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Analyses of Tourism Development in Southern Slovakia

ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to analyse the development of tourism in the southern regions of Slovakia. It deals with 17 districts of southern Slovakia, which due to the location and geomorphological character of the country have other attractions and potential for tourism development than the other regions of Slovakia. It analyses tourist attractions and assumptions for tourism development in selected regions. It also compares the development of tourism demand and supply according to the secondary data on accommodation establishments from 2008 to 2012. At the end, it proposes some recommendations on the improvement of tourism development in the southern regions of Slovakia.

ABSZTRAKT

A tanulmány célja a turizmus fejlődésének vizsgálata Szlovákia déli régióiban. Az elemzés Szlovákia 17 déli járására terjed ki, amelyek elhelyezkedésük és geomorfológiai jellegük révén a vonzerők és turisztikai fejlesztési lehetőségek tekintetében különböznek Szlovákia egyéb területeitől. Bemutásra kerülnek a vizsgált régiók turisztikai vonzerői, valamint a bennük rejlő lehetőségek a turizmus fejlesztése számára. A szálláshelyek szekunder adatain keresztül a tanulmány összeveti a turizmuson belüli kereslet és kínálat változásait 2008 és 2012 között, végezetül pedig javaslatokat fogalmaz meg a Szlovákia déli régióinak turizmusát érintő fejlesztések számára.

Keywords: accommodation establishments, attractions, southern Slovakia, tourism development

1. INTRODUCTION

Slovakia is a diverse country and in relation to tourism development we should take into account many factors that affect the ability of a particular region to develop tourism. “80% of tourism is affected by the country and its natural environment” (BERNECKER in KONEČNÁ, A. 1999, p. 69). Analysis

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of the natural environment determines suitability of the territory for tourism, indicates its basic orientation and indicates the boundaries of tourism development (KONEČNÁ, A. 1999). The primary supply associated with the natural, cultural and historical conditions of the country generates tourism attractions that are the basis for tourism demand and determines potential for tourism development. Different types of attraction indicates quite clearly different forms of tourism, which have distinctive requirements for growth, and certain sites, regions or countries are more favourable for development than others (BONIFACE, B., COOPER, C., COOPER, J. 2012). To develop tourism and support its different forms it is inevitable to match specific locations in an area to suitable types of recreation use.

The secondary supply consisting of infrastructure in the tourist destinations creates conditions for the demand and use of the primary supply. Coppock and Duffield (1975) acknowledge the interrelationship between human demand as participation or a desire to engage in recreation and tourism, and primary and secondary supply of resources, facilities and opportunities which enable such demand to be fulfilled (In HALL, C. M., PAGE, S. J. 2014). In order to develop tourism it is needed to analyse supply and demand, its structure, to know visitors and their preferences, needs and the way to satisfy them. Equally important is the assessment of conditions, opportunities and potential of the region for tourism development, which expresses capability of territory to offer conditions appropriate for tourism development and comprises all disposable resources in a certain region (HAMARNEHOVÁ, I. 2008). Potential for tourism development is objective category presenting opportunities for development of different forms of tourism (HRALA, V. 2013). Assessment of territory in terms of the preconditions for tourism is of great importance also for regional development (HAMARNEHOVÁ, I. 2008).

2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aim of the paper is to analyse the districts of southern Slovakia in terms of tourism development. The analysis focuses on the 17 southern districts of Slovakia, which, given the location and geomorphological character of the country have other attractions and potential for tourism development than the other regions of Slovakia.

We conducted secondary research to get data. From secondary sources, we used statistical data on the capacity of accommodation establishments and the number of guests, the number of overnight stays and the structure of foreign guests in accommodation establishments in selected districts of southern Slovakia published by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic between 2008 and 2012. To determine the main tourist attractions in the studied areas, we used the official delimitation from the publication entitled “Regionalisation of tourism in the Slovak Republic” (2005).

3. RESULTS

Southern Slovakia possesses a lowland character along the Slovakian-Hungarian border. There is the Danubian Lowland in the western part and the Eastern Slovak Lowland in the eastern part of Slovakia. In the middle there is the Southern Slovak Basin. The area includes highlands such as the Cerová Highlands and the Slovak Karst. The area extends significantly also the Slovak Ore Mountains and Slanec Mountains. The climate is warm and dry. There are mostly floodplain and

oak forests and the pertinent fauna. Districts to the east of the Danubian Lowland have problems with high unemployment, especially Rožňava, Revúca and Rimavská Sobota Districts which are called as “hungry valley” (<http://px-web.statistics.sk/PXWebSlovak/>, 2014).

