

THE POTENTIAL OF TOURISM IN THE PREŠOV COUNTY REGIONS

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Abstract: Slovakia has suitable natural and cultural-historical conditions for tourism that could help the economic situation to improve here. The article is concerned with the potential of tourism in the Prešov County regions. The potential is evaluated in the medium-term and long-term horizons for particular activities of tourism, but also for each region of tourism in Prešov Region. The second part of the report is concerned with the evaluation of basic indicators of accommodation facilities, which are the part of the material and technical basis of tourism and a precondition for implementation of tourism.

Key words: potential of tourism(t), activity of t, form of t, type of t, regionalization

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become an inseparable part of the inhabitants' lifestyle and standard of living. It fulfills a priority function in providing for the recuperation of human physical and spiritual powers by means of recreational and other social activities performed in people's free time.

The recreational-health function, representing one of the significant forms of useful free time utilization, is important and even principal for participants in tourism. Its position increases in proportion to the inhabitants' participation in tourism on the one hand, and to the worsening quality of the environment on the other hand. Besides this function, tourism is also characterized by a cultural-cognitive function and, with the development of science and technology, also a scientific-information function. (Mariot, 1983).

Nowadays, tourism at international level is evaluated as a significant economic branch with a powerful influence on the economy of the state and its individual regions. Its economic function has been highlighted as an activating factor of the economy and developing factor for the regions. According to the possibilities and preconditions of our country for tourism, in several regions it could be this very branch that could help the economic situation to improve.

The area of Prešov Self-governing Region, which in terms of the country's potential (represented mainly by circumstances of natural and cultural-administrative localization), has very good preconditions for tourism development, could become one of these regions in the future.

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MOST PRODUCTIVE FORMS OF TOURISM

According to the “Concept of Tourism Development in Slovakia” document approved by the resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 923 from 23rd November, 2005, and the National Programme of Tourism Development in the Slovak Republic, the development of tourism provision must be carried out at two levels – central and regional. The objective of the centre is to support those forms of tourism and its products which are preferred in terms of the country’s foreign visit rate. However, in the first place the product of tourism has regional character. The objective of the regions will be to develop those products for the supply and sale of which they have the best conditions.

The most productive forms of tourism for which Slovakia together with Prešov Region has the best preconditions and which need to be supported, developed and improved in preference in the course of the nearest years, are (Uznesenie vlády, 2005a):

- town and cultural tourism
- spa and health tourism
- winter tourism and winter sports
- summer tourism and waterside stays
- rural tourism and agrotourism

Their capacity means they are significant for our tourism as a whole and for its economic gains in the first place in terms of their size and proportion. Nevertheless, they seem to be crucial in terms of foreign as well as domestic tourism, and their dominancy is even more marked in the case of the former.

Within these forms this will concern the availability of individual urban units and settlements (e.g. 18 historical town reserves) in their original form with their architecture, culture, history, customs, folklore, crafts, gastronomy (**town and cultural tourism**), which distinguish us from our surroundings and make Slovakia unique. Various cultural events, festivals, fairs and the presentation of world cultural and natural heritage in Slovakia will have special importance. A number of castles and stately homes, with their potential of utilization for tourism, can potentially be utilized after reconstruction and modernization as cultural and accommodation facilities. Since tourism in Slovakia still has markedly seasonal character, the opportunity for growth in weekend stays will lie in town and cultural tourism development, within which foreigners can get acquainted with the most attractive towns of Slovakia, during so-called “city – breaks” (Uznesenie vlády, 2005b).

Within the cultural heritage, three basic goals can in principle be distinguished:

- getting to know the monument stock, that is national cultural monuments (im-movable and movable) and monumental areas (monument reserves and monu-ment zones), i.e. secular architectural monuments (such as castles, stately homes, palaces, fortresses and forts, town halls, historical town and village centres with burghers’ houses and traditional folk architecture), or religious architectural monu-ments (e.g. churches, monasteries, calvaries, synagogues, cemeteries), archaeologi-cal sites, historical parks and gardens, monuments of science, manufacturing and technology (e.g. historical mining works, ironworks, textile mills),
- visiting of cultural amenities (e.g. museums, including open-air museums, galler-ies, libraries, archives),
- participating in cultural and religious events (e.g. festivals, exhibitions, theatre per-formances, concerts, folklore feasts, pilgrimages) (Uznesenie vlády, 2005b).

Natural richness in thermal springs and a number of healing spas (**spa and health tourism**) gives Slovakia, and thus also Prešov Region, a chance to attract clientele to our country who are looking for health, relaxation and rehabilitation individually for each target group. Besides traditional spa services, a new worldwide trend of fitness-wellness stays is a challenge for the preparation of new products for clients of all age categories. Spas need to be modernized as soon as possible, and intensively propagated abroad. In spa tourism, even the smallest investments can bring returns with maximum effectivity, i.e. with high profit.

For Prešov Region, **winter tourism and winter sports** are no less important forms for which our country has very good natural conditions. Ski resorts must guarantee enough snow for the accommodated clientele. Artificial snowing, in terms of sustaining the visit rate of winter resorts and prolonging the season, will therefore have increasing importance in respecting the environmental capacity, especially hydrological conditions and nature protection. It is necessary to focus mainly on the guests from those countries where the possibilities for skiing self-realization are not great and their inhabitants, albeit with exceptions, mostly do not belong in the category of demanding skiers either (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Russia, Ukraine, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria and Romania). It is necessary to prepare a comprehensive offer of capacities, services and sports facilities for these target groups to support regular and repeated visits.

In our geographical conditions, summer tourism and waterside stays have good conditions for their development. Interest in thermal swimming pools, new aquaparks, open water spreads, lakes, reservoirs and rivers is increasing in terms of both domestic and foreign clienteles. Mainly the facilities with year-round utilization can lead to a significant decrease in so far marked seasonality, a higher utilization of accommodation capacity, the extension of the summer season and stabilization of employees in new professions.

The development of rural tourism and within it of agrotourism brings with it the possibility of using the great potential of the Slovakian countryside to offer products to tourists.

Rural tourism can be defined as the use of free time in the countryside with various recreational activities, with the possibility of accommodation with families, in country houses or specialized commercial accommodation facilities built in these environs.

