

## Connections between scientific research and education in the field of tourism and leisure in the Czech Republic

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### Abstract

This article provides insight into the development of tourism research and education in the period 1993–2015 in the Czech Republic. Tourism research and education have a strong tradition dating back to the 1950s, to the time of the former Czechoslovakia. Changes in the political and economic situation in 1989 marked the beginning of a new stage in tourism development. The initial phase was characterized by poorly completed projects and fragmented, uncoordinated approaches to rapidly growing incoming tourism. Currently, research on tourism has been dealt with by the national tourism office, the Czech Tourist Authority – CzechTourism. It was here that the Institute of Tourism was established. Public and private universities operating in the Czech Republic are also significant initiators of support for tourism research at the national and international level. The Society of Scientific Experts on Tourism was founded in 2009 as a platform for tourism research.

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### Introduction

The *Tourism Handbook* issued in Czechoslovakia in 1980 states that 'tourism research is closely and objectively linked to the level of tourism development. In characterizing research in tourism it is necessary to emphasize the fact that (a) tourism extends to many sectors of the national economy, which is fully reflected in the specifics of tourism

research, (b) research on tourism has a multidisciplinary character linked with economics, social sciences, and also geography, architecture, medicine, ecology and so on and (c) research on tourism has a strongly empirical character and is strongly influenced by practical problems' (Franke, 1980).

Whether tourism is a separate field of scientific inquiry; that is, a scientific discipline, is a constant subject of debate. The subject of scientific investigation can be virtually anything that has some social function, almost everything that surrounds us. If recognized scientific methods are used – the result will be recognized as scientific research. A great deal of recorded results of scientific research remain more descriptions of the state of tourism until the time that they are re-examined, again using scientific methods, to give a verifiable understanding of the causes, and show us a way to eliminate the possible undesirable situation or achieve the desired state. Only then the field becomes a scientific discipline in the true sense. In other words, it becomes an independent scientific discipline when it is possible to (a) clearly define the scope of the investigation, (b) identify the problems and (c) develop specific procedures to address them. Tourism involves more than a single object of investigation; it is essentially a multidisciplinary field (Kašpar, 2011).

Based on the division of research used by the International Association of Scientific Experts on Tourism (AIEST) in Switzerland, the four types of tourism research can be characterized as follows:

- macroeconomic research – builds primarily on economic and sociological studies (for example, determining the place of tourism in the society and the economy of the country)
- microeconomic research – focuses primarily on tourism subjects from various perspectives, but should, however, perform a wider function than merely advisory
- geographical research in relation to tourism – focuses on the contribution of geography; for example, in relation to the environment, the role of regional tourism and other aspects
- sociological research on tourism – sociological issues can include the impact of tourism on the socio-cultural structure of the host country, the behaviour of participants in tourism and meeting their needs, the impact of tourism on professions, the interaction

and confrontation of cultures, ethics and mentality and so on.

A general finding from studies on tourism is the fact that results remain up to date for a shorter time than do other types of research, and are often limited to a span of about 3–5 years. Because of this, tourism research must often focus on a future horizon of 10–20 years, and therefore requires comparisons with actual developments and timely corrections. The paper aims at providing an integrated approach of tourism science and education in the Czech Republic which has been an inevitable part of Czechoslovakia. The authors of this paper will use secondary research methods enriched with own experiences in education and tourism science in the Czech Republic.

#### **Development of tourism and leisure research in the Czech Republic in the years 1950–1993**

It is very gratifying that Czech researchers Černý and Charvát belong to the ranks of founders of tourism theory, especially on issues relating to spas. In Slovakia, there was Fodor, particularly in relation to hotels, and Karvaš, in relation to economic and financial issues of tourism. The stage of scientific research into tourism as a relatively independent discipline began in 1945, and builds mainly on the results of particular countries in post-war Europe.

In the early days of research into tourism one cannot talk about being systematic, but rather the popularization of travel and creating the preconditions for the development of tourism. Systematic approaches were applied beginning in the 1950s. In the years 1965–1967 the Tourism Research Department operated in Bratislava as part of the Research Institute for Commerce in Prague. From this, the Tourism Research Institute in Bratislava was established, which from 1970 to 1992 focused on tourism research from different perspectives (Gúčik, 2005).