3.1 Potential of the selected southern regions of Slovakia for tourism development

Potential of particular regions for tourism development is assessed by the “Regionalization of tourism in the Slovak Republic” (2005), which sorts 21 regions into four categories by relevance - regions of international, national, supra-regional and regional importance. The studied districts can be sorted into 8 regions, but only districts of Danube, Gemer and Košice region coincides with the studied districts (Table 1, Map 1). Most of them have supra-regional importance in the medium-term. Only the Košice region has national importance. The regions have a potential to increase their importance in the long-term.

Table 1: Districts according to the Regionalization of tourism in the Slovak Republic

Region	Medium-term importance	Long-term importance	Studied districts	Other districts
Danube	Supra-regional	National	Dunajská Streda, Komárno, Nové Zámky, Senec	-
Dolné Považie	Supra-regional	National	Galanta, Šaľa	Hlohovec, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, Piešťany, Trnava
Nitra	Supra-regional	National	Levice, Nitra, Nové Zámky	Zlaté Moravce
Ipeľ	regional	Supra-regional	Levice, Lučenec, Veľký Krtíš, Krupina	Poltár
Gemer	Supra-regional	National	Revúca, Rimavská Sobota, Rožňava	-
Spiš	Supra-regional	International	Rožňava	Gelnica, Levoča, Spišská Nová Ves
Košice	National	National	Košice I, II, III, IV, okolie	-
Dolný Zemplín	Regional	Supra-regional	Michalovce, Trebišov	Sobrance

Source: Self-elaboration according to Regionalization of tourism in the Slovak Republic, 2005.

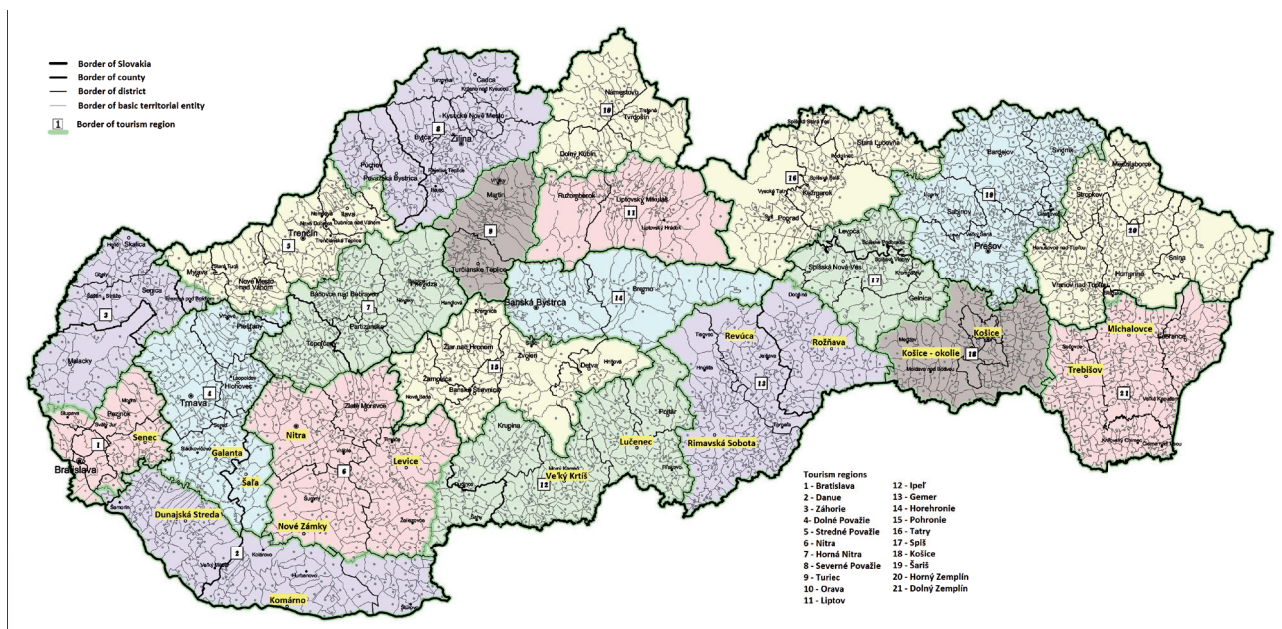
Districts Košice and Košice-okolie offer visitors exploring of the cultural and historical monuments, stay near water and forest, business and shopping tourism. We consider the city of Košice and the Slovak Karst National Park to be the sub-regions of the Košice region with qualitatively better conditions for tourism development. Košice is rich in cultural and historical monuments, but one can also visit the zoo and botanical garden. Košice was the European Capital of Culture 2013 and there are regularly organized numerous events (International Peace Marathon, Košice Music Spring Festival, Days of Košice, Central European Theatre Festival, Festival of Nations and Nationalities).

