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## SLOVAKIA IN THE SCOPE OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN TOURISM – PRESENT STATE AND OUTLOOK\*\*

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After a general survey of the ways in which a country in economic transition as Slovakia and especially economically backward regions in such a country can be affected positively as well as negatively by tourism the position of Slovakia within historical and present patterns of tourist flows is investigated. It is shown that Slovakia turned from a summer resort of the Hungarian upper classes before World War I via a destination of Czechs in the interwar period to one of the prominent touristic attractions of the socialist bloc in the postwar period. In spite of an ever increasing number of arrivals in the socialist era the revenues remained weak. The essence of the article is a discussion of Slovakia's perspectives within the tourist market of Central Europe under new preconditions. This discussion is based on the present structure of this market, its general trends as well as Slovakia's natural and cultural potential for tourism confronted with the structure of demand and the trends of the market. As a result some major possibilities of a touristic development in Slovakia are mentioned.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of this presentation is a rough survey putting the tourism of Slovakia – its present state and outlook to the future – into the overall tourism context of Central Europe. It remains necessarily one of an interested spectator from outside with some experience from other regions, but not especially from Slovakia.

This presentation is furthermore far from intending to provide Slovakia with any coherent concept as regards its future development of tourism. This is a task of Slovakian tourism geographers and tourism economists in collaboration with Slovakian planning authorities.

The contribution of this paper is to speak frankly on the preconditions and prospects, out of which Slovakian scientists and planning boards might derive some hints and ideas for own activities.

### 2 TOURISM AS A DEVELOPING FACTOR

Tourism – commercial tourism – is an especially valuable vehicle of economic and social transformation in a situation when a country (as Slovakia) is undertaking its first steps from

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a planned to a market economy, accompanied by a heavy decline of social tourism, by increasing unemployment in traditional branches of the economy and by a strong need for small-scale private initiatives. Commercial tourism could not only act as a primary detonation making the engine of the national economy running but could furthermore serve as an instrument to develop backward regions of a country as it has proved to do in many parts of Southern and Western Europe. In general, an economy characterized by a lack of capital and a weak employment situation, can be affected positively by tourism in the following ways (D.R. Hall 1991):

- The tourist industry as a less capital intensive branch of the economy creates economic activities and employment without much capital investment.
- The relatively small amount of capital needed enables not only big enterprises and public bodies, but also a lot of individuals to participate, even in the way of a second profession. Investment, participation, revenues and risks are widely spread.
- As capital input is relatively confined it can soon be exceeded by revenues. Tourism therefore serves to create new capital, which could be reinvested, also into other branches of the economy.
- Tourism is labour intensive comprising mainly personal services, which cannot easily be mechanized and automated. More than industry and agriculture it is able to absorb unemployment.
- Tourism needs a larger share of unskilled workers, offering jobs, e.g., to industrial workers unemployed or underemployed recently without much vocational training.
- Tourism creates employment not only in its own sphere, but also in other branches of the economy using products and services of transport, construction, food – and other consumer goods – industry, trade and agriculture. This multiplier effect is estimated to be in the size 1:1,4 to 1:1,8, that means that one person employed in the tourist industry corresponds to 1,4 or 1,8 persons employed as an indirect effect of the touristic demand in other branches.
- Tourism acts as a catalyst of social change, by permitting greater and closer interaction between the host population and the outside world.

These effects of tourism on a national economy are favourably supplemented by its support for a regional development policy:

- Tourism can be activated in regions not favourable for other branches of the economy. The lack of industry and intensive agriculture makes a region even more suited for tourism.
- Tourism can be combined favourably with alpine agriculture providing alpine farmers with a second income. It prevents them from abandoning their farmsteads and from emigration. In this way tourism contributes not only to preserve the traditional pattern of settlement in mountain regions but also to preserve the traditional appearance of cultivated landscape there, which is not the least of ecological importance.
- Tourism helps to improve the technical infrastructure of rural areas (roads, transport facilities, telecommunication network, canalization, etc.) in this way improving the living conditions of the local population.
- Tourism leads to the establishment of service facilities like shops, restaurants or entertainment facilities available also for the local population.

Of course, the expansion of tourism contains also dangers which have been outlined especially by Jost Krippendorf (1987), but which can easily be derived from the development of tourist regions in Western and Southern Europe as it has been done by Allan Williams and Gareth Shaw (1988):

- Tourism can lead to a fragile monostructural economy.
- Tourism can lead to an overdependence on foreign investment, with decisions being taken abroad. In cases of an intensive participation of foreign investors a good deal of the revenues are leaving the country.

- Tourism can withdraw capital and labour force from other branches of the economy disturbing the economic balance of a region severely.
- Tourism burdens the land market.
- The tourist industry is characterized by a high degree of seasonality overburdening infrastructure and labour force of a region during a short period of the year whereas in the rest of the year facilities are underutilized and the local population is unemployed or has to look for labour elsewhere.
- If the local economy and the local population is not in a position to provide tourism with most of the required goods and services, tourism tends to be an extraterritorial business with workers from outside serving foreigners with imported goods.
- The influence of tourists, the influx of seasonal labour force from outside and the seasonal out-migration of the local population can result in a confusion of the local community.
- Tourism can generate social tensions and accentuate disparities of wealth, both locally and regionally.
- Tourism is in danger to emphasize existing regional disparities as it is the case in Hungary, Italy and Portugal. For Slovakia, however, this danger seems to be not so great taking into account, that the predestinated tourist regions do not coincide with the economically most active parts of the country.
- Tourism can have negative impacts on natural environment by the consumption of land for the construction of houses and roads, by generating traffic and wastes or by the implementation of ski pistes.