Besides the offer of accommodation capacities this will involve visiting a farmyard with preserved, typically rural architecture, various recreational activities connected with farm work, for example collecting the harvest or forest crops, and the study of folklore and local customs. The importance of rural tourism and agrotourism for the stabilization and economic security of the rural population which decides for such business, which may have a positive influence on a partial decrease of high unemployment in some regions of Slovakia, is not inconsiderable.

The benefit of rural tourism development can be defined from several points of view:

- it enables the character of the rural environment to be utilized and appreciated, namely at relatively low financial demand,
- it creates new job opportunities for businesspeople and their families, and potentially for the employees of a cooperative in taking care of visitors,
- it stabilizes the inhabitants in the rural environment, and eliminates the uselessly high everyday job mobility to bigger habitations and towns,

- it creates conditions to preserve the traditional and typical settlement of the countryside according to local customs, to preserve the typical environment, land-forming and ecological functions of villages and the region,
- it enables, after modification, the existing material basis owned by private persons, villages and agricultural cooperatives to be used, which would otherwise not be utilized,
- it enables the conversion of people's own products into cash for catering and care of visitors,
- it supports village renewal and development in terms of gaining financial resources from the income from tourism services,
- it creates an interesting possibility of preparation of meals from freshly-grown agricultural products for visitors,
- it has a positive influence on the regional development, also on the balance of payments and tourism development in Slovakia (Uznesenie vlády, 2005a).

The compiled Regionalization of Tourism in the Slovak Republic is a significant document which divides the area of the Slovak Republic into individual regions on the basis of the tourism potential determination in the medium-term horizon, and the unemployment rate.

It will not be possible to develop all the potential of the regions at the same time, and all the regions cannot be, in terms of tourism, developed at the same rate either. It is therefore important to determine priorities. Prioritization will concern the medium-term horizon and, in the more distant future, it will be able to change depending on its development. The support of tourism development in the individual regions should be connected with those activities which show the highest potential in the given region, are in accordance with nature protection goals and the environmental capacity, and there is a real possibility of sufficient demand on the part of visitors.

THE POTENTIAL OF TOURISM IN THE REGIONS OF PREŠOV REGION

The system of preconditions for tourism has been used to evaluate regions in terms of the potential for tourism for a longer time. According to Mariot (1983), this system is divided into three groups of preconditions:

- localization,
- selection,
- implementation;
- localization conditions - natural and cultural-historical conditions for the given tourism localization, whereby their improvement enables the country potential for tourism to be expressed, as well as the capability of the area to provide conditions for tourism expansion – its potential character;
- selection conditions - this basically indicates the competence of the inhabitants to participate in tourism (settlement, demographic, sociological, political factors) – its potential character;
- implementation conditions –enabling tourism to be carried out; they indicate the real state in the country (communication conditions, the material and technical basis for tourism);

For the needs of this work, the groups of localization and realization conditions are essential in the first place. The localization conditions of tourism are further divided into natural (relief, climate, water, flora and fauna, protected territories), and cultural-administrative (cultural-historical monuments, central institutions and organized events).

Subsequent to the National Programme of Tourism Development in the Slovak Republic, implemented in the years 2002-2003, a new form of the Regionalization of Tourism in the Slovak Republic was compiled as an indicative and supporting document which reclassified the territory of Slovakia into 21 areas in terms of their tourism potential, in each of which it also suggested the most productive forms and types of tourism.

At the national level, this Regionalization of Tourism can be used as a supporting document for the regional policy in tourism, to evaluate the influence of the economic policy arrangements and public investments, as well as arrangements and tools within the tourism policy. It enables those involved to appraise, evaluate and prognosticate the influences and effects of decisions on individual regions, and on this basis to determine the goals of such decisions while knowing their impacts. From among the current objectives, the approaches in focusing and goals of supporting programmes can be mentioned.

This regionalization and the individual regions potential evaluation enable various approaches and their exposure in the area to be considered and evaluated. If the mentioned tools prefer achieving increases in economic gains and the highest evaluation of sources, their regional impact will be different from in the case when tourism development is used as a tool for balancing the economic level of individual areas of Slovakia. The evaluation of such variants or approaches is enabled by regionalization with the appraisal of the individual regions' potential, also in combination with other data, e.g. the unemployment rate. The regionalization of tourism in the Slovak Republic can also be a basis for determining priorities and development strategies at the local territorial and regional level, with the possibility of evaluating the external competitive environment.

In the Regionalization of Tourism in Slovakia study, the whole territory of the state was divided into regions according to the suitability for tourism. The regions' importance was evaluated on the basis of several criteria. In the first place, it was the value of potential expressed in a numerical form. However, since a summarized numerical formulation cannot express the real importance of the potential without remainder, this criterion was important, but not the only one. The more objective classification into categories was therefore also affected by other factors (P. Weiss et al, 2005):

- number, size and importance of subregions in the area
- intensity of tourism and achieved results (proportion of stays, long-term and short-term tourism)
- position of tourism in the economy of a region, its prosperity
- visit rate structure
- competitiveness on domestic and foreign markets
- degree of attractiveness – aesthetical level of the country, atmosphere, image

On the basis of the above mentioned, the categorization of regions into four groups according to a territory's potential for tourism was compiled (P. Weiss et al, 2005):

- 1st category – regions of international importance
- 2nd category – regions of national importance
- 3rd category – regions of supraregional importance
- 4th category – regions of prevailing importance at local level

Regarding the fact that the existing state in created conditions for tourism leaves space for possibilities of significant changes, especially in the long-term horizon, there were also formed two time horizons of evaluation – medium-term and long-term (P. Weiss et al, 2005).

Based upon this evaluation, Prešov County was divided into four regions, namely the Tatra Region, the Šariš Region, the Upper Zemplín Region and the Spiš Region, the latter being represented in the area of the county only by the towns of Levoča and Spišské Podhradie with their immediate environs.