Tourism greatly helped the economic transformation of the Czech Republic after November 1989. The spontaneous growth of international tourism and the economic benefits that resulted from the opening of the borders were highly significant, and yet this did not

receive any special attention from government authorities. Furthermore, despite their importance to the economy of the country, the outgoing and incoming tourist industries remained completely neglected besides the equally important domestic tourist industry. After the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993, no specialized research institutions dealing with tourism were established in the Czech Republic and until that time the national Tourism Research Institute in Bratislava focused its activities only on Slovakia and was later privatized (Studnička, 2007).

### **Development of tourism and leisure research in the Czech Republic in the years 1993–2015**

Research on tourism in the period up to 1989 or 1992 is described in detail in the contribution of Slovak colleagues Gúčik and Kučerová. And although we surveyed the most important institutions active in the field of tourism research from 1952 to the current period, further efforts will be devoted to analysing the present situation (Table 1).

Most projects awarded by the central institutions involve applied research with statewide significance and are linked to addressing issues related to the basic strategies and plans for tourism development, especially medium-term concepts. Projects derived from grants from the European Union and other foreign financial sources make up

another category. At the regional level, development programs deal primarily with specific aspects of the impact of tourism on the region and its priorities, issues of regional development, and marketing strategies. They also deal with destination management and increasing the marketability of the regions, short-term action plans for tourism development, and measures taken to obtain funds. This theme is common even at lower administrative levels. A growing trend is the establishment of micro-regions, a driving motive for raising funds even within tourism.

Following the geopolitical changes on the date of 1 January 1993 (the Velvet Divorce occurred, whereby two separate states were created out of the former Czechoslovakia: the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic) and the establishment of the independent Czech Republic the area of tourism, from the perspective of research, was rather a minority interest. After the privatization of the Tourism Research Institute, there was no specialized department in the Czech Republic dealing with research issues and trends in tourism. The Ministry of Regional Development (MRD), which is under the *Competence Act*, is responsible for tourism from 2004, and is one of the providers of support for research and development. It was therefore considered competent to announce grants aimed at, among others areas, research in the field of tourism. In the years 2004–06 two research

**Table 1.** *Institutions involved in tourism research in the Czech Republic from 1993 to 2015*

<b>Period</b>	<b>Institution</b>
1993–2010	No establishment of specialized institutions for research on tourism (Czech Republic)
1996–2008	Tourism research implemented by the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic
2008–present	Tourism research falls under the Grant Agency Czech Republic (2008) and the Technology Agency Czech Republic (2010)
2009	The Society of Scientific Experts on Tourism was founded by A. Franke
2010	Establishment of Department for Research, Trends and Innovation as part of the Czech Tourist Authority – CzechTourism
2013	Institute of Tourism was founded as a part of the Czech Tourist Authority – CzechTourism
2015	Institute of Tourism was divided into three departments (Office Institute of Tourism, Marketing Research, Education and R&D projects)

*Source: own elaboration*

programs were realized: the WA – research for the government program, and the WB – research for the needs of the regions. The program was implemented with WA comprising seven projects with a direct focus on the issue of tourism and WB comprising nine projects. In the period 2007–11 the last program was implemented, and this program, WD, which has

already been implemented, contained only two projects in the field of tourism (Table 2). A significant change came in 2008, when the government approved on 26 March a specific document called *Reforming research, development and innovation in the Czech Republic*. The approved document has resulted in an amendment to Act no. 130/2002 Coll. concerning aid for research and development,