Nevertheless even Krippendorf is of the opinion that most of those disadvantages and costs can be avoided, if development policies are taking care of the local and regional preconditions and if the growth of the tourist industry is stopped at the point at which tourism yields diminishing returns. The question remains whether within a market economy the actors may be forced „to prevent the goose from laying one too many golden eggs!„ (Krippendorf 1987)

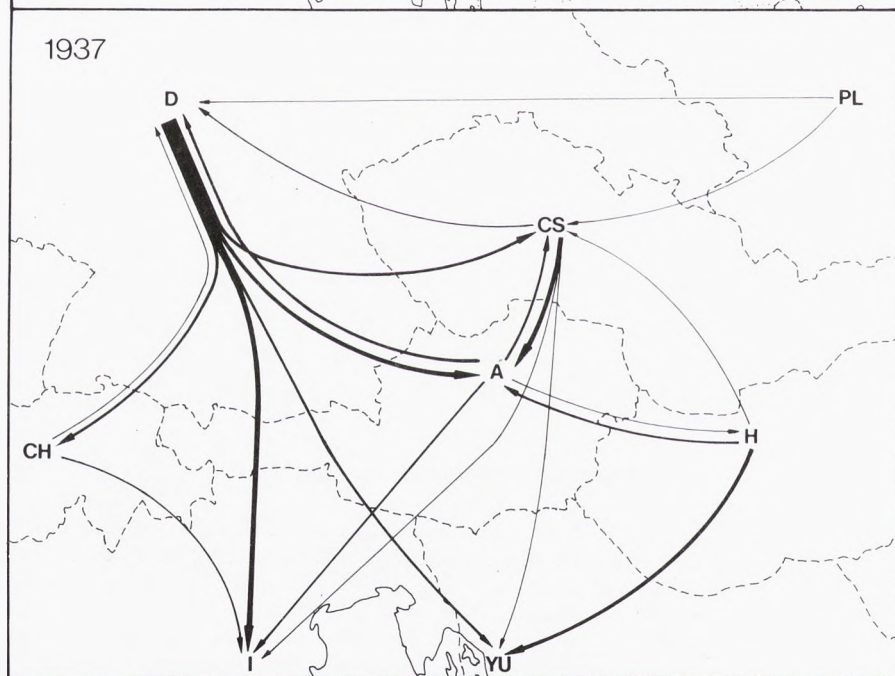
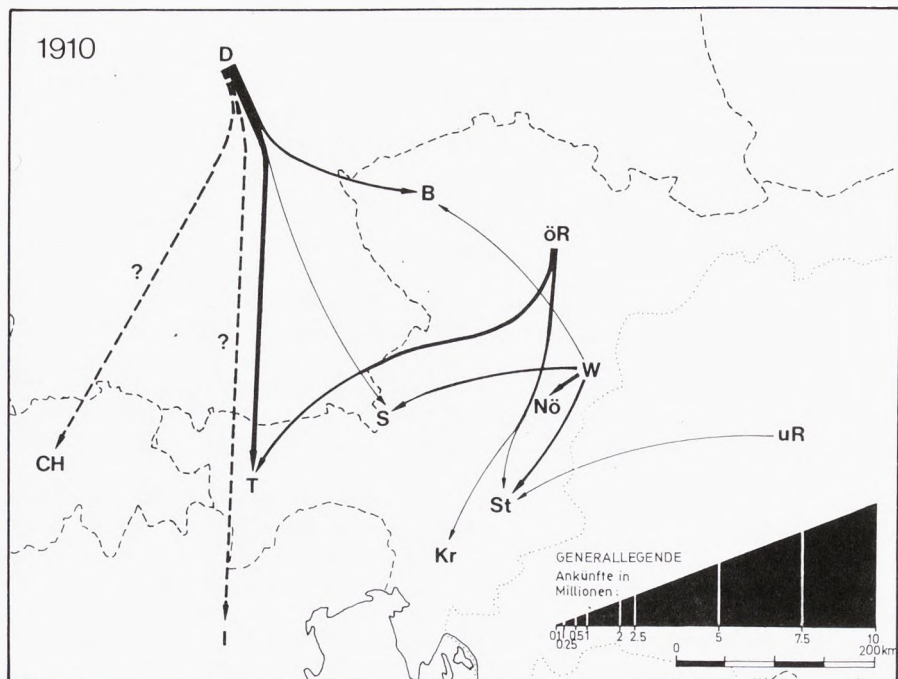
### 3 SLOVAKIA WITHIN HISTORICAL AND PRESENT PATTERNS OF TOURIST FLOWS

After this rough outline of the possible role of tourism as a developing factor in a country like Slovakia it seems useful to have a short glance at the position of Slovakia within the historical pattern of tourist flows as well as within the pattern of tourist flows immediately before the political changes of 1989 before the perspectives and prospects of Slovakian tourism in the nearer future are referred to.

The view back to history must not be considered as a pure academic fingering—exercise as it is not unlikely that at least some aspects of the historical patterns of tourist flows having prevailed under the conditions of market economy and open frontiers will be reinforced now, when the frontiers are open again and when Slovakia is going to implement market economy.

#### 3.1 Before World War I (see Fig. 1)

In the time before the First World War the main sources of tourism in Central Europe were the German Empire and the Austrian part of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy. Within these countries the big cities and the other urbanized and industrialized regions stood out: within the German Empire mainly Berlin and industrial Saxony, within the Austrian half of the Hapsburg Empire the capital Vienna [Wien] generated about one half of the tourists, the second half was originating mainly from the industrialized Czech provinces Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.



The main flow of tourists from the German Empire was directed to the western parts of the Austrian Alps, mainly to the provinces Tyrol, Salzburg and Vorarlberg. A second, minor branch, aimed at the Western Bohemian spas Karlovy Vary, Mariánské Lázně and Františkovy Lázně as well as to other spas and resorts in Bohemia like to Teplice or Špindlerův Mlýn in the Giants' Mountains [Krkonoše]. Slovakia was not even touched by the tourist flows from the German Empire.