From the studied districts the Danube, Nitra and Gemer region considered to be the most important for tourism development. The sub-region of the Danube region is the Small Rye Island, Gabčíkovo Water Dam, cities Dunajská Streda, Veľký Meder, Komárno and Štúrovo thanks to the thermal parks. This region has a good potential for the development of summer tourism with the presence of the near water and thermal water, water sports, cultural tourism and it has also a potential for cycling and rural tourism in the long-term. There are good links to Esztergom and Szigetköz in Hungary as well.

In Nitra region, taking into account the studied districts, there is the sub-region Nitra and the thermal spa Podhájska. Nitra attracts visitors especially with cultural heritage. It is also a place for

many cultural and religious events, for example the Nitra Theatre Festival and annual celebration of the arrival of St. Cyril and Methodius to Great Moravia. This region has a potential especially for developing of cultural, religious, business and summer tourism near water and thermal water. The organizing of exhibitions, hunting and horse riding is also important.

Map 1: Districts and tourism regions according to the Regionalization of tourism in the Slovak Republic



Source: Self-elaboration according to Regionalization of tourism in the Slovak Republic, 2005.

The main attraction of the Gemer region is the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site Domica cave with an overlap to the Aggtelek Karst in Hungary, then Rožňava town, the Krásna Hôrka castle and the Betliar castle, the Slovak Karst National Park, also with overlap to the Hungary and the Muran Plateau National Park. For this region cultural tourism, summer tourism in the forests mountains and countryside and spa tourism are typical. The activities with the greatest long-term potential also include hiking, cycling, visiting caves and rural tourism.

The Dolné Považie and the Spiš region have supra-regional importance, but in terms of the studied districts the Dolné Považie region includes only Galanta and Šaľa District which compared to other districts of the region does not have a lot of attractions. The analysed part of the Spiš region includes the only area of the Slovak Paradise. The Dolný Zemplín and the Ipel' region are categorized as regions of regional importance, but especially the Dolný Zemplín region has sub-regions with significant potential for tourism development, for example the water reservoir at Zemplínska Šírava, the Tokaj wine region, the Tokaj hills and Zadobrožie. In this area, therefore summer tourism near water, cultural and shopping tourism are in priority. The highest potential for long-term tourism development is staying near water with also water sports, wine tourism and gastronomy. The Ipel'ský region has opportunities for summer tourism near thermal water and in the nature. Rural tourism and stay in a forest or mountains are important in the long-term.

The studied districts have particular potential for the development of summer tourism associated with bathing in water and thermal water, water sports and cycling, cultural and rural tourism.

3.2. Analyses of tourism demand in selected southern regions of Slovakia

According to the regionalisation of tourism, the Košice region comprising Košice and Košice – okolie District, had the greatest potential for tourism development compared to the other studied districts. Primary offer corresponds to the demand is expressed by the number of guests in accommodation establishments. From 2008 to 2012 it was the highest in Košice District, then in Nitra, Nové Zámky, Senec and Dunajská Streda District. The City of Košice and Nitra are also administrative centres of autonomous regions and centres of economic development, therefore they are largely visited by business travellers. The least number of guests was accommodated in Šaľa District (Table 2) with the low number of tourist attractions.

Table 2: Number of guests in accommodation establishments in selected districts of southern Slovakia

Districts	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Index 09/08	Index 10/09	Index 11/10	Index 12/11
Senec	77 793	55 978	40 025	44 318	58 922	0,7196	0,7150	1,1073	1,3295
Dunajská Streda	52 335	37 213	40 952	43 018	59 799	0,7111	1,1005	1,0504	1,3901
Galanta	16 733	11 741	10 183	12 490	17 413	0,7017	0,8673	1,2266	1,3942
Šaľa	4 332	2 222	2 057	2 320	2 147	0,5129	0,9257	1,1279	0,9254
Nitra	84 919	76 446	76 909	73 405	73 696	0,9002	1,0061	0,9544	1,0040
Komárno	25 490	25 497	26 440	23 217	23 769	1,0003	1,0370	0,8781	1,0238
Nové Zámky	84 286	72 061	71 233	69 612	66 200	0,8550	0,9885	0,9772	0,9510
Levice	32 043	29 844	33 400	31 662	29 800	0,9314	1,1192	0,9480	0,9412
Veľký Krtíš	8 808	7 656	6 800	6 639	5 270	0,8692	0,8882	0,9763	0,7938
Lučenec	17 733	11 860	12 893	12 316	15 113	0,6688	1,0871	0,9552	1,2271
Rimavská Sobota	26 639	25 696	26 594	21 502	23 870	0,9646	1,0349	0,8085	1,1101
Revúca	10 257	6 403	6 396	7 395	11 439	0,6243	0,9989	1,1562	1,5469
Rožňava	38 507	27 236	22 473	20 461	19 092	0,7073	0,8251	0,9105	0,9331
Košice	141 758	115 550	135 188	129 526	118 662	0,8151	1,1700	0,9581	0,9161
Košice - okolie	23 904	21 469	19 170	24 205	24 454	0,8981	0,8929	1,2626	1,0103
Trebišov	22 143	22 833	17 392	17 423	13 972	1,0312	0,7617	1,0018	0,8019
Michalovce	49 052	39 273	33 732	32 794	32 118	0,8006	0,8589	0,9722	0,9794