**Table 2. Overview of completed projects under the research programs MRD focusing on tourism**

Code of project	Project title	Researcher
WA-010-05-Z05	Draft of a data file processing model which includes the Tourism Satellite Account with the goal to support decision making process on a regional level	Czech University of Life Science Prague
WA-019-05-Z08	Optimal use of natural and cultural heritage in the development of tourism	The Institute of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics AS CR, v. v. i
WA-035-05-Z07	Partnership for Tourism Activities on the Regional Level	University of Pardubice
WA-037-05-Z06	Proposal of Systematic Tourism Research in the Czech Republic Particularly Aimed at Regions	The Institute of Hospitality Management in Prague
WA-206-06-Z06	The Tourism Policy in the Czech Republic on the National and Regional Level – Objectives, Instruments and Mechanisms	Haskoning DHV Czech Republic, Ltd
WA-213-05-Z07	Methods for Tourism Strategic and Programme Document Processing	Masaryk University
WA-307-06-303	The economic and social pillar of sustainable tourism in the Czech Republic	Czech Institute for Tourism and Management, o.p.s.
WB-07-04	Technical monuments as a product of tourism	University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice
WB-08-04	The New Tourism Regionalization in the Czech Republic draft	Masaryk University
WB-11-04	Manual for development of experienced tourism in villages based on cultural and historical heritage	The Centre for Community Work South Bohemia
WB-45-04	Benefits from the navigation technology on the Vltava river cascade to increase the attractiveness of regions for tourism – identification of costs and benefits	AF-CITYPLAN Ltd
WB-04-05	The proposal of methodology to utilize the potential for development of meeting and incentive tourism	Czech University of Life Science Prague
WB-05-05	Pilot project on unique local attractions in the Czech Republic and their use in the experience of tourism	The Center for Community Work South Bohemia
WB-19-05	Contemporary Architecture as a New Touristic Phenomenon	University of Pardubice
WB-26-05	Unique local technical attractions	University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice
WD-12-07-2	Delimitation of Suitable Areas for Development of Agricultural Tourism in relation to Exploitation of Objects for Firm Travel Movement	Czech University of Life Science Prague
WD-37-07-2	Research of domestic and incoming tourism in relation to reducing social-economic disparities	The Institute of Hospitality Management in Prague

Source: own elaboration

followed by the establishment of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (hereafter referred to as 'TACR'), as a state institution.

The TACR is an organizational unit of the state that was founded in 2009 by Act no. 130/2002 Coll. on the support of research, experimental development and innovation. The creation of the TACR is one of the cornerstones of the fundamental reforms in research and development (R&D) in the Czech Republic. The key feature of the reform is the redistribution of financial support from the national budget. The TACR simplifies the state support of applied research and experimental development, which had been fragmented and implemented by many bodies before the reform. In accordance with Act no. 130/2002 activities assigned to the TACR are:

- preparation and realization of its own programs of applied research, experimental development and innovation; and realization of programs from those governmental departments without public financial support
- evaluation and selection of program proposals
- administration of functional financial support of applied research from the national budget
- control of the fulfilment of project contracts
- evaluation of fulfilment of objectives of programs and control of their results
- counselling (legal, financial and IPR) for programs and projects of applied research, experimental development and innovation
- communication support between research organizations and the private sector
- negotiations with institutions in the Czech Republic and the European Union in terms of permitted public support of applied research and innovation
- cooperation with similar foreign institutions.

The TACR announced challenges in these six programs:

- The ALPHA program aims to support applied research and experimental development, especially in the field of advanced technologies, materials and systems, energy resources and the protection and creation of the environment and the sustainable development of transport.

- The BETA program is focused on public procurement in research, experimental development and innovation for the government. It means the specific topics and issues that the state authorities want to address in the area of research through public procurement.
- The GAMMA program aims to support the verification of the results of applied research and experimental development in terms of their practical application and to prepare their subsequent commercial use.
- The DELTA program is aimed at supporting collaboration in applied research and experimental development projects through joint projects of enterprises and research organizations supported by the TACR and major foreign technological and innovation agencies and other similar agencies with which the TACR has/will have at the time of publication of the public tender in research, development and innovation (hereafter referred to as the 'public tender') established collaboration.
- The EPSILON program is mainly focused on improving the standing of the Czech Republic, as well as European industry in a global context, through the support of applied research and experimental development, whose results have a high potential for rapid application in new products, production processes and services, particularly in the following priority areas: competitive knowledge-based economy, sustainability of energy and material resources and environment for quality of life.
- The main objective of the OMEGA program is to strengthen research activities in the area of applied social sciences and apply the results of these activities to increase the competitiveness of the Czech Republic, enhance the quality of life of its inhabitants and balance socioeconomic development ([www.tacr.cz](http://www.tacr.cz)).

Tourism may be contained in the BETA program, if it concerns MRD and further in the OMEGA program, which focuses on socioeconomic development, where tourism is undoubtedly a significant factor. The Ministry of Regional Development currently has no direct

tool to support research in tourism; however, it is the contracting authority for projects falling under the categories of methodologies, analyses and expert opinions. As part of MRD, the Tourism Board of Ministry of Regional Development was founded, where academia represented the most significant workplace, the Institute of Hospitality Management (hereafter referred to as 'IHM'), University of Economics and University College of Business. These institutions, plus Masaryk University in Brno, are the main partners of MRD in the processing of major strategic documents, methodologies and analyses. Analysis and research projects are also supported by the Czech Tourist Authority – CzechTourism – deriving from the current needs of the relevant institution.