Among the tourist flows originating in Vienna, only very weak ones were directed to regions outside of the Austrian part of the Monarchy, only weak ones also to regions outside of present Austria. The main destinations of the Viennese were at that time the Austrian Alps, not only their western, but also their eastern parts, among them Styria, Carinthia and Upper Austria. Besides, Viennese were used to go for a cure to the Western Bohemian spas. The Hungarian part of the Monarchy received only a few guests from Vienna, but – remarkably – the region of present Slovakia stood out, the most prominent destinations being the Tatra Mountains [Tatry], the Spiš region and the spas of the Váh valley, foremost Piešťany.

The tourist flows from the Czech lands were directed quite evenly to the provinces of the Austrian half of the Monarchy south of them, more frequented destinations being the eastern parts of the Austrian Alps and the Kvarner beach [Kvarnerski zaljev]. Present-day Slovakia, in contrast to the interwar period, did not receive many Czech tourists. Instead, the Slovakian spas and the Tatra Mountains were some of the main destinations of the Hungarian urban middle and upper classes, especially from Budapest. Besides, only Lake Balaton and the Croatian Coastland [Hrvatsko primorje] around Fiume [Rijeka] and Crikvenica [Crikvenica] held such a prominent position among Hungarians.

It may be resumed that the region of present-day Slovakia before the First World War was mainly a tourist destination for the Hungarian upper classes, guests from Vienna and other parts of the Austrian half of the Monarchy playing only a minor role.

The influx from the Hungarian coreland resulted e.g. in the construction of big hotels and villas at the bottom of the High Tatra Mountains [Vysoké Tatry] in the first decade of our century, which are still in function, at least as guest houses of trade unions and enterprises. In a renovated and adapted form they could act as very specific attractions for a future touristic development.

### 3.2 Interwar period (see Fig. 2)

During the interwar period Slovakian tourism suffered from the social descent of the former Hungarian upper classes spending their summer holidays in the Tatra Mountains before the war. In addition the problematic political relations between the two successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, contributed to a decline of the tourist influx from Hungary.

In comparison with the Czech lands Slovakia was of a decisively minor importance as regards tourism of foreigners. Two thirds of all foreign visitors to Czechoslovakia were absorbed by the Western Bohemian spas alone. The Tatra Mountains and the Slovakian spas turned to destinations of mainly Czech tourists.

### 3.3 Postwar period (see Fig. 3 and 4)

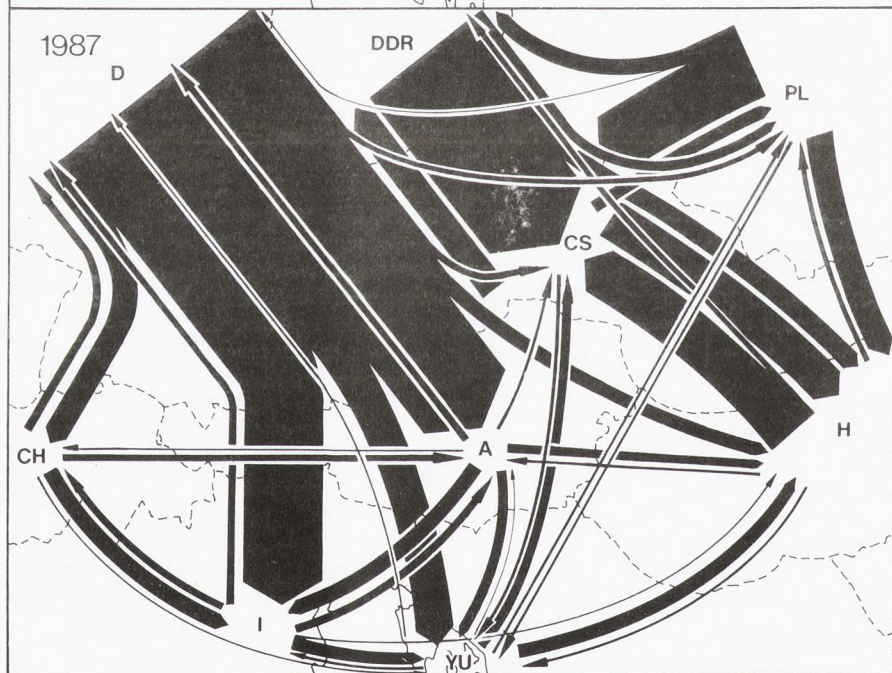
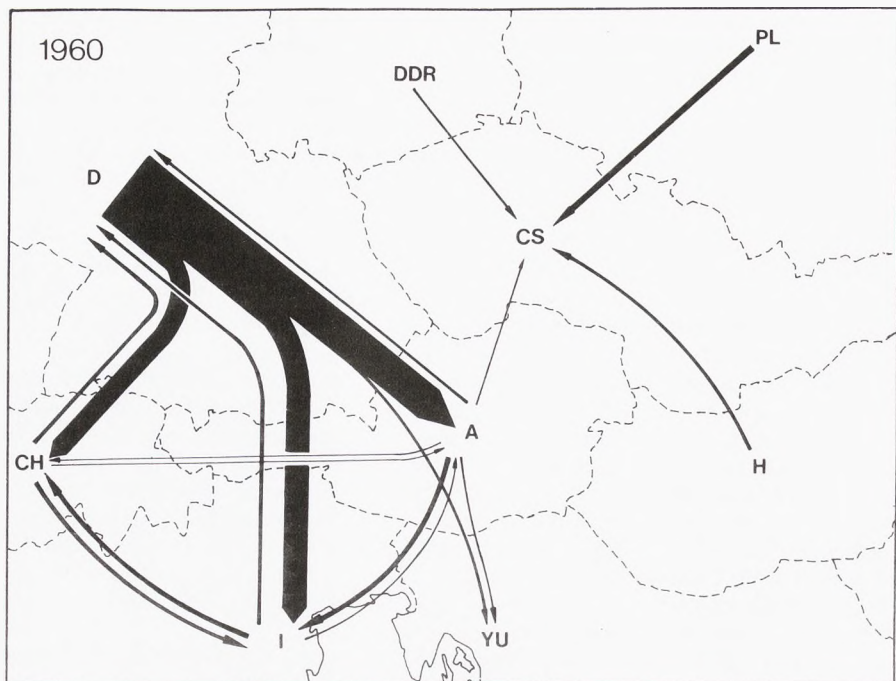
After the Second World War the communist rule in the countries of East-Central Europe and the Iron Curtain separating Central Europe into two antagonistic parts stopped the development

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Fig. 1. Tourist flows within Central Europe 1910.

