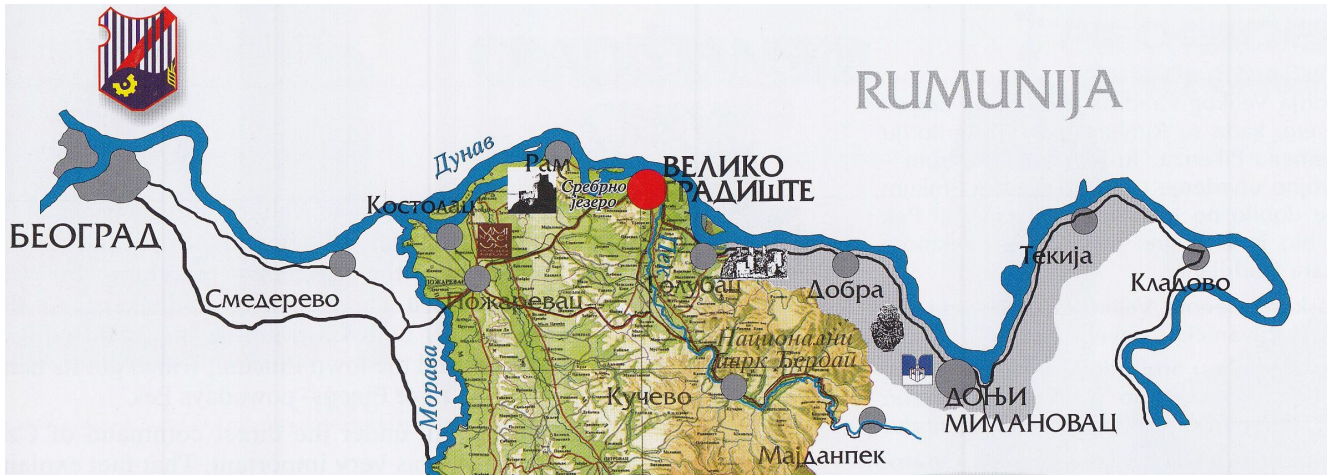


General information and location

At the foot of the Carpathians and the Homolje Mountains, at the entrance to the Đerdap gorge, in the embrace of the blue river Danube and the gold-bearing Pek river, there is Veliko Gradište – also called the lobby of Đerdap.

The municipality of Veliko Gradište is located in the *northeastern* part of Serbia and belongs to the Danube region (Braničevo district). It covers an area of 344 km². About 17,500 inhabitants live in 26 settlements on the municipality territory. The seat of the municipality is Veliko Gradiste, which has about 6,000 inhabitants and is the administrative, economic and cultural center of the municipality. There are over 5,500 citizens temporarily working abroad (mostly in Western European countries). Veliko Gradiste is bordered on the west by the municipality of *Malo Crniće*, on the southeast by the municipality of *Kučevo*, and on the east by the municipality of *Golubac*. In the north, the municipality is bordered by the Danube, which is 20 km long and separates it from neighboring *Romania*.

The *Belgrade-Kladovo* highway and the railway pass through the southern part of the municipality. It is about 110 km away from Belgrade, only an hour's drive. Veliko Gradište is connected with other surrounding cities by good asphalt roads.



Veliko Gradište is a port for foreign ships coming from Vienna along the Danube on their way to Black Sea ports and in the opposite direction. There is also a customs house in Gradište, so that is the reason why these white beauties stop there on their way, shorter or longer.

Near Veliko Gradište, the river Pek flows into the Danube. With the construction of *HPP Derdap* and the raising of the level of the Danube, a bay was formed at the mouth of Pek river, which very quickly became a large habitat for many bird species. From Veliko Gradište, along the Danube to the mouth of the Pek, and further upstream, a defensive embankment was built, which is at the same time a beautiful promenade along the banks of the Danube.

Veliko Gradište is located at an altitude of 81 meters. In terms of *relief*, the area of the municipality is mostly flat because over 60% are plains. Higher hilly land makes up 25% and hilly area only 15% of the total area. The highest elevation is Lipovačka hill, 362 meters high, and the lowest point is the mouth of Pek with an altitude of 68 meters.

Most of the area is land with vegetable gardens, arable land and vineyards. This area used to be very rich in forests, however, today they cover about 200 hectares. The relatively young acacia forest prevails, after which the famous picnic area Beli Bagrem is named. From the village of Ram through Zatonje, Veliko Gradište and Požeženo, all the way to Golubac,

there is the Ram-Golubac sandstone, with a total length of 70 kilometers. The municipality also abounds in numerous hunting grounds in which low game prevails, and there is also an abundance of feathered game.

The climate here is temperate-continental with long warm summers and relatively high temperatures. Veliko Gradiste is often the warmest city in the country during July and August. The warmest month is, of course, July with an average temperature of over 25° C. The topographic position, the sandy cape that points to the Danube, the surrounding swamps and Pek, significantly determined the place and importance of this city. It is the only urban settlement in Serbia that contains in its name, not only the term settlement-fortress, but also an indication that in the past it was a larger fortress around what the city developed.

The backbone of the *economic development* of the municipality is agriculture and tourism. *Agriculture* has the most important place in the structure of the economy, so corn, wheat, industrial crops, fruits and vegetables are mostly grown on arable land. The villages in the lower course of Pek – Tribrode, Carevac, Kusiće and others, are known as the villages of widely known gardeners who can be found on markets throughout Serbia. Farmers in this area are also excellent producers of healthy food. Ostrovo, Carevac and some other villages are known for the famous „gradištanac“ beans. Livestock breeders in this area mostly raise cows, pigs and poultry.

The backbone of tourism development is the Silver Lake and the Danube and Pek rivers. The Silver Lake, created by the partitioning of the Danube tributary, is 14 km long, about 300 meters wide and on average 8-9 meters deep. Next to it, a weekend settlement and the tourist-recreational complex Beli Bagrem (White Acacia) were built, with numerous accommodation capacities, restaurants, an aqua park and sports fields.



Primary education is conducted in three central primary schools (Veliko Gradiste, Majilovac and Srednjevo) with about 2,000 students. In Veliko Gradište, there is also a high school with departments of tourism, catering and trade.

The preschool institution Kindergarten „Majski cvet“ (May Flower) in addition to the central facility in Veliko Gradište, organizes its activities in nine other classes in rural settlements.

Cultural institutions in the municipality are the Cultural Center „Vlastimir Pavlović Carevac“, „National Museum Veliko Gradište“ and the National Library „Vuk Karadžić“.

The cultural center has a folklore, drama and music section. The aim of the museum is to expand, study, document, protect and preserve collections of archaeological, ethnological, historical and artistic character, as well as to research and interpret the past of Veliki Gradište and its surroundings. The library has a reading room and a large number of books and other archival and non-book materials.

Sport is a significant activity. The sports association „VGSK“ represents the backbone of the development of sports and has nine sports clubs in which over 500 young people gather.

Basic health care is organized through the Health Center in Veliko Gradište and with a number of health stations and clinics in the rural area.

The municipality is twinned with the municipalities of Nova Moldava and Resita from Romania and Asprangeli from Greece.