An important authority in the area of research projects for tourism is the Ministry of Culture, which announces tenders for projects in the fields of culture, where interested parties can bid for projects in the field of cultural tourism. At the national level, within the past 15 years 26 research projects in the tourism sector were funded with total support from several sources.

Research at the regional level is not systematically supported. Over the last few years, however, the individual county offices have announced research projects through so-called innovation vouchers. This tool is aimed at linking providers of knowledge and practical experience. It is a transfer of knowledge between academic spheres and private research businesses. In the tourism sector, several projects were implemented. For example, the Institute of Hospitality Management was the project team focused on product and service innovation at the Stein Hotel in western Bohemia. Another type of project is those conducted within the authority's autonomy. In the hotel business, increasingly, projects are awarded to entrepreneurs. For these types of projects, there are many variations of approach, but they are primarily dealing with analysis, design, business plans and marketing strategies.

The last type of project, on the contrary, concerns most of the research projects of an international character, which are financed by external sources, such as European funds, for

example, or those that use Visegrad Funds. For example, a project is presented in the following table which is an overview of projects conducted by the Institute of Hospitality Management over the last five years.

From a review of the projects carried out by one of the departments that deal with tourism research, it is clear that the combination of academia and practice, whether represented by the private sector or public administration, is set up very intensively. Cooperation with the public sector, in addition, also takes place via the representation of academic efforts in various working groups and groups such as the Tourism Board of Ministry of Regional Development, the Working Group for Science and Research, Czech Tourist Authority – CzechTourism, the Educational Section of the Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants and Platform Tourism within the Czech Confederation of Commerce and Tourism.

#### **Education in tourism and its connection with scientific research**

Since 1989, after the 'Velvet Revolution', the tertiary education system changed rapidly. Extensive international contacts, exchange of students and teachers, as well as the process of transforming research and teaching were immediately started up. New disciplines and new study plans came into being. New departments and new faculties were established. New higher education institutions (HEIs) were formed on this basis, and a number of existing institutions were restructured. Private HEIs are a new phenomenon in the Czech higher education system. Their establishment was enabled by the *Higher Education Act* in 1998. At present (2015), there are 26 public, two state and 42 private HEIs in the Czech Republic.

Tertiary education is composed of two sectors. The first, relatively small sector, comprises tertiary professional schools that offer professionally oriented courses (ISCED 5B). The duration of the studies is mostly three years, and graduates are awarded a diploma generally (not comparable with a Bachelor degree). Higher education is provided by higher education institutions, which form the main part of tertiary education. They offer all levels of

**Table 3. Summary of research projects conducted by IHM from 2011 to 2015**

<b>Code of the project</b>	<b>Title of the project</b>	<b>Contract owner</b>
WD-37-07-2	Research on domestic and inbound foreign tourism in relation to mitigating socioeconomic disparities	Ministry of Regional Development
SVP 1. 2011 HRM	Flexibility of the workforce and its optimal use in enterprises of road transport	Association of Road Carriers ČESMAD BOHEMIA
VRP 1. 2012 OTH	Unification of foreign gastronomic menu terminology in translations of menus in restaurants in the Czech Republic	Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants
527775-LLP-1-2012-1-FI-ERASMUS-ECUE	Health & Wellbeing in Tourism Destinations (WeiDest)	European Commission
CzT-13/110/111/7	An innovative approach to system management of tourism at the national and regional level in the Czech Republic	CzechTourism (NTO)
SVP 1. 2013 HMM	Design marketing measures for strengthening traffic at the Horizont Hotel	Regata Čechy a.s.
SVP 2. 2013 MDL	Shadow Economy in the subsystems of tourism with a focus on hospitality and catering	Ministry of Regional Development
OLNV-MECR1VŠH-2012 a LIP-MECR2VŠH-2012	Measuring the effects of tourism in the municipality of Lipno nad Vltavou	Municipality of Lipno nad Vltavou
SVP 3. 2013 HMM	Effect of exchange rate differences and the impact on the overall economy hotel operations	CPI Hotels, a.s.
OLOU-DIVOLO1VŠH-2013	Options for boating use on the Vltava river in the municipality of Loučovice and its surroundings – the Devil's Streams	Municipality of Loučovice
VVP 1. 2013 MDL	Mutual cooperation in the field of religious tourism and science	Archdiocese of Prague
SVP 4. 2013 HMM	Cost control centres for food and beverage at Aquapark	Redvale a.s., operator of Aquapalace Hotel Prague
SVP 2. 2014 HMM	Optimization of catering services for employees of AGC while respecting the diversity of work activities	AGC Flat Glass Czech a.s., member of AGC Group
SVP 3. 2014 HMM	Concept of catering services in the area of stadium Football Club Teplice	AGC Flat Glass Czech a.s., member of AGC Group
SVP 5.2014 HRM	Analysis of selected market effects of competition on innovation and marketing strategy Aquapalace Hotel Prague	Redvale a.s., operator Aquapalace Hotel Prague
CzT-14/o/510/1236	Analysis of the selection of local fees in relation to the capacity and performance of accommodation and spa facilities in the Czech Republic	CzechTourism (NTO)
OLNV-ODM1VŠH-2014	Support for the establishment of public-private partnerships in tourism development by establishing a local destination management organization	Municipality of Lipno nad Vltavou
MMR-1489/2014-54	Impact of local fees on tourism development	Ministry of Regional Development
MECK-PSCR1VŠH-2014	Benefit analysis of tourism and tourism development strategy in Český Krumlov	City of Český Krumlov
15/410/2836	Product offers of Czech spas	CzechTourism (NTO)
15/510/004	Measuring the effectiveness of promoting tourism in regions of the Czech Republic	CzechTourism (NTO)