In each of the mentioned regions, the specific forms and activities of tourism for which the region had the required conditions were defined. For each activity, particular evaluation criteria were determined. For most activities and facilities evaluation, four levels or degrees of a territory's suitability for practising individual tourism activities were established:

- basic degree of potential – suitability of a territory for a given activity can be registered, but it remains at low level and does not exceed regional importance – point value 1
- average degree of potential – suitability of a territory for a given activity is increased, it reaches average level, it is important from a regional point of view – point value 2
- good degree of potential – suitability of a territory for a given activity is important at national level – point value 3
- high degree of potential – suitability of a territory for a given activity is very important and comparable to significant localities abroad – point value 4 (Weiss et al, 2005).

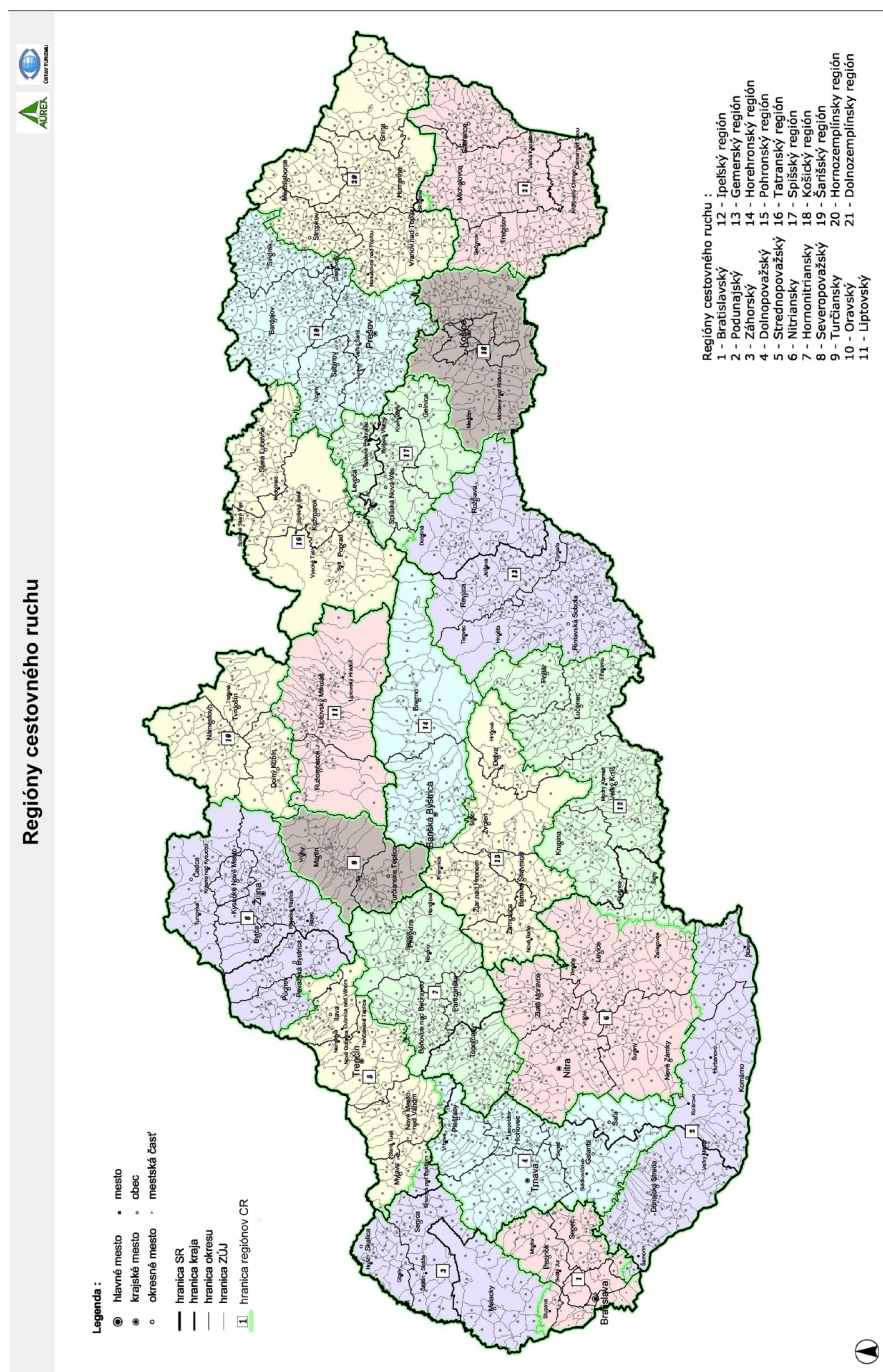
For the classification of activities into individual degrees, criteria were determined on the basis of which activities were evaluated and classified into one of the four degrees (basic, average, good, high). In some activities only the appearance of potential was evaluated, in others the two-level evaluation – basic and increased potential – was applied. Criteria for individual activities in the medium and long-term horizons can be found in the document *Regionalization of Tourism in the Slovak Republic*, published by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and compiled by the Institute of Tourism in 2005, whereby activities are divided into these groups:

- activities with prevailing relation to the natural environment
- activities bound to the created, anthropogenic environment
- availability of facilities for tourism.

The value of the potential of regions is expressed by a point value. Individual tourism activities were evaluated on the basis of the established criteria, and according to quantitative and qualitative characteristics classified into degrees (1-4). The long-term (natural) and medium-term potentials were evaluated, where the availability of facilities for a given activity, the visit rate, the range of services, etc. were taken into account.

Point values for each of the activities were thereafter modified by weighted values, which express the importance of individual activities within tourism in Slovakia. The achieved values were then adjusted for the influence of modifying factors which can emphasize or decrease the potential. Values from 1 to 10 were allotted to the weights.

Picture No.1: Regionalization of Tourism in the Slovak Republic



Source: Regionalization of Tourism in the Slovak Republic, Institute of Tourism, 2005

In the following tables we can see the potential of the County regions according to individual activities, and their point evaluation: (T – Tatra Region, S – Spiš Region, Š – Šariš Region, UZ – Upper Zemplín Region).