Source: Self-elaboration according to www.statistics.sk, 2014.

From 2008 to 2012 the number of guests in accommodation establishments in the selected districts of Slovakia has been fluctuating. In 2009 the development of accommodation establishments in Slovakia was interrupted by the world economic crisis and its consequences are still visible. The depreciation of neighbouring districts currencies in relation to the euro contributed to the negative development of tourism in Slovakia in 2009. For visitors from Poland, Czech and Hungary, representing the source markets, the staying in Slovakia has become too expensive. The crisis also affected the corporate sector, which started to save on expenses for business trips, causing loss of business guests in accommodation establishments.

In 2009 compared to 2008 the number of guests decreased in almost all districts, while the largest decrease was in the districts Šaľa, Revúca and Lučenec. There was the most significant decrease in the number of foreign guests in 2009 comparing 2008 in those districts, especially from Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. A slight increase was in those years only in Trebišov and Komárno District. In 2010 and 2011 the number of guests increased in 7 districts. Interestingly, in those districts, where there was a growth in the number of guests in 2010, in 2011 the number of guests declined. In 2012

compared to 2011, the number of guests increased in 9 of the 17 studied districts. In Revúca District the number of guests increased by almost 55%, in Dunajská Streda and Galanta by about 39% also thanks to guests from Hungary whose number increased significantly in 2012. Districts in which the number of guests from 2008 to 2012 decreased were Nové Zámky, Veľký Krtíš, Rožňava and Michalovce. To the negative development in Rožňava District contributed the closure of the Krásna Hôrka Castle because of fire in March 2012.

Regarding the structure of the foreign guests, the Czech guests were the most numerous group and from 2008 to 2012 they were on the first place in the number of guests in accommodation establishments in all the studied districts. In 2009 compared to 2008 the number of guests decreased from the Czech Republic in all districts with the exception of Nitra District. The strongest decline was in Šaľa District (54.7%) and Košice - okolie District (43.3%). In 2010 the situation was better, the growth occurred in 6 studied districts. In 2011 compared to 2010 the development was the most favourable. There was a growth in the number of Czech guests in 13 of the 17 surveyed districts. The following year the number of Czech guests in accommodation establishments decreased again. In 2012 only 5 districts recorded growth (Senec, Dunajská Streda, Revúca, Košice, Košice - okolie). Despite the favourable development at the end of the reporting period, in 2012 the majority of the accommodation establishments had fewer guests from the Czech Republic than in 2008.

The second largest group was made by the guests from Germany, Poland and Hungary. In Nitra, Galanta and Veľký Krtíš District there were also guests from Italy in higher number. It should be noted that this is a tourist statistics that does not include visitors staying by relatives and friends, or tourists traveling to Slovakia without an overnight stay. This phenomenon is characteristic of the Slovakian-Hungarian border, so it can be assumed that the number of Hungarian visitors was higher.

In 2009 Slovakia adopted the euro as the national currency and was particularly influenced by the world economic crisis. The number of guests from neighbouring countries decreased significantly because of the effort to cut costs, the preference of domestic tourism and the rise of neighbouring countries currencies in relation to the euro. Even within the studied districts, we can observe more significant impact of these factors on the V4 countries compared to Germany or Italy.

From 2008 to 2012 the structure of source markets for the first three places changed in every region except for Senec, Rožňava, Košice, Trebišov and Michalovce District. In Komárno, Nové Zámky, Lučenec and Košice – okolie District the same structure remained, the order was changed only on the 2nd and 3rd place. In other districts there have been significant changes in the structure of source markets. Interesting were the guests from China on the 2nd place in 2009 in Rožňava District, guests from the Republic of Korea on the 2nd place in 2012 in Šaľa District, and guests from the United States, who were on the 2nd place in Revúca District in 2011 (Table 3).