Fig. 2. Tourist flows within Central Europe 1937.





of commercial tourism in Czechoslovakia for many years. The major part of the hotels was transformed into recreation homes of trade unions, welfare organizations and state enterprises. Tourism was not considered as a branch of the economy but as a social, cultural, educational and political instrument. Social tourism, mainly in the form of collective recreation of the whole staff of an enterprise prevailed, individual tourism and even more the influx of foreigners was considered as disturbing the system. Not before the mid-fifties a certain amount of international tourism emerged, but almost only between the socialist countries.

In the course of the 60s, 70s and 80s, however, Czechoslovakia developed into the main destination of international tourism among the socialist countries of East-Central Europe receiv-

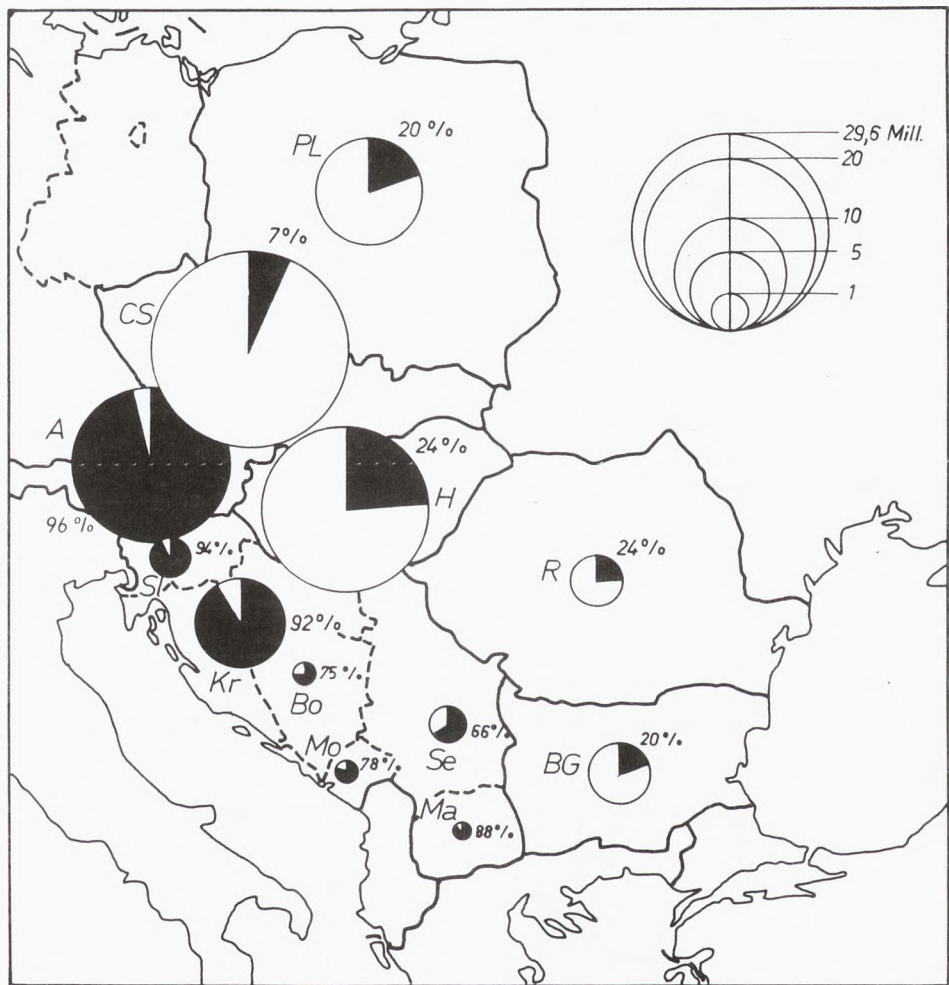


Fig. 5. Share of tourism from Western countries in international tourism as a whole 1989/90 (by arrivals).

Fig. 3. Tourist flows within Central Europe 1960.

Fig. 4. Tourist flows within Central Europe 1987.

ing tourists mainly from the GDR, Poland and Hungary. Slovakia had a considerable share in it exceeding its proportion in the population figure (Atlas Slovenskej socialistickej republiky 1980).