Tab.1: Point values of the potential for individual tourism activities according to regions of tourism in Prešov County

region	value of potential				weights				weighted value of potential				resultant value of potential			
	T	S	Š	UZ	T	S	Š	UZ	T	S	Š	UZ	T	S	Š	UZ
activity																
long-term potential																
stay/recreation by water	1	1	1	3	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	30	9	6	8	25
water sports	2	2		3	3	3	3	3	6	6		9	7	2		4
water tourism/watermanship	2	1			3	3	3	3	6	3			11	5		
stay/recreation by thermal/mineral water	4		4		7	7	7	7	28		28		32		32	
stay in forest/mountain environment	4	4	3	3	5	5	5	5	20	20	15	15	21	17	16	12
hiking	4	4	3	3	10	10	10	10	40	40	30	30	39	36	29	26
cy cloutourism	4	3	3	2	6	6	6	6	24	18	18	18	22	13	16	14
paragliding	1				1	1	1	1	1				3			
downhill skiing	4	3	3	1	9	9	9	9	36	27	27	9	36	26	26	6
cross-country skiing	4	3	2	1	4	4	4	4	16	12	4	8	18	9	8	1
climbing	2	1			1	1	1	1	2	1			4	2		
visiting caves and speleology	2	2			1	1	1	1	2	2			6	5		
stay in the countryside/country tourism	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	9	9	6	6	10	7	8	4
hunting	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	3	5	1
fishing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	-2
getting to know cultural-historical monuments	4	4	4	2	10	10	10	10	40	40	20	40	46	43	46	21
overall evaluation of potential									242	190	184	143	269	174	195	112
medium-term potential																
stay/recreation by water	1	2		3	10	10	10	10	10	20		30	7	12		23
stay/recreation by thermal water	3				7	7	7	7	21				22			
water sports				2	3	3	3	3				6				0
hiking	4	4	3	1	10	10	10	10	40	40	30	10	38	32	26	4
downhill skiing/snowboarding	4	3	2	1	9	9	9	9	36	27	18	9	35	25	15	5
cross-country skiing	4	1	1		3	3	3	3	12	3	3		14	-1	2	
cy cloutourism	4	3	1	1	6	6	6	6	24	18	6	6	22	12	2	0
stay/recreation in spa	4		4		7	7	7	7	28		28		31		30	
visiting caves and speleology	2	2			1	1	1	1	2	2			5	5		
getting to know cultural-historical monuments	4	4	4	2	10	10	10	10	40	40	40	20	45	42	44	19
visiting museums and galleries	3	2	3	3	6	6	6	6	18	12	18	18	21	13	22	20
getting to know local traditions	2	1	1	1	4	4	4	4	8	4	4	4	12	4	6	4
visiting events	2	2	2	2	5	5	5	5	10	10	10	10	13	9	11	10
attendance/visiting trade fairs/exhibitions					4	4	4	4								
attendance at congresses and conferences	3		1		4	4	4	4	12		4		15		6	
business tourism	2	2	2	1	4	4	4	4	8	8	8	4	12	10	11	5
other sports activities	2	1	2	1	5	5	5	5	10	5	10	5	10	-1	7	-1
overall evaluation of potential									279	189	179	122	302	162	182	89
potential of equipment																
temporary accommodation	4	2	2	2	10	10	10	10	40	20	20	20	42	18	20	18
tourist information offices	2	1	1		4	4	4	4	8	4	4		9	5	5	x
overall evaluation of potential									48	24	24	20	51	23	25	18

Source: modified according to the Regionalization of Tourism in the Slovak Republic study, Institute of Tourism, 2005

Tab.2: Potential of Presov County regions according to individual activities

activity	potention	medium-term horizont	long-term horizont
stay - recreation by water	good	UZ	UZ
	average		
	basic	T	T, Š
stay/recreation by thermal/mineral water	excelent		T, Š
	good	T	
water sports	good		UZ
	average	UZ	T
water tourism/watermanship	good		T
stay/recreation in spa	excelent	T, Š	
stay in forest/mountain environment	excelent		T
	good		Š, UZ, S
stay in the countryside/country tourism	good		T, S
	average		UZ, Š
hiking	excelent	T	T
	good	Š	UZ, S
	basic	UZ	
cyclotourism	excelent	T	T
	good	S	S, Š
	average		UZ
	basic	Š, UZ	
climbing	good		T
paragliding			T
visiting caves and speleology	good	T	T, S
downhill skiing/snowboarding	excelent	T	T
	good		S, Š
	average	Š	
	basic	UZ	UZ
cross-country skiing	excelent		T
	good		S
	average		Š
	basic		UZ
cross-country skiing	excelent	T	
	basic	S, Š	
getting to know cultural-historical monuments	excelent	S, Š, T	S, Š, T
	average	UZ	UZ
visiting museums and galleries	good	T, Š, UZ	
	average	S	
getting to know local traditions	good	T	
	basic	S, Š, UZ	
other sports activities	average	T, Š	
	basic	S, UZ	
visiting events (sport, culture...)	average	T, S, Š, UZ	
attendance/visiting trade fairs/exhibitions			
attendance at congresses and conferences	good	T	
	basic	Š	
business tourism	average	T, S, Š	
	basic	UZ	

Source: modified according to the Regionalization of Tourism in the Slovak Republic study, Institute of Tourism, 2005

The following survey shows brief characteristics of individual regions in terms of their contemporary state, development possibilities and some needs. The surveys are supplemented by the most significant tourism localities of the individual regions. This information is not a complete calculation, but presents the main elements that form the character of a region as a tourist target.

TATRA REGION

The Tatra Region, on the basis of the evaluation in the regionalization of tourism in the medium-term as well as long-term horizons, is of international importance, and is the most important of all the regions of tourism in Prešov County. It is defined by the Poprad, Kežmarok and Stará Ľubovňa Districts. In the medium-term horizon, the High Tatras should be connected with the Tatras of Poland, Pieniny (with another connection to Poland) and Vyšné Ružbachy Spa. In the long-term horizon, the adding of Zamagurie and the valley of the River Poprad is prospective. The Tatra Region basically has the potential to create centres of tourism with their environs, specifically Kežmarok, Červený Kláštor, Spišská Stará Ves, Vyšné Ružbachy and Stará Ľubovňa. A relatively broad region of tourism, offering a wide range of attractions, would be created in this way.

