arts presentations, and theatrical performances. Both the institutional and non-governmental sphere places a high emphasis on the promotion of general education and culture, while the civilian cultural organisations and associations reinforced by the extensive international cultural connections play a definitive culture-promoting role.

WEAKNESSES AND THREATS

Dependence on centralized budgetary allocation

The city and the municipal government’s economic perspectives are likely to be limited by the following factors:

- The limited growth of governmental financing
- No possibilities for the expansion of the non-recurrent privatisation option.
- The limited growth of the scope and amount of incomes realised from personal and business taxes.
- Limited borrowing capability for the financing of municipal investments
- European Union funds can only be accessed with thoroughly prepared project applications

Demographic trends

Since the beginning of the 1990’s Eger has experienced greater demographic decline and population aging than other county seats or towns of county rank. The main reason for this detrimental process is the rate of transmigration from the city. While the negative transmigration rate has decreased last year, it is still considered significant, and the high rate of population fluctuation demonstrated by the number of people of moving in or moving out of the city is still a potential impediment. The transmigration process tends to be selective primarily
impacting the younger employable generation thereby exerting an overall negative impact on population growth. Most citizens of Eger tend to move to other parts of the county, especially the Eger Microregion, but the number of people moving into Budapest and its vicinity also shows a substantial increase.

**Shifting emphases within the region**

Hungary’s accession to the European Union and the resultant configuration of a regional institutional infrastructure tends to favour Miskolc posing a significant challenge to the city of Eger. If Miskolc’s regional and economic field of attraction continues to increase, Eger can expect to experience a significant decline in the fields of finance, public administration, and tourism.

**Regional connections, internal transportation, parking facilities**

As far as transportation is concerned Eger is in a unique position. While it is considered a county seat, its national and regional transportation connections are weaker than the national average, and the city is located in a distance from the main lines of the motorway and railway networks. Consequently, the city is at a disadvantageous position in attracting active capital even within Heves County.

Eger’s topography results in a somewhat deficient municipal transportation network, which has to meet numerous challenges arising from the city’s roles as the educational and economic centre of the county in addition to being a significant tourism destination. Also, the city of Eger is a district transportation centre with a 40-50 km range of attraction impacting 30-50 communities. Consequently, the expanding public traffic, the increasing parking difficulties, and the deficiencies of the transportation culture all contribute to a decline in the transportation network’s capability to meet the respective requirements.

**SWOT-analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>• The high quality and equal distribution of assets</td>
<td>• Lack of an optimal transport connection to the main motorway and railway networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Emblematic features: viniculture, wine production, the Castle, Baroque architecture, therapeutic baths, cultural attractions</td>
<td>• Limited development capability, reduced municipal income to be realised from business activities and taxation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Historic past</td>
<td>• Limited range of housing sites</td>
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<td>• Natural attractions and features, the proximity of the Bükk and the Mátra Mountains</td>
<td>• High real estate prices</td>
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<td>• Lack of industry with a</td>
<td>• High cost of infrastructure development</td>
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**OPPORTUNITIES**
- Network development and communication
- The improvement of municipal transportation
- Microregional cooperation, the establishment of a resource and development community
- Improvement of the high quality intellectual potential of the city
- The establishment of an educational and research base facilitating economic innovation
- Informatics-based development of the institutional infrastructure
- Functioning as a regional financial, public administration, and tourism centre
- People-centred, citizen and environment friendly municipal government, the promotion of cultural life
- The establishment of new residential areas
- Supporting environment-

**THREATS**
- The persistence of disadvantageous external and internal transport connections
- The transmigration of qualified workers and graduating students
- Aging population
- The wasting of environmental assets
- Limited local capital accumulation capability
- The potential scattering and squandering of available material and intellectual resources in light of the wide range of assets
- The potential disadvantages brought on by the accession into the EU, and the formation of the regional institutional infrastructure (The increasing significance of Miskolc might lead to the decline of Eger’s central position in the field of finance, public administration, and tourism)
conscious and knowledge-based enterprises