The amount of Western tourism to Czechoslovakia remained extremely low up to the early 80s, when Czechoslovakia – forced by economic problems – started to solicit for Westerners to gain foreign currency. However, the influx of Western tourists increased much slower than to

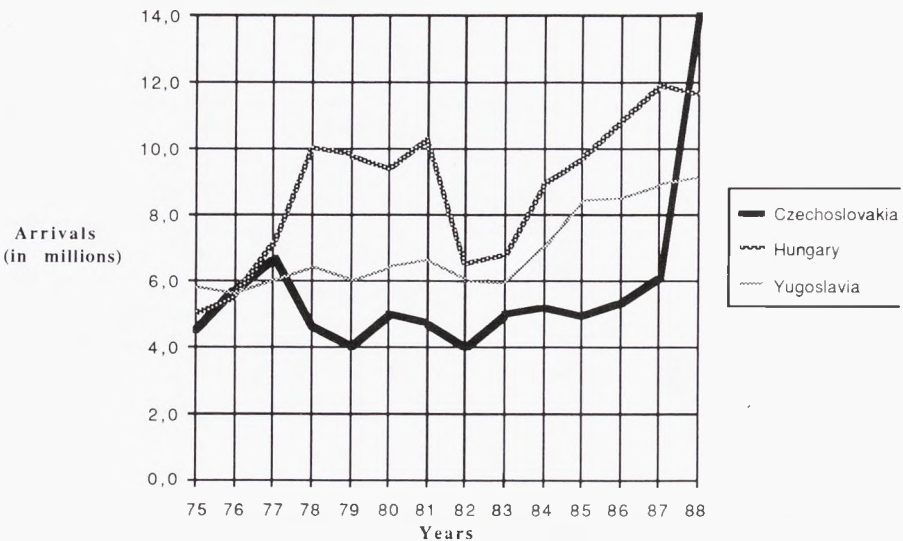


Fig. 6. International tourist arrivals.

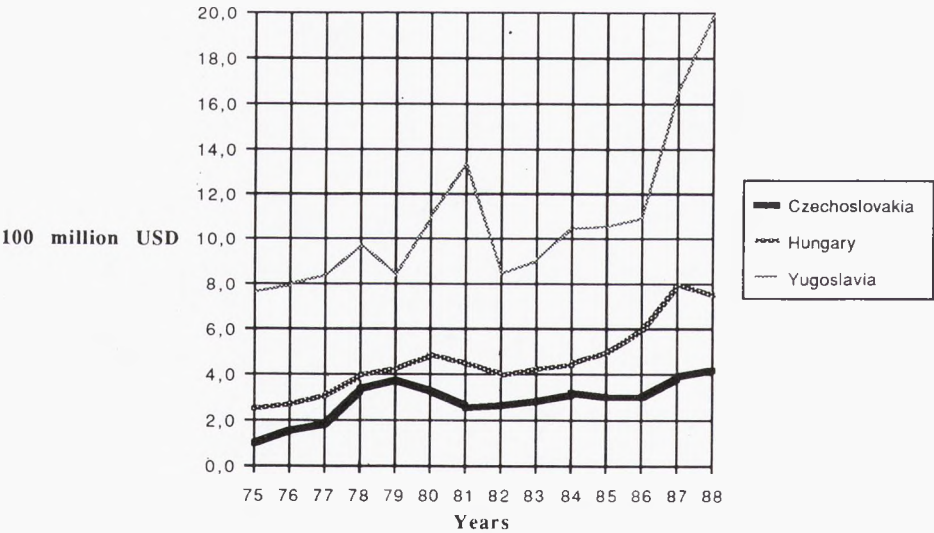


Fig. 7. International tourist receipts.



Hungary reflecting the less active attitude of the Czechoslovakian regime towards privatization and improvement of services. Comparing the former socialist countries of Europe as regards the share of Westerners in the overall number of international arrivals in 1989 and 1990 respectively the share of Westerners in Czechoslovakia is extremely low (see also Fig. 5): only 7% compared to 20% in Bulgaria and Poland, 24% in Romania and Hungary and 82% in Yugoslavia (92% in Croatia, 94% in Slovenia) which, however, had opened its borders much earlier to Western tourists (Statistical yearbooks). The Western visitors to Czechoslovakia originated in 1989 mainly in the Federal Republic of Germany (37% of all Western visitors), considerable shares had Austria (17%) and Italy (8%) (Statistická ročenka České a Slovenské Federativní Republiky 1990).

It seems that up to 1989 the share of Western tourists in the overall number of foreigners in Slovakia was well below the average of Czechoslovakia.

How weak the economic effect of low-price tourism in comparison with the tourism from Western countries was can be derived from Fig. 6 and 7 representing the number of tourist arrivals (Fig. 6) and the revenues (Fig. 7). One could arrive at the conclusion that for the receiver country social tourism was only a burden, not a benefit.

## 4 SLOVAKIA'S PERSPECTIVES WITHIN THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN TOURIST MARKET

To judge Slovakia's chances to attract a larger share of commercial tourism in the future the following items could serve as criteria:

- the structure and attributes of the European, especially Central European tourist market,
- long-term trends and topical cyclical movements of the tourist market,
- the natural and cultural potential of Slovakia for tourism confronted with the structure of demand and the trends of the market.

### 4.1 Tourist markets with a certain predisposition for Slovakia

By far the biggest tourist market of the world is that one of the United States with expenditures of 34.977 million USD in 1989, followed by the German (24.129 million USD) and the Japanese (21.130 million USD) (Tourismus in Zahlen 1991).

Taking into account that American and Japanese tourists expend their money not mainly in Europe, the German market as the biggest European market gains in importance. The second in Europe is the British market with expenditures of 15.195 million USD, followed by the French market with 10.293 million USD (Tourismus in Zahlen 1991). Among the smaller markets in the course of the 80s the Italian, the Dutch, the Belgian and the Austrian grew more than the average (Tourismus in Zahlen, several editions). Especially the growth of the Italian market is very promising as Italy has a big population potential of which until recently only a small share used to travel to foreign countries.

On the other hand the commercial tourist market of the former socialist countries of Central Europe (GDR, Poland, Hungary), having been the most important generating countries of Slovakian tourism in the last decades, cannot be expected to develop rapidly. They will generate a growing number of tourists, of course. But the spending capacity of their citizens will remain weak and it must be expected that at least in the first years after having achieved full freedom of travelling they will prefer Western destinations.

Assuming even that both Hungary, having started to liberalize its economy earlier, and the provinces of the former GDR, benefiting from Western German support, will recover surprisingly soon, the development of commercial tourism in Slovakia will have to rely mainly on Western European sources, at least for a couple of years.