Main types of tourism:

- intensive domestic and foreign tourism
- long-term stay tourism
- short-term stay tourism
- one day visit rate

Forms of tourism

- summer stays in mountains
- winter stays in mountains – various forms of ski sports
- incentive tourism – congresses and conferences
- spa tourism with healing function
- cognitive tourism
- rural tourism

Activities with the highest long-term potential

- stays in forest or mountain environments
- hiking
- downhill skiing
- cross-country skiing
- getting to know the cultural heritage
- thermal water recreation stays

Significant localities

- urban type - Poprad, Kežmarok, Stará Ľubovňa
- localities with cultural heritage - Kežmarok, Poprad, Červený Kláštor, Spišská Belá – Strážky, Veľká Lomnica, Osturňa, Batizovce, Švábovce, Betlanovce, Ždiar, Podolíne, Stará Ľubovňa, Hniezdne
- spa localities – High Tatras climatic spa, Vyšné Ružbachy
- thermal swimming pools - Vrbov, Vyšné Ružbachy, Poprad, potentially Stará Ľubovňa, Nová Ľubovňa
- recreational areas – the West Tatras, the High Tatras, Spišská Magura, Pieniny, the

Ľubovňa Hills, the Kozie Chrbty range, the Levoča Hills

- tourism units - Podbanské, Tatranská Štrba, Štrbské Pleso (Štrba Tarn) including cross-country tracks, Smokovce, Tatranská Lomnica, Stará Lesná, alpine huts, Javorina, Ždiar (Strednica and Bachledova Valley), Jezersko, Červený Kláštor, Novolubovnianske Spa, Lopusná Valley, Vernár, Liptovská Teplička

Localities within the region suitable for individual forms of tourism, on the basis of their level of potential:

- town and culture tourism
 - basic potential - Podolíneč
 - average potential – Poprad – Spišská Sobota, Osturňa, Stará Ľubovňa, Jezersko
 - good potential – Kežmarok, Ždiar
 - excellent potential – the towns of Vysoké Tatry and Poprad
- spa and health tourism
 - basic potential – Gánovce, Stará Lesná, Veľký Slavkov, Plavnica, Nová Ľubovňa, Hromoš, Hniezdne
 - average potential – Malý Sulín, Červený Kláštor, Šarišský Štiavnik
 - good potential – Vrbov, Poprad
 - excellent potential – Vyšné Ružbachy (Nižné Ružbachy, Ružbašská Míľava)
- winter tourism and winter sports
 - average potential – Vyšné Ružbachy, Nová Ľubovňa, Litmanová
 - good potential – villages in Zamagurie (Jezersko)
 - excellent potential – the towns of Vysoké Tatry, Poprad, Ždiar
- summer tourism and waterside stays
 - basic potential – Veľký and Malý Sulín, Spišská Belá, Spišská Stará Ves
 - average potential – the area of Ľubovňa Uplands
 - good potential – villages in Zamagurie, the area of Pieniny (rafting on the River Dunajec, Červený Kláštor)
 - excellent potential – the towns of Vysoké Tatry, Poprad, Ždiar
- rural tourism and agrotourism
 - average potential – Liptovská Teplička
 - good potential – the area of Pieniny (Červený Kláštor), the area of Ľubovňa Uplands

SPIŠ REGION

The Spiš Region, on the basis of the evaluation in the regionalization of tourism in the medium-term horizon is of supraregional, and in the long-term horizon even of international importance. In the territory of the County, it is formed by the Levoča District. However, it is necessary to point out that only a small part of this region is situated in Prešov County, and the only touristically interesting area is between Levoča and Spišské Podhradie, although the area of Levoča Hills, closed until recently, could become attractive over time.

Main types of tourism

- intensive domestic and foreign tourism
- short-term stay tourism
- one day visit rate

- temporary visit rate

Forms of tourism

- summer stays in forest – mountain environments
- cognitive tourism
- rural tourism

Activities with the highest long-term potential

- getting to know the cultural heritage
- stays in forest – mountain environments
- hiking
- cyclotourism
- stays in the countryside

Significant localities

- urban type – Levoča
- localities with cultural heritage – UNESCO monuments (Spišské Podhradie, Spišská Kapitula), Levoča, Bijacovce, Dravce
- recreational areas – the Levoča Hills, Branisko, Spiš – Gemer Karst

Localities within the region suitable for individual forms of tourism, on the basis of their level of potential:

- town and culture tourism
 - excellent potential – Levoča, Spišské Podhradie
- spa and health tourism
 - basic potential – Baldovce
- winter tourism and winter sports
 - basic potential – Dravce, stredisko Závada,
- summer tourism and waterside stays
 - basic potential – Dravce,
- rural tourism and agrotourism
 - basic potential – oblasť Levočských vrchov (Vyšné a Nižné Repaše, Torysky, Oľšavica)

This is a region where the potential is relatively slightly utilized, and the infrastructure and supply of services are only slightly developed.

ŠARIŠ REGION

The Šariš Region, on the basis of the evaluation in the regionalization of tourism in the medium-term as well as long-term horizons, is of national importance. In the territory of the County it is formed by the Bardejov, Prešov, Sabinov and Svidník Districts. In the medium-term horizon, certain subregions should be developed in the region, specifically the city of Prešov and its surroundings (e.g. Zlatá Baňa, Sigord, opal mines at Dubník), Bardejov together with Bardejov Spa (open-air museum with UNESCO monuments of international importance), winter ski resort Drienica-Lysá, the surroundings of Svidník towards Dukla together with the complex of wooden churches. A more compact region of tourism, offering a wide range of attractivities, would be created in this way.

Main types of tourism:

- strong domestic tourism
- significant proportion of foreign tourism

- long-term stay tourism
- short-term stay tourism
- intensive one day visit rate

Forms of tourism

- spa tourism with a healing function
- cognitive tourism
- summer stays in forest – mountain environments
- winter stays, ski stays
- shopping tourism

Activities with the highest long-term potential

- getting to know the cultural heritage
- spa stays
- stays in forest – mountain environments with hiking
- winter stays in mountains – skiing

Significant localities

- urban type – Prešov, Bardejov
- localities with cultural heritage – Bardejov (UNESCO monuments, open-air museum), the complex of wooden churches of the Eastern Christian rite, Dukla, Sabinov, Prešov, Kapušany Castles, Veľký Šariš, opal mines at Dubník
- spa localities – Bardejov
- recreational areas – the Lower Beskyds, the Ondava Uplands, the Šariš Uplands, the Slánske Mountains, the Čergov range
- tourism units – Lipovec – Šindliar, Dubovica – Žliabky, Renčišov – Búče, Drienica – Lysá, Regetovka, Sigord, Šarbov, Solivar