- The promotion of health and sports tourism (therapeutic and thermal baths, general health therapies, equestrian activities, bicycle tourism, nature walks, hiking, recreational activities etc.)
- Special tourism attractions (student tourism, utilisation of cellars and catacombs, castle-based programs, Baroque architecture, national historical monuments, parochial or religious architecture, church life and organisation)
- The preservation of natural and man-made values and assets
- The promotion of local pride and local patriotism, the strengthening of community awareness and the Eger spirit

Source: Settlement development strategy and concept 2003

Eger’s inability to accommodate current demands and respond to the respective challenges might jeopardise and undermine the validity of the motto of the 1994 municipal development strategy: “Eger, is the city of quality.”

“The ideal and most desirable developmental strategy implies the promotion of a complex municipal economy based on knowledge, informatics, and network building. In the context of Eger this means the realisation of opportunities arising from grape culture, wine making, local industry, tourism, therapeutic and thermal baths, and the continuous improvement of the quality of the respective interdependent and interrelated services”

According to section 91.§ (6) of Act LXV of 1990 regulating municipal and local governments each municipal and local administration has to prepare an economic program. In light of the respective financial situation and local budgetary constraints this economic program determines the respective developmental strategies, schedules the fulfilment of mandatory and voluntarily
assumed tasks, helps the establishment of the conditions for job creation, identifies the objectives of community development and taxation policies, offers solutions for the performance of public services, and outlines the goals of investment and municipal management policies.

At the beginning of 2006 the city council of Eger accepted the municipal economic strategy for the 2006-2013 period. The economic strategy includes the main development objectives and strategic goals in addition to outlining the respective expansion aims of the various sectors

**StratEGIC OBJECTIVES, PRIORITIES**

1. **The strengthening and reinforcement of economic capacities**

   This set of objectives includes those priorities and respective actions, which create the conditions for and have a direct impact on the income producing potential of the local economy and the settlement of new businesses and enterprises.

   The development of tourism in general, the leading economic attraction of the city, is a special priority along with the full utilisation of competitive advantages provided by thermal water-based curative tourism, the intensification of wine, bath, and culture-tourism, the expansion of the related services and the improvement of the respective resource utilisation capacities

   *Priorities:*

   1.1. *The development of economic infrastructure the development of industry, transport, public utilities*

   1.2. *The promotion of tourism*

   Culture and tourism-related projects

   1.3. *The encouragement of investment*

2. **The development and utilisation of human resources**

   The municipal government can exert a direct impact on quality assurance and the improvement of the professional standards of the work performed at municipally run and controlled institutions thereby establishing the material and expertise background for the achievement of the optimal distribution of human and objective resources.

   A closer cooperation with the business sector can help in establishing the training trends responding to the demands of the labour market.
Priorities:

2.1. The infrastructure and professional development of the institutional network

3. The improvement of the quality of life—the creation of a liveable city

In order to respond to ever-increasing expectations of an improved quality of life not only accommodation and housing conditions have to be improved, but action plans have to be elaborated for the preservation of a liveable artificial and natural environment in addition to that of the community requirements of public welfare.

Priorities:

3.1. Improvement of housing and accommodation conditions social-health care programs, youth-, sports-, leisure time activities, partner connections

3.2. The promotion of environmental culture environmental protection, water and waste management, air quality concerns, noise and vibration protection, the expansion of green areas

4. The sustainable development of municipal task performance and the respective condition criteria

One of the most important objectives of the near future is the modernisation of public services. This goal has to be realised in a continuously changing legal and financial environment while meeting the expectations of the European Public Administration Area and accommodating the challenges posed by reduced taxation receipts, insufficient governmental normative support not reflecting the increasing task burden, and the financing conditions of grant applications. Furthermore, a change of paradigm is necessary as the previous administrative and managerial attitude must give way to a service-oriented perspective

Priorities:

4.1. Client-friendly public administration complex e-governance projects

4.2. Maintaining the balance of municipal financing activities

The main objectives of financial management: guaranteeing financial feasibility and operability, tax policies, grants and projects, uniform data-providing
In the following section I will introduce the main developmental projects aiming at the realisation of the strategic objectives outlined in the economic program of Eger.