The pattern of tourist flows generated by Western European countries is, however, well – established and it will not be easy for a newcomer like Slovakia to gain in a short time an essential share of it.

In 1989 34% of Germany's tourist expenditures went to the countries of Southern Europe (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Turkey), 23% to the Alpine countries Austria and Switzerland, 18% to countries of Western Europe, 17% to other continents and only 4% each to Northern and „Eastern Europe“, including the former socialist countries of East–Central Europe (Tourismus in Zahlen 1991).

The tourist flows from Germany to the Alpine countries are very traditional (as one can see from Figs. 1–3), furthermore promoted by the same language. Even the recently acquired provinces of the former GDR are showing quite the same attitude.

But although the Alpine countries receive an ever increasing absolute amount of German tourist expenditures (Austria: from 5464 million DM in 1977 to 7401 million DM in 1989; Switzerland: from 2852 million DM in 1977 to 3081 million DM in 1989), their relative share in the overall German tourist expenditure in foreign countries was in decline, at least between 1977 and 1989 from 33% to 23%, mostly to the account of Switzerland, but also of Austria (Tourismus in Zahlen 1991). There are recent signs that on account of an increased demand for apartments and „holidays on the farmstead“ this negative trend has come to a halt. Major reasons for this decline were:

- the general trend to spend one's holidays farther away,
- the comparatively high level of prices in the Alpine countries,
- the shift within German travellers from families looking for nearby and quiet holidays to younger and senior people, not hesitating to travel farther to find more entertainment and alternation.

In all these respects, except the first, Slovakia could be an alternative.

The relative decline of German expenditure in the Alpine countries concerned predominantly the summer season. But either the winter season does not promise an everlasting growth, although the Alps are profiting in this regard from their neighbourhood to big German urban centres, the winter season being a matter of short stays.

Tourists from Italy, holder of the second rank among West–Central European tourist markets (6.773 million USD [Tourismus in Zahlen 1991]), have no strong inclination to one distinct tourist region in Central Europe, but are spread over all regions mainly as urban and cultural tourists. Italians are used to have a short duration of stay and are travelling mainly individually. Slovakia's cities are benefiting already somewhat from their interest, but there is still a wide range of possibilities to make this interest growing.

The international expenditure of tourists from Austria, a tourist market of 6.266 million USD (Tourismus in Zahlen 1991), were distributed in 1990 among the main regions of destination in the following mode (Austrian Note Bank 1991): Southern Europe (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece) 34%, other continents 21%, Western plus Northern Europe (France, United Kingdom, Benelux, Scandinavia) 12%, Germany 12%, Yugoslavia 9%, „Eastern Europe“ 8%, Switzerland 4%. The inclination to overseas destinations is even stronger than in Germany, but Austrians obviously have also a strong „drive“ to „Eastern Europe“ and Yugoslavia.

In 1989 11,2% of all outgoing border–crossings of Austrians were directed to Czechoslovakia, 80% of them being day–trips. 80% of the Austrian day–trippers went to Prague leaving a very small share to Slovakian destinations (Austrian Note Bank 1991). From the first quarter of 1990 to the first quarter of 1991 the number of Austrian trips to Czechoslovakia rose from 180 000 to 240 000 accompanied by a growth of Austrian expenditure in Czechoslovakia from 100 to 500 million AS (Austrian Note Bank 1991). This astonishing growth is mainly due to a doubling of overnight–stays by Austrians, but couldn't have been achieved without an increasing consumer–orientation of the Czechoslovakian economy.

Although situated outside of Central Europe the French and Dutch tourist markets, having a strong impact on Central European destinations, are not to be neglected. Both French and Dutch tend to

have a long duration of stay. The French are known as individualists also in the field of travelling, hardly following overcrowded tourist paths. The Dutch have a strong inclination to visit natural monuments frequenting to a large share camping sites. Not within the next years, but for the further future the fast economic recovery of Hungary offers Slovakia the chance to revive its traditional touristic ties to this almost natural catchment area also in the field of commercial tourism.

In any case a wider scattering of sources is desirable to lower the risks of economic and political disturbances. Such a high concentration as 85% on three tourist generating countries as Slovakia had in the past is certainly not an advantage.

## **4.2 Long-term trends and topical cyclical movements of the tourist market**

The development of the tourist market is characterized by long-term trends, cyclical movements in the range of 6 to 7 years and short-term erratics. As long-term trends and cyclical movements can be mentioned:

- An increasing attractiveness of long-distance tours.
- A tendency to split one's leisure time into several shorter holidays which are spent in different ways and different places. To consume one's holidays only once a year becomes increasingly unusual.
- An inclination to short city and cultural tours.
- The participation of younger people not yet integrated into working life and of senior people in tourism increases. Both groups are not so strictly bound to vacation times, are less cost-minded than whole families and are looking for something different from traditional holidays.
- The travel-experience increases, travellers are less hesitating to cross language and cultural barriers.
- A shift from hotel accommodation to self-catering tourism.
- A growth of business-, conference- and incentive tourism.
- The efforts of tourist regions to concentrate on special market segments and to gain a distinct image.
- An internationalization of ownership structures.
- Horizontal and vertical concentration of enterprises.
- Smaller enterprises are forced to offer specialized services to stand the competition.

## **4.3 Slovakia's touristic potentials confronted with the markets and trends**

Some of these trends favour a newcomer in commercial tourism, especially when he is endowed with a considerable natural and cultural touristic potential as Slovakia. Leaving the low price level aside, as it – frequently connected with a low quality of services – cannot be considered as a long-lasting touristic attraction, Slovakia's outstanding touristic potentials are in the author's opinion:

- large and varied mountainous and hilly areas with a dense wood cover, in general not overcrowded by settlements, tourists or excursionists, but neatly developed for rambling and walking,
- the High Tatras Mountains as an attractive high mountain region offering summer and winter recreation and sports possibilities,
- a lot of beautiful old towns, cities, castles and other places of historic interest,
- a former and a present ethnic and cultural mixture, having left interesting traces,
- well-known spas.