Source: own elaboration

higher education degree programs (ISCED 5A, 6). HEIs in the Czech Republic deliver Bachelor and Master degree programs (ISCED level 5A)

as well as Doctoral degree programs (ISCED level 6).

In recent years, a number of interesting research projects related to issues in tourism have been carried out. The collected evidence suggests that in the Czech Republic there are currently 16 higher education institutions (universities, colleges, institutes) with programs based in tourism issues (see Table 4).

Materials from selected higher education institutions confirm that numerous Bachelors and Masters dissertations are focused on problems and issues in tourism and some may be useful, even as partial groundwork, for work on these issues at a more complex level.

**Table 4.** *Higher education institutions with the study field tourism and leisure in the Czech Republic in 2015*

Higher education institutions	Faculty	Study field	Degree (ISCED 5A)
<i>Public higher education institutions</i>			
University of Economics Prague	International Relations	Tourism and regional development Tourism	Bachelors and Masters
Mendel University in Brno	Business and Economics	Tourism	Bachelors
Masaryk University Brno	Economics and Administration	Regional development and tourism	Bachelors
VŠB – Technical University of Ostrava	Mining and Geology	Geosciences and montane tourism	Bachelors
	Economics	Tourism economy	Bachelors
Palacký University Olomouc	Physical Culture	Recreology	Bachelors and Masters
University of Hradec Králové	Informatics and Management	Tourism management	Bachelors
University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice	Economics	Commercial business – tourism	Bachelors and Masters
Technical University of Liberec	Economics	Economics and management of services – tourism	Bachelors
Silesian University in Opava	Philosophy and Science	Spa and tourism industry	Bachelors
Tomas Bata University in Zlín	Business Administration	Tourism economics	Bachelors
	Management and Economics	Tourism economics	Masters
College of Polytechnics Jihlava	-	Tourism	Bachelors
<i>Private higher education institutions</i>			
The Institute of Hospitality Management in Prague	-	Hospitality Management Hospitality and Spa Management Destination management in travel and tourism industry	Bachelors and Masters
University College of Business in Prague	-	Tourism Tourism management	Bachelors Masters
Institute of Logistics of Přerov	-	Tourism logistics	Bachelors
Jan Amos Komenský University of Prague	-	Tourism management	Bachelors and Masters
College of Business and Hotel Management in Brno	-	Hotel and tourism management	Bachelors

Source: own elaboration



In the Czech Republic there is no possibility of studying tourism in a Doctoral degree program. The same situation applies for the procedures for habilitation (associate professors) or appointment of professors.

### **Cooperation in the field of tourism research**

The Czech Republic organizes on an annual basis several international conferences in the field of tourism, which provides the basic platform for creating and maintaining domestic and international cooperation. Among the regular organizers of the scientific conference with the primary topic of tourism are the Institute of Hospitality Management in Prague, the College of Polytechnics in Jihlava, the Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism, together with the Masaryk University in Brno and the Silesian University in Opava. Of course, organized conferences focus on economics and management, where tourism gets its due consideration. A regular event is the Tourism Forum, which is organized annually by the Czech Tourist Authority – CzechTourism.

