

Developers without border

The option of living over the border in Austria looks to be getting both cheaper for Bratislavans, and greener

One of the most unique aspects of Bratislava is its proximity not only to Vienna but to the Austrian border itself. Wealthy Slovaks have been gradually becoming a sizable force there from a real estate perspective, spotting inexpensive land plots and building homes on them. There are obvious benefits, not the least of them being that commuting from some sleepy towns like Kittsee or Berg to the center of Bratislava is often less of a hassle than it is for those living in the small Slovak towns on the other side of the capital.

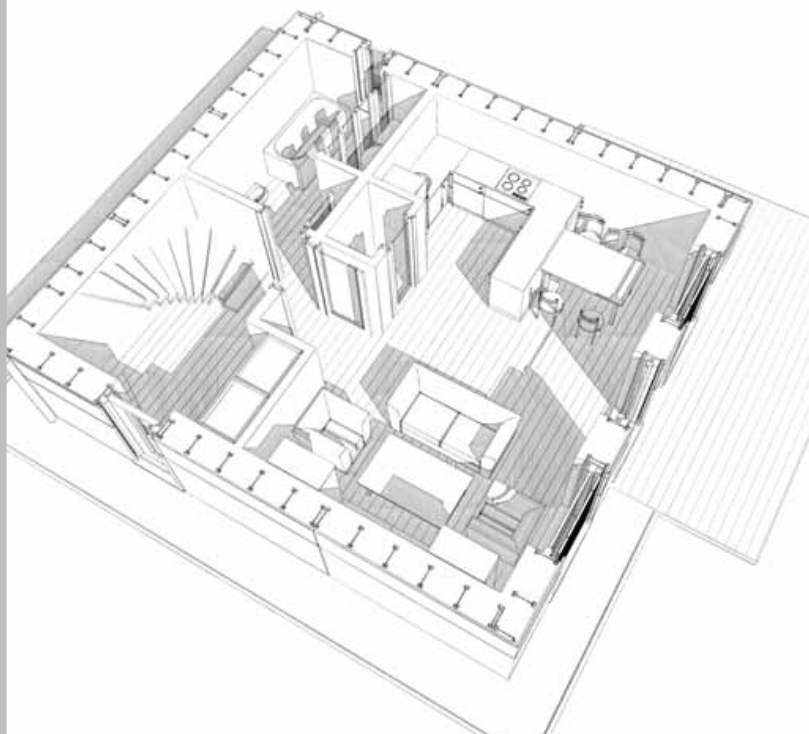
Living in Austria need not be an option only for the well-to-do, and the next wave of Slovaks to cross the border could be those hoping to save some money. Not merely in the short-term, by buying cheaper accommodations, but by living

in low-energy and passive homes.

Using a concept by the company Createrra, two Slovak companies, ForDom and D7 are working with their Austrian-based company [Fertighaus OK](#) on the project, together with the Austrian real estate company Immobilien Group. Put simply, Immobilien Group controls land suitable for the construction of family homes, while the first two companies design and produce besides various low-energy houses also four basic types of passive prefabricated homes. By severely



Interior and exterior views of future eco-friendly homes



31 limiting the layouts on offer, they've come up with affordable homes whose energy costs can be as low as €30 to €40 per month, compared to what ForDom executive Igor Kuzma says can be well over €100 per month. The homes employ heat recuperation, heat absorbing bricks installed in ceilings, three-paned windows that block 60 percent of the sun's light energy, automatic shutters, and solar panels. Thanks to mass produced panel walls and the creation of a simple construction and installation process, the homes can be built in just four months. This time savings also helps reduce the price, which is currently set at an attractive €149,900 (including 20% VAT) for a 90 sqm home.

48 Assuming they're willing to declare permanent residency in Austria, Slovaks are eligible for mortgages from Austrian banks, which he says offer cheaper interest rates and a quicker approval process. Moreover, the Austrian government provides tens of thousands of euro in low-interest loans for those who purchase approved passive and low-energy homes. Fertighaus OK is offering four types of prefabricated passive homes ranging in size from 90 sqm to 150 sqm.