Of course, disadvantages and hinderances to put these potentials into effect must be drawn into consideration, too (D.R.Hall 1991):

- The heavy urbanization and industrialization in the course of the last decades having affected also and even foremost the mountainous regions with the best natural potential for tourism. The results are environmental damages and a social structure less favourable for tourism than, e.g., small-scale farming,
- the negative environmental image of Czechoslovakia in Western countries, whether it is justified or not, accentuated even by the existence of dangerous nuclear power stations,
- the long-lasting neglect of touristic facilities and tourism management,
- the long-lasting neglect of the service sector in general resulting in a sparse network of service facilities (shops, restaurants) and in a personnel not adequately educated,
- the merely spot-like restauration of historical buildings and places resembling more the face-lifting of dead bodies than revitalizations in the full sense of the word.

In comparison with the most intensive tourist regions of Europe the Slovakian touristic potential has been used intensively mainly in the High Tatra Mountains [Vysoké Tatry] and in some spas. But social tourism was by far prevailing (Atlas Slovenskej socialistickej republiky 1980).

The High Tatra Mountains represent really a densely developed tourist region with two seasons, three assets for the development of a future commercial tourism being

- the old hotels and villas from the beginnings of the century, attractively scattered at the bottom of a high mountain range in a wooded area,
- the favourable opening up of the resorts by a network of small railways and
- the neighbourhood of interesting old towns.

The spas, on the other hand, were intensively used for social and health tourism, but in a manner, that would hardly attract a bigger number of Westerners. Situated frequently in a lovely scenery the accomodation and cure facilities are communicating a hospital-like atmosphere. Without some entertainment, shopping and sports facilities in the surroundings they are not attractive for paying guests.

Cultural attractions like the historic cores of big cities, historic towns in the countryside, castles or vine-dresser's villages and towns like the chain of small vine-towns at the bottom of the Little Carpathians northeast of Bratislava were not paid the attention deserved by tourists up to now.

#### **4.4 Some major possibilities of touristic development in Slovakia**

So, which segments of the Central European tourist market could Slovakia attract in the nearer future? In the author's opinion for three segments Slovakia provides the best preconditions: for rambling and walking in a mountainous or hilly scenery, for urban tourism and for a tourism evaluating the cultural heritage.

As regards rambling and walking tourism other mountainous and hilly regions in Central Europe as the Alps, the Hercynian massif in Germany or the mountains of the Bohemian fringe are strong competitors being easier accessible from the main sources of Central European tourism. It might be however, that at least some of these regions will loose their overwhelming attractiveness, because of environmental damages caused by winter sports visible in the summer season, because of a lack of originality as a result of the long-lasting intensive tourism, a.s.o. Together with the attraction of the new these pushfactors could make some people deviate from traditional paths and look for an alternative. Rambling and walking is usually performed during a longer period of stay, in the course of main holidays, albeit ramblers and walkers are not big spenders. Necessary is a network of footpaths, well marked by signposts and well documented in

maps, a network of guest-houses and shelters as well as privately rented rooms. Slovakia has a good tradition of rambling and mountaineering. A problem might be the accomodation.

As regards urban tourism, one of the fast growing, most profitable and less seasonal, but not one of the stable branches of the tourist industry, in which in Central Europe mainly Italians, Americans, Japanese and Scandinavians are participating, Bratislava has a fair chance, e.g. to be integrated into round-trips including Vienna [Wien], Budapest and Prague [Praha]. A close cooperation with Vienna holding rank four among the destinations of urban tourism in Europe certainly would be an advantage. But not only Bratislava, also other Slovakian cities like Banská Bystrica or Košice have the potential to receive a stronger flow of urban tourism, although there is much international competition in this field. Urban tourism must not be confined to the cities themselves, but could involve also larger parts of the surroundings as, e.g., the slopes of the Little Carpathians [Malé Karpaty] in the case of Bratislava.

As the multiplier effect especially of urban tourism depends very much on specialized services offered, its preconditions are in any case not only a systematical renovation and revitalization of the historical urban cores as well as fast and comfortable traffic connections making it easy to reach the city by air, railway or coach, but also an updating of shops and services in the city as well as opportunities to make excursions to interesting places in the surroundings (not excluding the typical industrial and housing structures of the communist era).

The third, very specific chance for Slovakia is an evaluation of its cultural heritage. Slovaks have a rich tradition of rural folklore which might not have been buried everywhere. But the evaluation of the cultural heritage should not be confined to Slovakian folklore. A special asset of Slovakia with a strong appeal to German and Austrian cultural tourists could be the witnesses of a former German settlement like the towns of the Spiš, the mining towns of the Slovak Ore Mountains [Slovenské rudohorie] and the towns at the bottom of the Little Carpathians. Being fully aware of the psychologic difficulties to hint on the German past of these places in booklets, museums and on the spot, to restore German inscriptions etc. the author is sure that such an attitude would not only create a unique attractiveness of Slovakia for German and Austrian tourists, it would be considered also as an expression of mutual appreciation and understanding. In a similar way witnesses of Hungarian influence and culture in Slovakia could act both as incentives for Hungarian tourists and cultural links.

Offering rambling and walking tourism combined with cultural and ethnic attractions forms quite an attractive mix, which could be extended to more specialized sports activities (rock climbing, hunting, fishing, white-water rafting, horse-riding and cures) according to the locality.