The main developmental projects of the city of Eger

1. The strengthening and enhancement of economic potential

The improvement of national and regional transportation connections

The strengthening of the city’s connection to the national public road system is a basic requirement for the improvement of the regional role of Eger. Direct access to the national motorway network is not only indispensable for Eger’s tourism, cultural life, education, and economy, but it can promote the development of the micro-regional settlements located in a short distance from the city. Due to Eger’s relative remote location from the transportation corridors traversing the country, the city has experienced a significant decrease in its investment attracting capability since the second half of 1999. It is beyond doubt that only a high standard, easy, and safe access route to the national motorway network can improve the accessibility of the city of Eger thereby promoting the development of its leading economic activities including tourism, wine production, and light industries.

The extension of the M3 motorway until Füzesabony

The establishment of a connection to the M3 motorway according to the national and regional developmental plans determines the conditions of the city’s accessibility. Presently from a southern direction the city of Eger can be approached by two roads. Both of them originate from Highway 3, one of them is Main Road 25 running through Kerecsend, the other is By-road 2501 starting at the edge of Füzesabony.

The traffic speed Main Road 25 can accommodate, 80 km/h at the beginning section, and 60 km/h at the final section joining Eger respectively, means that connection to the M3 can only be established with the inclusion of Highway 3. Thus the participants in Budapest-related traffic can enjoy a high standard access
route only at the cost of a significant additional travel, while. By-road 2501 passing through Maklár, Nagytálya, and Andornaktálya cannot even accommodate 60 km/h traffic speeds. The cross-sectional formation of the 12 km by-road is satisfactory at the beginning section, while the concluding section of the road running into Eger is in a relatively bad condition.

The planned 2 x 2 lane M25 expressway would be located in an area bordered by Highway 3, Main Road 25, By-road 2501, and Road 2500. All preliminary and feasibility plans of the track have been prepared, and the plan for the application process is underway. The track of the M25 will run parallel to the railway lines originating from Füzesabony and will join via a three branch roundabout at the Kölyuk avenue at the Industrial Park located at the southern section of the city.

**Eastern detour road**

Since most of the communities located within the Eger Microregion can only be reached via passing through the city, Eger has to cope with significant traffic problems. The environmental problems caused by the heavy traffic undermine the living conditions and can potentially damage the architectural monuments of the historic city centre. Consequently, a transportation road network has to be elaborated in order to alleviate the aforementioned traffic burden.

The principal axis of the urban transportation network is provided by Main Road 25. This national level 2 thoroughfare has a dual function serving as a main channel for vehicles passing through the city, and provides for intraurban traffic as well. The increasing use of automobiles, primarily in the north-south direction causes traffic jams resulting in parking problems and heavier noise and air pollution.

The most important priority of the development of the urban transportation network is the construction of a North-South direction road component at the eastern section of the city. According to the structural plans the completion of this Eastern detour road is expected to reduce the significant cross traffic emerging in the internal sections of the national highway network. The anticipated reduction of the burden of Main Road 25 will decrease the intraurban traffic role of this thoroughfare running close to the city centre and will result in the improvement of the capacity of its intersections, along with the expansion of green areas, and in the promotion of mass transportation and bicycling options.

**The development of tourism**

In order to regain Eger’s former position and increasing its tourism attraction capability unique, high-standard, internationally marketable attractions have to be developed enabling the city to meet the demands of the tourism industry all year round. Having analysed the respective tourism trends we can conclude that tourism development strategies must take into consideration the following
requirements: the generation of complex and unique programs, the improvement of the environment of the respective tourist attractions especially accommodation, the inclusion of on-hand experience-based attractions available all year round, and the promotion of leisure time and night entertainment options. Furthermore, the respective tourism development efforts should lead to the realisation of the objectives mutually developed with the micro-regional partners.