Localities within the region suitable for individual forms of tourism, on the basis of their level of potential:

- town and culture tourism
 - average potential – Svidník a okolie, dubnícke opáľové bane
 - good potential – Bardejov
 - excellent potential – Prešov
- spa and health tourism
 - basic potential – Lipovce, Cigeľka, Šarišský Štiavnik
 - excellent potential – Bardejovské kúpele,
- winter tourism and winter sports
 - basic potential – Zlatá Baňa, Makovica – Nižná Polianka, Šarbov
 - average potential – Dubovica – Žliabky, Renčišov – Búče,
 - good potential – Drienica – Lysá, Bardejov, Regetovka – Stebnícka Huta,
- summer tourism and waterside stays
 - basic potential – oblasť Čergova, Zlatá Baňa
 - average potential – oblasť Slanských vrchov, oblasť Búsova
- rural tourism and agrotourism
 - basic potential – Lačnov, Olejníkov, Šindliar, Lipovce, oblasť Čergova (Stebnícka Huta, Regetovka, Nižná Polianka, Kríže, Cigeľka, Hertník, Osikov, Raslavice, Zlaté)
 - average potential – Renčišov, Lužany pri Topli, okolie Svidníka
 - good potential – oblasť Slanských vrchov

Nowadays this is a region with relatively slight, although above-average utilization of capacities, mainly due to Bardejov Spa. The area of the town of Lipany appears potentially to be a highly suitable territory where tourism should be developed on the basis of thermal ground water from a newly discovered borehole. With its capacity and other characteristics, this predestines the locality for intensive utilization in tourism. The remaining part of the region is beginning to use its potential for tourism only gradually. Historical monuments of international importance are slightly utilized in the region's tourism.

UPPER ZEMPLÍN REGION

The Upper Zemplín Region, on the basis of the evaluation in the regionalization of tourism in the medium-term horizon is of regional, and in the long-term horizon of supraregional importance. In the territory of the County, it is formed by Stropkov, Medzilaborce, Snina, Humenné and Vranov nad Topľou Districts. In the medium-term horizon, certain subregions should be developed in the region, in particular the recreational area of Domaša Reservoir (national importance), the area of Snina Fishpools and the adjacent parts of the Vihorlat range, and the area of the prepared theme park Bird Valley (Vtáčie údolie) near Humenné.

Main types of tourism

- strong domestic tourism
- significant proportion of foreign tourism
- long-term stay tourism only during the summer season
- short-term stay tourism
- intensive one day visit rate

Forms of tourism

- summer waterside stays
- cognitive tourism
- summer stays in forest – mountain environments
- theme park visits
- shopping tourism
- Activities with the highest long-term potential
- water sports
- stays in forest – mountain environments with hiking
- cognitive stays, or tours
- cognitive tourism
- Significant localities
- urban type – Humenné, Medzilaborce (the Warhol Family Museum)
- localities with cultural heritage – Hanušovce nad Topľou, wooden churches
- recreational areas – the Lower Beskyds, the Bukovské Hills, the Poloniny National Park, the Vihorlat range, Domaša Reservoir
- tourism units – Poľany, Holčíkovce, Kelča, Valkov, Dobrá, Danová, Snina Fishpools, Ptičie, Chlmec

Localities within the region suitable for individual forms of tourism, on the basis of their level of potential:

- town and culture tourism
 - basic potential - Humenné, Medzilaborce, Ulič, Nová Sedlica

- average potential – Svidník,
- spa and health tourism
 - basic potential – Vranov nad Topľou, okolie Humenného,
- winter tourism and winter sports
 - basic potential – Driečna, Petrovce, Zamutov, Borov, Parihuzovce, Chlmec
 - average potential – zimné stredisko Biele kamene pri Sninských rybníkoch (katastre Snina, Zemplínske Hámre, Kolonica, Stakčín), Danová - Vydraň
- summer tourism and waterside stays
 - basic potential – Nižný Hrušov, Kamienka, Kamenica nad Cirochou, Slovenská Volová, Brestov
 - average potential – oblasť Vihorlatu (Chlmec–Porúbka, Zemplínske Hámre) a Bukovských vrchov,
 - good potential – obce v okolí vodnej nádrže Domaša, Sninské rybníky,
- rural tourism and agrotourism
 - basic potential – okolie Medzilaboriec (Miková, Borov, Ol'ka) a Stropkova (Šandal, Havaj), Vranov nad Topľou (Zamutov, Banské, Juskova Voľa, Hermanovce), Nižná Sitnica, Kamienka, Kamenica nad Cirochou
 - average potential – oblasť Vihorlatu a Bukovských vrchov, Holčíkovce

Nowadays, this region is only minimally used for tourism. The capacities are limited in extent and are also very lightly utilized. Domaša Reservoir needs intensive modernization of its amenities. The intention of the theme park (the biggest one in Central Europe) near Humenné (Ptičie, Chlmec) may be an incentive for the region. Furthermore, it is possible to utilize the intactness of the forest stands and quiet localities. Regarding climatic conditions, it is possible in suitable terrains to operate smaller and medium-sized ski areas, which can be attractive after arranging contacts with Poland. In this region, although it is the most distant from the crucial markets, it is possible to develop tourism attracting visitors from other parts of Slovakia and adjacent foreign countries. It is so far not possible to estimate the importance of the theme park, but it has the potential to become crucial in the region.

IMPLEMENTATION PRECONDITIONS FOR TOURISM

The group of implementation preconditions which basically indicate what each territory's facilities for tourism are like, and are the means by which tourism in the territory is carried out, is a large and very important group of preconditions. Communication factors (the texture and structure of the communication network, traffic availability) and the material and technical basis of tourism (accommodation, catering and amusements, traffic facilities, services) belong in this group. Accommodation facilities, which can keep a customer in the territory, are definitely the focal point of the material and technical basis.