As regards the social and ownership structure in Slovakian tourism a strong influx of foreign capital and multinational firms must be expected. Foreign investment promises an early take-off and quick succes. The question is, whether a tourist industry dominated by foreign owners will integrate itself properly into the local economy reinvesting into activities on the spot, making use of the products and the labour force of the region. Examples from Western and Southern Europe show, that such an integration happens only rarely.

On the other hand a structure of small enterprises based on domestic capital, local and regional resources in combination with many private room-renters among the rural population like in Austria and Scandinavia has proved to have good effects in the long run, both in economic terms and in terms of social and regional development. It is questionable, however, whether after a long period of industrialization the rural population of Slovakia is still interesed and suited to engage itself in private room-renting and other touristic activities. Up to now touristic activities in Slovakia are very much concentrated in certain places involving not many villages and towns outside the centres.



Finally: There seems to be a dichotomy between mass tourism and quality tourism and it is said that a tourist region has to choose between these alternatives. The author's opinion is that tourist regions should preferably have a mixed structure consisting of a leading centre with higher attractiveness, higher quality, bigger enterprises and a less pretentious fringe based on family pensions, private accommodation and camping sites. The leading centre sets the trends and forms the image of the region. The peripheral resorts are benefiting from its overspill, which should not prevent them from advertising their own attractions, from developing their own specific clientele.

Quality tourism has in general certainly the stronger economic and employment effects. For a country, however, which is not in a comfortable economic position and forced to import many of the higher quality consumer goods, too early a development of quality tourism might even be uneconomic as a high share of the revenues from tourism would be lost by paying the imported goods required. To avoid such an import pressure it seems wiser to raise the quality of tourism only to the extent to which the required goods and services can be provided by the own economy and by the own labour force.

## LITERATURE

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## MOŽNOSTI SLOVENSKA V STREDOEURÓPSKOM CESTOVNOM RUCHU - SÚČASNÝ STAV A VÝHLADY

V článku sa v zásade diskutuje o kapacite cestovného ruchu, ktorý podporuje ekonomický rozvoj a sociálny blahobyť, skúma postavenie Slovenska v štruktúre historického a súčasného pohybu turistov v strednej Európe a konfrontuje prírodný a kultúrny potenciál cestovného ruchu Slovenska so súčasnými požiadavkami a trendami na trhu cestovného ruchu. Výsledkom je definícia niektorých hlavných možností rozvoja cestovného ruchu na Slovensku v podmienkach otvorených hraníc a voľného trhu.

Cestovný ruch môže slúžiť ako motor ekonomickej a sociálnej transformácie, lebo vytvára ekonomické aktivity a pracovné miesta bez veľkých kapitálových investícií, umožňuje účasť nielen veľkým podnikom a verejným orgánom, sľubuje zisky v relatívne krátkom čase aj pre iné sféry hospodárstva a pôsobí ako katalyzátor sociálnych zmien. Cestovný ruch ďalej priaznivo podporuje politiku regionálneho rozvoja, a to najmä v regiónoch s extenzívnym poľnohospodárstvom. Na druhej strane najmä monoštruktúry cestovného ruchu a prílišná závislosť od cudzích investícií obsahujú nebezpečenstvo, ktoré nemožno podceňovať.

Až do povojnového obdobia Slovensko nezaujímalo prominentnejšiu pozíciu v stredoeurópskom cestovnom ruchu: pred I. svetovou vojnou jeho letoviská a kúpele navštevovali predovšetkým maďarské horné triedy a v medzivojnovom období ich vystriedali Česi. V obrovskom štarte socialistického vnútroblokového cestovného ruchu počas 60. a 70. rokov Slovensko na ňom participovalo väčšinou tým istým spôsobom, ako České krajiny. Ekonomický efekt socialistického cestovného ruchu bol však slabý. Po politických zmenách v roku 1989 a zavedení trhovo orientovanej ekonomiky sú susedia zo západnej a strednej Európy najsľubnejším zdrojom slovenského cestovného ruchu. V prvom rade je to veľký nemecký trh, ale tiež trh taliansky a rakúsky. Slovensko môže profitovať na všeobecnom trende delenia dovolenky na krátke kultúrne cesty a návštevy miest a na klesajúcich obavách z jazykových bariér. Treba tiež počítať s úsilím regiónov cestovného ruchu koncentrovať sa na určité oblasti trhu a budovať ich výnimočnosť.

S ohľadom na aktíva (rozsiahle horské oblasti s hustou lesnou pokrývkou, Vysoké Tatry, množstvo starých miest a iných lokalít s historickým významom, niekdajšia i terajšia etnická zmes, kúpele), ako aj na nevýhody (zdeformovaná sociálna štruktúra v dôsledku preindustrializovanosti a preurbanizovanosti, negatívny environmentálny charakter, zaostalosť službovej sféry) Slovenska ako cieľa turistických ciest, možno spomenúť tri možnosti rozvoja cestovného ruchu:

1. Stať sa alternatívou pre prehustené horské regióny strednej Európy pre pešie túry.
2. Začleniť sa do okruhu urbánneho cestovného ruchu.
3. Zhodnotiť kultúrne dedičstvo Slovenska, avšak nielen slovenského národa, ale tiež napr. svedectvo niekdajších nemeckých sídel, ktoré majú vysokú atraktivitu pre nemeckých a rakúskych účastníkov kultúrneho cestovného ruchu.

Obr. 1. Pohyb turistov v strednej Európe v r. 1910.

Obr. 2. Pohyb turistov v strednej Európe v r. 1937.

Obr. 3. Pohyb turistov v strednej Európe v r. 1960.

Obr. 4. Pohyb turistov v strednej Európe v r. 1987.

Obr. 5. Podiel účastníkov cestovného ruchu z krajín západnej Európy na aktívnom zahraničnom cestovnom ruchu v r. 1989/90.

Obr. 6. Počet zahraničných turistov.

Obr. 7. Príjmy zo zahraničného cestovného ruchu.

Preložil J. D r d o š