Cooperation between domestic universities and institutes dealing with research in the field of tourism is realized mostly in the framework research projects; the contracting authority is a public administration or directly connected with the Czech Science Foundation and the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic.

International cooperation in the tourism sector is more closely aligned among V4 countries, where the Visegrad Fund, from which agencies can draw funds for underwritten projects. Another platform for collaboration research projects financing is from the European Union, and its various funds and initiatives. One example is the project WelDest, where IHM collaborated with well-known universities in Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom and Finland. It even supports international cooperation in the framework of the ERASMUS+ program, which runs staff mobility and is called ERASMUS week. It is the most common way of obtaining contacts and setting up cooperation on joint projects.

In the Czech Republic there are published two magazines with the profile of tourism. *Czech*

*Hospitality and Tourism Papers*, which was founded in 2005, IHM, and is included in the EBSCOhost and ERIH PLUS. The second magazine is the *Czech Journal of Tourism*, which was established in 2011 by the Faculty of Economics and Administration at Masaryk University, Faculty of Informatics and Management of the University of Hradec Králové and the Faculty of Economics, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice. Since 2013 the journal can be accessed online in the database of the publisher De Gruyter and it is indexed in RePEc/EconPapers, ERIH PLUS, EBSCOhost and other databases.

### **Current research questions in the field of tourism research in the Czech Republic**

The situation in the Czech Republic nowadays is characterized by lack of coordination in tourism research and education. However, the most common focus of projects in tourism can be divided into several groups:

1. Projects focusing on the evaluation of projects supported by EU funds in the programming period 2007–13. The question is whether the incurred financial expenditures in tourism have been effective and whether they met predetermined targets.
2. Projects focusing on creating strategic documents at the level of municipalities.
3. Projects focused on the establishment of destination management organizations at the local and regional level.
4. Projects focusing on the competitiveness of the Czech Republic as a whole or destinations of each region individually.

None of the group of projects, however, can be regarded as pure research. Research on tourism in the Czech Republic is subject to current demand and the political-economic situation at national and regional level (OECD, 2010).

### **Discussion – SWOT Analysis of Current Tourism Research in the Czech Republic**

Based on an analysis of the current state of tourism research in the Czech Republic, the following summary of a SWOT analysis was formulated (Franke et al., 2006):

### **Strengths:**

- many years of tradition in tourism research
- preparing future researchers in relation to the issue of tourism since the middle of the last century through specialization at economics-oriented universities
- specialized research workplaces in the form of tourism research institutes already established in the 1960s
- involvement of Czech experts in international tourism research in the second half of the last century and involvement of Czech experts in international projects and programs (for example, zoning of tourism)
- relatively quick response to changes after 1989 in the development and management of tourism even in relation to research activities in tourism, especially at economics- and geography-oriented universities schools with programs related to these issues
- the presence of foreign consulting firms in the Czech Republic since 1989 and the emergence of domestic consulting firms that have developed the supply-side of the tourism industry
- good preconditions for further development of six key types of tourism announced in 2002 for Central and Eastern Europe by the UNWTO; that is, cultural, short-term city recreation, business and conventions, rural, winter and health.

### **Weaknesses:**

- loss of a specialized centre for tourism research in the Czech Republic after the split with Slovakia
- unsystematic, random approaches to meeting immediate needs with research tasks, particularly at lower levels of tourism management (regions, municipalities with extended powers)
- uncoordinated approach and lack of information on completed research sometimes leads to research of already explored issues and thus to inefficient allocation and spending of funds
- decrease in the number of specialized research workers on issues of tourism; research increasingly conducted only by teams of investigators established ad hoc

- weak involvement of Czech experts on tourism issues in international tourism research and in internationally specialized organizations.

### **Opportunities:**

- the Czech Republic's admission to the European Union and the possibility of obtaining support from the funds, in particular in relation to regions
- involvement of the Czech Republic in international research work in tourism
- initiatives including financial coverage by the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic for establishing a new system of tourism management in the Czech Republic and the proposal for the reinstitution of systematic research in tourism in the Czech Republic
- initiatives including financial coverage by the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic for carrying out research on the impact of tourism and its sustainability
- initiation of the development of research centres, including for tourism, at universities with courses relevant to the teaching of tourism
- respect for the fact that the support of systematic research by central and regional institutions and the business community and the use of those results in the management of tourism is a necessary investment
- systemic use of modern information and communication technologies in research.