In Prešov County, out of 464 accommodation facilities, there were 178 hotels, motels and guest-houses, 49 boarding houses, 8 chalet settlements, 110 other collective accommodation facilities (camping-sites and others) and 119 accommodation facilities in private houses towards the end of 2006. The visitors had 9,677 rooms available with 25,773 beds (including supplementary ones). This capacity serving for tourism represented 20.6% of the overall accommodation capacity of the Slovak Republic. The Poprad District has

dominant position, and is followed at a considerable distance by the Kežmarok, Bardejov, Prešov and Stará Ľubovňa Districts. The other districts have relatively small capacities of accommodation facilities.

Map 1: Accommodation capacities in the Prešov County districts in 2006



Source: Tourism in Prešov Region, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2007

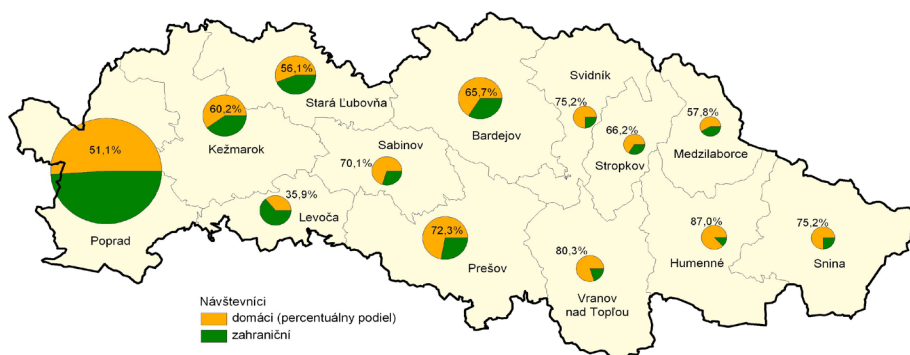
The visit rate is derived from the accommodation possibilities, the level of provided services and the individual regions' attractiveness. Prešov County, as the second biggest in Slovakia in terms of area, provided accommodation to 647 000 guests, which makes 18.1% of the overall number of users of accommodation facilities in the Slovak Republic.

According to the classification of visitors into domestic and foreign, the Slovaks participated in the visit rate of Prešov County accommodation facilities with 55.7% (361 000 visitors) and foreigners with 44.3%, which represents 286 000 visitors.

Thanks to the High Tatras Region, the most visitors came to the Poprad District, namely 64.4% out of the overall number of the County's visitors. This district is followed at a considerable distance by the Prešov District (7.7%), Bardejov District (7.1%) and Kežmarok District with a 6.9% proportion on the county visit rate.

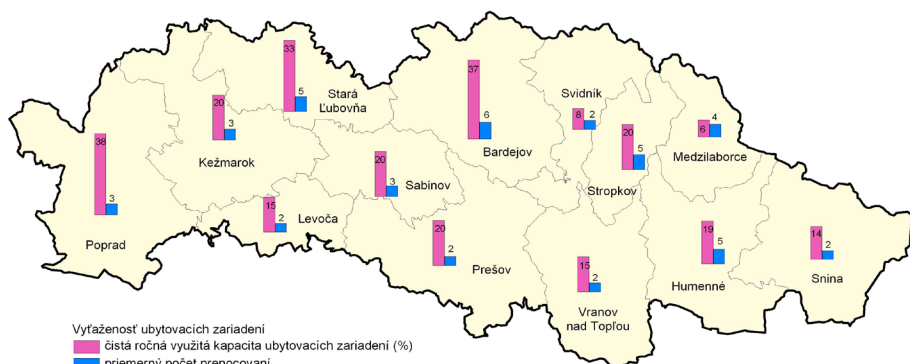
For spa tourism in Prešov County, the most visitors came to the Bardejov District (25 200), Poprad District (20 700) and Stará Ľubovňa District (14 700). The visitors stayed the longest in the Bardejov District, where the average length of stay was 9 days, which is connected with the particularities of healing spa stays, especially the procedure length.

Map 2: *Proportion of domestic and foreign visitors in the Prešov County districts in 2006*



Source: Tourism in Prešov County, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2007

Map 3: *Accommodation facilities utilization in the Prešov County districts in 2006*



Source: Tourism in Prešov County, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2007

The accommodation facilities utilization in tourism is problematic. Prešov County with its 31.2% value of the annual accommodation capacity utilization ranks above the average level for the Slovak Republic. However, this position is only guaranteed by the Poprad, Bardejov and Stará Ľubovňa Districts. The other districts rank deeply below the average for Prešov County, but also for Slovakia as a whole. The utilization of accommodation capacities itself indicates that it is not necessarily vital to further increase accommodation capacities. The main thing will be mainly to increase the quality of services in the already existing facilities together with the offer of new activities that are attractive to visitors. Another important aspect is seasonality. It is necessary to place emphasis particularly on the yearly visit rate. Seasonal centres will have to develop new activities to attract visitors also in those parts of the year when they are markedly more weakly utilized.

Another evaluation criterion of the tourism development level are sales from accommodation. In 2006, their volume in the County reached 1 150 800 000 Slovak

crowns, which represents 16.5% out of all-Slovakian sales. The proportion of the domestic visitors sales in the county represented 45.9%, which, at a nominal value, represents 528 700 000 Slovak crowns. Foreign visitors participated with 54.1%, which is 622 100 000 Slovak crowns. From the individual County districts, the Poprad District (809 200 000 Slovak crowns), Bardejov District (91 000 000 Slovak crowns) and Kežmarok District (72 700 000 Slovak crowns) reached the highest sales from accommodation.

The average price of accommodation in the County came to 508 Slovak crowns and was lower by 119 Slovak crowns than the all-Slovakian average. The highest average price of accommodation of 579 Slovak crowns was paid by visitors in the Poprad and Levoča Districts.

The composition of the County's visitors according to the country of permanent address points to the highest visit rate from the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, and of the non-European countries from South Korea, the USA and Canada. The longest stay in days on average was made by visitors from Belorussia, Liechtenstein and Turkey.