**City under the City**

The Municipal Government of the city of Eger has developed the City under the City (CUC) project plan, which due to the invested expertise has grown into a comprehensive, complex, and regionally definitive mega project including several components supported by the citizens, civilian associations, and tourism-related organisations and enterprises.

The main objective of the planned development effort is the conversion of two unused or under-utilised cellar systems of Eger, the Archdiocesan and the so-called Knowledge Cellars into a tourist attraction with significant international appeal via the formation of underground urban sections with a unique and special atmosphere. In order to guarantee effective accessibility and a sophisticated surrounding of the aforementioned attractions, the mega project includes subcomponents aiming at the improvement of parking, and the expansion of space and of the accompanying green surfaces.

According to the City under the City project the following objectives will be realised:

1. The establishment of a historic panorama park in the Archdiocesan Cellar
2. The construction of an underground garage beneath the Pyrker Square
3. The elaboration of a forum space
4. The establishment of a cultural and tourism (cul-tourism) centre at the Municipal Bus Station
5. Rearrangement of the green area and space around Pyrker square and the Cathedral
6. Remodelling of the Eszterházy square, the establishment of the Knowledge Centre, and the reconstruction of the Liceum building
7. The improvement of the Bajcsy-Fellner parking facility and pedestrian area
8. The improvement of the pedestrian and vehicle transportation network
As a result of the complex development project the “underground world” will be interwoven into the existing historical texture of the city and can become a defining component of Eger’s tourist profile.

The encouragement of investment

Adhering to the guidelines of the national and regional developmental programs, the Municipal Government of Eger has always assigned a crucial priority to the improvement of capital attraction capability, and the promotion of productive cooperation with the private sphere. The city aiming to emphasize the aforementioned guidelines has developed a communication strategy in the recent past. The purpose of this strategy to be carried out via close cooperation with the various professional chambers, the local representatives of the ITDH, and other organisations and associations is the identification, informing, and persuasion of potential investors. The maintenance, and facilitation of an up-to-date and flexible communication strategy is a continuous task and responsibility. The Mayor’s Office established the Urban and Regional Development Bureau coordinating the abovementioned connections, facilitating the preparation of national and international, primarily European Union supported, grant applications and respective documents, in addition to assisting and coordinating the professional development efforts of the various specialised agencies.

Agria Park – shopping, entertainment, and service centre

According to already accepted plans on the location of the former Tobacco Factory, in the city centre, only a few hundred meters from the Cathedral and Dobó Square, the Agria Park shopping, entertainment, and service centre will be established.

This development will result in the integration of a presently unused but already cultivated part of the city centre into the urban circulation. The construction process incorporating the existing and new buildings will result in a multifunctional facility with retail establishments of various size, along with entertainment units, cinemas, restaurants, catering facilities, offices, and warehouses. In addition to an underground garage with a capacity of holding 520 cars, a park will be developed in which playground, open-air stage, and shady trees will provide opportunities for active relaxation. The Agra Park with a significant potential of expanding the leisure time options of the city centre is expected to be completed by the end of 2007.

The construction of a therapeutic hotel and health centre, the reconstruction of the Bárány swimming pool.

One of the aims of the Municipal Government of Eger is the utilisation of the real estate at the Petőfi square via the promotion of therapeutic tourism based on
the available curative and therapeutic waters. Accordingly, following the reconstruction of the presently dilapidated Bárány Swimming Pool, in addition to the construction of a parking facility, a four-star 300 bed therapeutic hotel, and open access health centre will be established as well. This development significantly contributes to the expansion of the all year round tourism attractions and promotes demand for this type of tourism destinations.