### **Threats:**

- research activity in tourism may remain at the periphery of society's interests (politically, conceptually, and in obtaining the necessary financial resources)
- lack of interest will continue for scientific research work in tourism as a main occupation
- lack of specialized tourism research centres supported by regional bodies and a central headquarters will continue to be replaced by sometimes underfunded investigator teams and organizations that cannot be competitive with foreign countries where the work is supported by a centralized bureau with clear aims.

### **Proposals to address threats to the current state of tourism research in the Czech Republic**

A preventative stance will need to be taken to address the risk, which was brought to light in tourism research results and mentioned as a threat in the SWOT analysis that research activity in tourism will remain at the periphery of society. The following are possible approaches:

✓ Strongly focus the outputs of tourism research work on the business community in this field, taking into account that tourism affects a number of industries and sectors of the economy. This may, to some extent, even eliminate the fact that some elected public officials may have an ambivalent relationship with tourism (tourists are not voters), and that they are not always well motivated when there are territorial limitations to their power. (From a marketing point of view, it is difficult to promote regions created artificially for administrative purposes.)

✓ Consistently respect and analyse the market system even in the tourism sector. Its influence can be seen, for example, in the massive private sector investments, often by construction companies, in the construction of smaller hotels and restaurants across the country. Another example is the sharp increase in hotel capacity in Prague over the last ten years and the massive influence of foreign capital. Yet another example is the construction of huge shopping centres and marketplaces on our borders, especially after 1989, taking advantage of the different price levels for goods and services in Austria and Germany versus the Czech Republic.

✓ Public administration at the regional level. Well-designed programs and their purposeful implementation can significantly contribute to the elimination, or at least mitigation, of the obstacles to the meaningful development of tourism.

✓ The central authorities in the Czech Republic should make fundamental decisions on tourism based on well-researched, scientific-based research activities and analyses. Positive examples from recent years include work on the zoning of tourism, tourism research in relation to the environment, a systematic effort to restore research on tourism, working out measures to further

develop tourism and, last but not least, the drafting of the Tourism Satellite Account. Another positive factor is that this work, using knowledge from scientific research, is built on the concepts in the State Tourism Policy of the Czech Republic for the period 2007–13.

### **Proposals to strengthen systematic tourism research in the Czech Republic**

The essential factor in strengthening systematic tourism research is a regulated organizational structure of tourism and clearly defined powers at the regional and the supra-regional level. This thesis has been confirmed by the conclusions stated in the State Tourism Policy Concept in the Czech Republic for 2007–13 and 2014–20 and by comparing the management of tourism with the organization of its research in European countries that are advanced in terms of tourism.

This policy document also asserts that ‘one negative factor is the lack of long-term research on tourism, or more precisely, its institutional support. Some research issues and questions are addressed by Czech Tourist Authority – CzechTourism and the Ministry of Regional Development by awarding grants. At the national level (MRD), however, there is a lack of a national research centre for tourism, which most other tourism developed countries have’.

A basic postulate, which tourism research must take into account, is tourism’s multidisciplinary character, which is based on the fact that its reach extends to a number of industries and sectors of the economy. This also affects the need for a coordination of all involved entities. Systematic macroeconomic research on tourism, therefore, is an affair of the state. The current state of tourism research in the Czech Republic, however, does not fully reflect these realities. The emergence of such a state was affected by the division of the Czech and Slovak Republics, when the national Tourism Research Institute, based in Bratislava in Slovakia, with a decades-old tradition, was transformed into the Tourism Institute, Ltd. During this time, qualified workers doing systematic research on tourism made the transition to the University of Matej Bel in Banská Bystrica. In the Czech Republic, no such approach was taken.

In general, there are two basic pillars on which developed countries, in terms of tourism, base their research. They are:

- central and regional bodies of state and public administration which are responsible for issues of tourism, including research bodies
- universities and institutes, including their research centres, specialized in tourism or having courses related to tourism.

In many instances, at these levels, there are various forms of time-limited cooperation with private agencies, institutions, consulting firms and both domestic and foreign experts on tourism.