Tab.3: *Main characteristics of accommodation facilities in the Prešov County districts in 2006*

	number of accommodati on facilities	number of rooms	number of beds	number of visitors altogether	domestic	foreign	net capacity utilization	average number of overnight stays altogether
Bardejov	29	1014	2266	45620	29961	15659	36,8	6,1
Humenné	9	233	592	5891	5127	764	19,1	4,7
Kežmarok	76	945	2659	44932	27050	17882	20,1	3,1
Levoča	19	219	597	15100	5416	9684	14,7	2,1
Medzilaborce	4	88	243	1442	833	609	6,1	3,5
Poprad	221	4959	13182	416589	212852	203737	37,9	3,4
Prešov	26	739	2039	49927	36085	13842	20,3	2,2
Sabinov	11	212	707	12989	9105	3884	19,5	3,3
Snina	6	79	235	3755	2824	931	14	2,4
Stará Ľubovňa	35	789	1894	36693	20574	16119	33	5,1
Stropkov	9	136	483	1876	1242	634	20,2	4,7
Svidník	4	88	356	3442	2589	853	7,7	2,3
Vranov nad Topľou	15	176	520	8812	7074	1738	15,1	2,3
Prešov County	464	9677	25773	647068	360732	286336	31,2	3,5
Slovak Republic	2490	48173	124323	3583879	1972071	1611808	28,8	3,1

Source: Tourism in Prešov County, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2007

CONCLUSION

Tourism has become the strongest economic branch in the world and also belongs among the quickest growing branches. Tourism development is influenced by many factors, the most influential of which are income and standard of living, holiday leave and free time, the development of traffic and communication systems, increase in population and urbanization levels, and the state and development of the material and technical basis of tourism. Tourism development is to a considerable extent also influenced by the existence of recreational and cultural potential.

According to the documents Concept of Tourism Development in Slovakia and National Programme of Tourism Development in the Slovak Republic, the development of supply in tourism must be carried out at two levels – central and regional. The objective of the centre is to support those forms and products of tourism which are preferred in terms of the country's foreign visit rate support. However, the product of tourism has, in the first place, regional character. The objective of the regions will be to develop those products which they have the best conditions for supplying and selling.

The principal forms of tourism for which Slovakia together with Prešov County has the best preconditions and which, in the course of the coming years, need to be supported, developed and improved in preference, are (Uznesenie vlády, 2005a):

- urban and cultural tourism
- spa and health tourism
- winter tourism and winter sports
- summer tourism and waterside stays
- rural tourism and agrotourism

Subsequent to the National Programme of Tourism Development in the Slovak Republic, in the years 2002-2003, a new form of the Regionalization of Tourism in the Slovak Republic was compiled as an indicative and supporting document which reclassified the territory of Slovakia in terms of tourism potential into 21 areas, and which also suggests the most productive forms and types of tourism.

On the basis of the above-mentioned, the categorization of regions into four groups according to the territory's potential for tourism was compiled (P. Weiss et al, 2005):

1st category – regions of international importance

2nd category – regions of national importance

3rd category – regions of supraregional importance

4th category – regions of prevailing importance at regional level

Regarding the fact that the existing state in created conditions for tourism leaves space for possibilities of significant changes, especially in the long-term horizon, there were also formed two time horizons of evaluation – medium-term and long-term (P. Weiss et al, 2005).

Based upon this evaluation, Prešov County was divided into four regions, namely the Tatra Region, the Saris Region, the Upper Zemplin Region and Spis Region, although the latter is as yet, in the area of the County, represented only by the towns of Levoca and Spišské Podhradie with their immediate environs.

The Tatra Region, on the basis of the evaluation in the regionalization of tourism in the medium-term as well as long-term horizons, is of international importance, and is the most important from among all the regions of tourism in Prešov County. The Spiš Region, on the basis of this evaluation in the medium-term horizon is of supraregional, and in the long-term horizon even of international importance. However, it is necessary to recall that only a small part of this region is situated in Prešov County. The Šariš Region, on the basis of the evaluation in the regionalization of tourism in the medium-term as well as long-term horizons, is of national importance. The Upper Zemplín Region, on the basis of the above mentioned evaluation in the medium-term horizon is of regional, and in the long-term horizon of supraregional importance. All the four regions therefore have advantageous conditions in terms of the potential for tourism. The main factors which distinguish the

regions from each other are implementation preconditions for tourism represented by communication provisions and the presence of the necessary material and technical basis of tourism (especially the offered range and quality of services).

The Poprad District has the dominant position in the availability of accommodation facilities, followed at a considerable distance by the Kežmarok, Bardejov, Prešov and Stará Ľubovňa Districts. The other districts have relatively small capacities of accommodation facilities. The visit rate is derived from the accommodation possibilities, the standard of provided services and the individual regions' attractiveness. Prešov County, as the second biggest in Slovakia in terms of area, provided accommodation to 18.1% out of the overall number of visiting users of accommodation facilities in the Slovak Republic.

According to the classification of visitors into domestic and foreign, the Slovaks participated in the visit rate of Prešov County accommodation facilities with 55.7% (361 000 visitors) and foreigners with 44.3%, which represents 286 000 visitors.

Thanks to the High Tatras Region, the most visitors came to the Poprad District, namely 64.4% out of the overall number of the County's visitors. After this, at a considerable distance, followed the Prešov District (7.7%), Bardejov District (7.1%) and Kežmarok District with a 6.9% proportion of the County's visit rate.

For spa tourism in Prešov County, the most visitors came to the Bardejov District (25 200), Poprad District (20 700) and Stará Ľubovňa District (14 700). The visitors stayed the longest in the Bardejov District, where the average length of stay came to 9 days, which is connected with the particularities of healing spa stays (mainly the procedure length).

The utilization of accommodation facilities in tourism is problematic. Prešov County with its 31.2% value of the annual accommodation capacity utilization ranks above the average level of the Slovak Republic. However, this position is only guaranteed by the Poprad, Bardejov and Stará Ľubovňa Districts. The other districts rank far below the average for Prešov County, but also for Slovakia as a whole.

The composition of the County's visitors according to the country of permanent address points to the highest visit rate from the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, and of the non-European countries from South Korea, the USA and Canada. The longest stay in days on average was made by visitors from Belorussia, Liechtenstein and Turkey.

In conclusion we can state that Prešov County with its potential belongs among the leading regions of the Slovak Republic. The utilization of this potential is regionally strongly differentiated at the level of Prešov County. The best developed districts are Poprad, Stará Ľubovňa, Bardejov, partly Prešov, Kežmarok and Levoča. However, the eastern part of the county in the first place lags markedly behind the above-mentioned districts.

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