2. The development and utilisation of human resources

Despite the obvious difficulties and challenges the Municipal Government of Eger considers primary, secondary, and vocational education a strategic priority. This is also substantiated by the fact that almost 1/3 of the municipal budget is used for the maintenance and operation of educational institutions. It is our mutual interest that the number of the city-operated institutions corresponds to Eger’s financial capability while the necessary conditions are guaranteed.

The social and economic changes of the recent past have impacted the municipal governmental sphere, especially the field of education. Consequently, local educational policy makers had to take into consideration the reduced student enrolment numbers and the savings resulting from the elimination of positions and institutional fusions were used for the maintenance of the school infrastructure in addition to financing the necessary expansion and renovation tasks. The Municipal Government of Eger considering effective teaching and learning a crucial priority promoted the introduction of modern educational programs, along with the improvement of foreign language teaching, and computer-assisted instruction.

Microregional Integrated Vocational Training Centre

The Municipal Government of Eger and its consortium partners have submitted a successful project application for the establishment of a microregional integrated vocational training centre. The general objective of the municipal vocational training strategy is the establishment of a vocational training environment and infrastructure, which supports the realisation of the goals of the Human Resource Development Operative Program of the National Development Plan and that of the National Vocational Education Development Program. The developmental efforts will result in a more up-to-date institutional network assuring the effectiveness of vocational education and coordinating the microregional and regional vocational training objectives. Moreover, the rate of job placement for skilled graduates is expected to improve along with the elaboration of cooperation programs with the business sphere. The introduction of the completed professional program components will provide easier access to vocational training for disadvantaged youth, the disabled, women and Roma youth. These programs will also help the employment opportunities and social integration of the abovementioned groups.
The new educational centre based on the cooperation of six institutions will be equipped with state of the art instrumental infrastructure and will be suited to meet community demands. Simultaneously with this developmental process organisational and curriculum development activities will take place while the further training system will be modified and a data compilation system predicting labour market demands will be elaborated. The program of the Training Centre contains two main parts, one is the professional program for the developments to be carried out in the headquarters of the Centre, the other refers to special professional developments to be realised via institutional development schemes. One important factor that should be taken into consideration during the elaboration of the professional programs and curricula is the achievement of the interdependence and interrelation of the different training schemes potentially carried out in different buildings, thereby promoting the integration of the whole system.

3. The sustainable development of municipal task performance and respective condition criteria system, the promotion of e-governance and public administration

Client-friendly public administration

One of the most important objectives of the near future is the modernisation of public services. This goal has to be realised in a continuously changing legal and financial environment while meeting the expectations of the European Public Administration Area and accommodating the challenges posed by reduced taxation receipts, insufficient governmental normative support not reflecting the increasing task burden, and the financing conditions of grant applications. Furthermore, a change of paradigm is necessary as the previous administrative and case-managerial attitude must give way to a service-oriented perspective

One of the prerequisites for the achievement of a developed democratic society conforming to the expectations of the European Union is the rise of the service-providing state in addition to the development of the information-based society. The service-providing state is an electronic network-based information providing system in which clients (citizens, economic institutions, general purpose institutions) can establish informatics-assisted connections not only with public administrators, but public service institutions and other sources of information in a digital format. The informatics system of the public administration sphere as one of the cornerstones of the service-providing state entails the governmental and municipal information systems accessible to the public. The data bases and registers serving public administration purposes (business registers, the records of public utilities, real estate registers, official digital maps) contain indispensable data for the operation of the economic and
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business sphere as well. Similarly statistical data about the national economy are vital for the planning and controlling of the national budget. Finally, in areas controlled and/or supported by the government such knowledge can be accumulated whose extensive dissemination can significantly assist the healthy functioning of the national economy. This includes governmental projects, public acquisition, financial information, various resources, important business information acquired via international cooperation, etc.

The dynamic development of technology experienced worldwide compels governments to change the forms of social and public services in light of the decreasing budgetary sources and the corresponding rising public expectations. The application of informatics-based solutions in public administration is a multiple challenge radically changing the traditional administrative approaches. Following the objectives of the establishment of a “service providing government”, the Municipal Government of Eger aims at the achievement of faster and more effective public administration surpassing spatial and temporal limits in providing client services and access to information for the citizens and business enterprises of the city of Eger.