The Czech Republic currently has no comprehensive legislation on tourism. Law no. 2/1969 Coll. relegates tourism to the charge of the ministerial level. At the regional level, the legislative basis is currently found in the Constitution of the Czech Republic in Article 8 and Articles 99 to 105 of 1993. Law no. 129/2000 Coll. 1 January 2001 also applies to regions (regional government). This law, however, disregards the administrative borders assumed when defining individual tourism regions. Other laws relating to tourism are Law no. 159/1999 Coll. on certain conditions for doing business in the tourism sector and on the amendments to Civil Code no. 89/2012 Coll., and the Trade Licensing Act no. 455/1991 Coll., which was amended by Act no. 214/2006 Coll. This cannot be regarded as the law on tourism, as it is commonly called, and does not have ties to research on tourism. In summary, the development of tourism in the Czech Republic is currently being helped only by secondary legislation (Franke et al., 2007).

The most important decision in relation to regulatory standards includes the establishment of the Czech Tourist Authority by the Ministry of the Economy from 1 April 1993 according to Section 31, paragraph 2 of Act no. 576/1990 Coll. on rules concerning budgetary means of the Czech Republic and municipalities in the Czech Republic. On 14 July 2004 a decision was made, again by the Ministry of Regional Development, to repeal the statute of the Czech Tourist Authority and for approval of a new statute regarding the Czech

Tourist Authority – the establishment of CzechTourism and the rules of procedure for the supervisory board of the institution. In 2006 there were changes in the organizational structure of the MRD, particularly in the area of financial support for tourism in the country. A substantial portion of that aid had been entrusted to the regions with the aim of significantly strengthening the role of the regions in decision making on the provision of financial resources from EU funds and the state budget. The need for adequate infrastructure was emphasized, as well as the opportunity to participate in expert assessments of the development of tourism services by professional organizations. A new role of the ministry in this area involves the creation of a national concept for promoting tourism. Follow-up actions will be directed toward the MRD and CzechTourism improving service for the regions, including monitoring trends in tourism and their application, and providing more support to the private sector in presentations abroad.

This strategy corresponds to trends in European countries that are well-developed in terms of tourism. In other words, the basis for tourism development is regions and areas in which there is domestic tourism. The state agency responsible for managing tourism is responsible to the government for processing and creating conditions to implement the national policy for tourism development and for presenting the state as a destination on the European tourism market, including the terms of inbound tourism.

There are currently 11 public and five private higher education institutions in the Czech Republic dealing with programs regarding issues in tourism, of which only around one-fifth are involved in research activities in this field. It can be assumed, however, that there will be a trend toward broader involvement in targeted cooperation and participation in public tenders announced by other universities of this type and their research centres. This will better enable qualified specialists to cooperate systematically, and present their work in the universities' professional journals. Universities will also have an incentive to increase the number of Doctoral students from the younger

generation and to address topical issues of tourism in their work. The cooperation of a proposed research centre as a part of the Czech Tourist Authority – CzechTourism, with research centres at universities dealing with issues in tourism, could strengthen the prerequisites for obtaining international projects with relevant foreign institutions.

A major challenge in this context is the gradual expansion of the number of experts working on issues in tourism in the Czech Republic who would meet the prerequisite to become members of international specialized institutions, especially the International Association of Scientific Experts on Tourism, Switzerland.

### Conclusion

Research activities on tourism in the former Czechoslovakia, and now in the Czech Republic, have had a long tradition. Research in Czechoslovakia was determined by parallel institutions of urban planning. In the Czech part, research focused mainly on internal trade (the Trade Research Institute in Prague), and in the Slovak part on tourism (the Tourism Research Institute in Bratislava). A very well-prepared document, developed from 1960–62 by the Institute for the Planning of Zoning, dealt with the zoning of tourism in Czechoslovakia. Updates to the material were carried out in 1981.

After the Czech Republic became independent in 1993, no statewide research institute for tourism was set up. The task was gradually assumed in 1996 by the Ministry of Regional Development, which oversees tourism, and in 2001 by regional offices, which manage tourism subjects in the regions. The basic aim of promoting research (especially applied) is to support the goals of tourism. Priorities were identified in the projects Research for the Needs of Regions and Research for Addressing Regional Disparities. Within the framework of reforms for research, experimental development, and innovation carried out by the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic in 2008, the power to issue a public tender in research and development and socio-scientific research was lost, and is now gradually coming under

the power of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic and the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic.

Since 2010, research on tourism has been dealt with by the national tourism office, which is the Czech Tourist Authority – CzechTourism. It was here that the Institute of Tourism was established. Public and private universities operating in the Czech Republic are also significant initiators of support for tourism research. Currently, there are 16 higher education institutions engaged in the teaching of tourism with a variety of intensity and focus.

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