The Municipal Government of the City of Eger has surpassed the national average in the introduction of electronic public administration programs demonstrated by the compilation of a digitalised geodesic survey map along with the introduction of a new financial program in 2003, which is expected to include the whole institutional network in the future.

Eger has successfully applied for the Implementation of a complex electronic public administration system project in the Business and Enterprise Operative Program (GVOP) in which it won 540 million HUF non-refundable support complemented with an own contribution of more than 77 million HUF. As a result of the project the current computer infrastructure will undergo significant development as in most municipal governmental offices 3d. and 4th. level electronic administration services will be established corresponding to the recommendations of the eEurope program Common List of Basic Public Services thereby creating the necessary administrative and bureaucratic “back office” systems.

Not only the citizens of Eger, but visitors to the city can take advantage of the touch screen terminals installed in different locations, including the Dobó Square. These terminals set up as a result of the project, not only enable users to conduct official business, but provide information on local programs and accommodation, in addition to providing access to the Worldwide Web. Furthermore, in the Eger Microregion a complex electronic public administration demonstration system was established based on a network connecting the participating communities, and the Municipal Government and its institutions. The partners will be in a closed network, thus the residents of the respective communities following registration at the respective centres can take care of
their official business matters via a portal system. The complex e public administration system resulted in the fulfilment of three principal tasks:

1. **one window electronic client service system**
   - internal administration framework
   - general assembly and committee systems
   - construction authority system
   - social work system
   - guardianship and child custody system
   - industrial and commercial system
   - public area system
   - misdemeanour system
   - spatial informatics system

2. **A system for supporting electronic public acquisition or procurement**

3. **Microregional public administration collection portal and settlement portals**

The important tasks of the near future include the successful completion of the project, the utilisation of the respective results, and the continuation of the program in light of the budgetary restraints and potential resources acquired via the tender application process.

**Summary**

Eger’s future depends on whether it will be able to take advantage of Hungary’s membership in the European Union via utilising the local assets, and through the establishment and strengthening of a multilevel internal and external connection system. The Municipal Government of Eger should enable the city to become an attractive place to live for the citizens, students, tourists, and investors planning to settle in the city and taking advantage of the available knowledge base.

The integration into the European economic and public administration systems facilitates an unprecedented capital inclusion and market expansion. While accommodation to the structural and cohesion policies of the European Union results in more predictable, goal-oriented, and specified planning systems, strategic designers and decision makers have a greater responsibility in defining the developmental trends and reconciling the specific perspectives with the general development policies and the respective financial resources.

The improvement of **competitiveness** is a mutual interest of the citizens and of the economic institutions, and of the municipal and microregional governments. The promotion of competitiveness is not the sole responsibility of the economic organisations, as it is closely related to the direct entrepreneurial conditions of a given community. In light of the limited developmental resources municipal governments must assume a connection-developing (coordinating and
cooperating) attitude in addition to determining the activities of the local economic associations.

It is vital that a communicative and cooperative atmosphere is established between equally qualified institutions playing a leading role in the economy of the city and the groups of citizens. Furthermore, the city’s financial and intellectual capital accommodating and retaining capability must be strengthened via an active, open, initiative-based municipal management and city marketing policy. While competitiveness entails accessibility, reliability, professional qualification, and innovation capability, the unfavourable connection to the national highway and railway system has a limiting effect. Consequently, responding to the challenges of the 21st century, these disadvantages have to be turned into assets via conquering the lack of spatial connection with business, cultural, institutional, and personal connections, and via an informatics-based network.

Both forms of connection building entailing direct, personal communication and indirect, virtual communication are available. While general purpose tourism, recreational and conference tourism, grape and wine production, education, and culture can promote actual communication, informatics can provide useful assistance for the growth of virtual networking and information exchange.

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