Number of overnight stays in the years 2010 to 2012 was the highest in Košice District, in 2008 and 2009 in Nové Zámky District. The following ones were districts of Nitra, Dunajská Streda, Senec and Michalovce (Table 4). If we compare the number of guests with the number of overnight stays, we find that in Nové Zámky District the number of guests was significantly lower than in Košice District. The number of overnight stays was almost the same, i.e. the length of the guests' stay was higher in Nové Zámky District than in Košice. Similarly, compared with Nitra District, guests stayed longer in Nové

Zámky District. We assume that the motivation for guests to stay longer in Nove Zámky District can be the Thermal Park Štúrovo and Nové Zámky.

Table 3: Structure of foreign guests in selected districts of southern Slovakia (first 3 places)

District	State	2008	State	2009	State	2010	State	2011	State	2012
Senec	CZ	22 141	CZ	18 668	CZ	9 918	CZ	13 566	CZ	20 013
	PL	5 014	PL	2 044	PL	1 215	PL	1 299	PL	1 374
	DE	1 384	DE	1 100	DE	790	DE	761	DE	1 051
Dunajská Streda	CZ	20 272	CZ	14 208	CZ	16 142	CZ	17 859	CZ	23 065
	PL	1 867	RUM	1 426	DE	1 151	DE	1 143	HU	1 566
	HU	1 710	DE	1 121	HU	972	PL	990	DE	1 487
Galanta	CZ	3 591	CZ	2 448	CZ	2 129	CZ	2 685	CZ	2 604
	IT	392	HU	394	HU	423	IT	462	HU	757
	DE	387	IT	308	IT	363	DE	313	DE	618
Šaľa	CZ	1 354	CZ	613	CZ	589	CZ	624	CZ	622
	AT	130	DE	42	DE	52	PL	65	KR	44
	DE	101	HU	41	PL, AT	49	JK	48	DE	39
Nitra	CZ	9 405	CZ	9 509	CZ	9 751	CZ	10 306	CZ	9 269
	DE	3 010	DE	3 217	DE	2 852	IT	2 508	IT	2 957
	PL	2 078	IT	2 247	IT	2 155	DE	2 928	DE	2 686
Komárno	CZ	3 817	CZ	2 979	CZ	2 512	CZ	2 458	CZ	2 365
	HU	1 896	DE	1 142	DE	937	DE	864	DE	856
	DE	972	HU	1 021	HU	799	HU	624	HU	453
Nové Zámky	CZ	33 303	CZ	24 986	CZ	25 741	CZ	25 872	CZ	23 653
	HU	3 504	HU	1 654	PL	1 884	PL	2 653	PL	2 010
	PL	2 764	PL	1 353	HU	1 880	HU	1 950	HU	1 563
Levice	CZ	6 713	CZ	5 070	CZ	6 494	CZ	6 919	CZ	5 237
	DE	1 760	DE	1 140	DE	1 683	PL	1 237	PL	1 025
	IT	874	PL	785	PL	931	DE	851	HU	917
Veľký Krtíš	CZ	794	CZ	542	CZ	404	CZ	704	CZ	597
	IT	294	IT	324	IT	338	PL	133	UK	159
	HU	249	HU	184	HU	172	HU	104	DE	146
Lučenec	CZ	1 618	CZ	1 074	CZ	1 159	CZ	1 627	CZ	1 347
	HU	821	DE	337	HU	788	HU	885	HU	720
	DE	361	HU	215	DE	226	DE	338	DE	288
Rimavská Sobota	CZ	1 376	CZ	1 280	CZ	1 211	CZ	1 171	CZ	881
	HU	797	HU	516	RO	845	HU	646	HU	402
	PL	269	PL	238	HU	550	RO	590	RO	364
Revúca	CZ	459	CZ	281	CZ	237	CZ	282	CZ	497
	PL	187	CN	85	HU	65	HU	129	HU	204
	HU	139	HU	54	PL	39	US	69	PL	108
Rožňava	CZ	4 272	CZ	2 714	CZ	1 949	CZ	1 692	CZ	1 220
	HU	4 031	HU	2 134	HU	1 836	HU	1 426	HU	1 177
	PL	2 627	PL	882	PL	979	PL	791	PL	691
Košice	CZ	13 365	CZ	11 739	CZ	13 347	CZ	14 316	CZ	15 303
	DE	6 883	DE	4 592	DE	6 030	DE	6 170	DE	5 671
	PL	5 784	PL	4 011	PL	4 472	PL	5 012	PL	4 632
Košice - okolie	CZ	1 812	CZ	1 027	CZ	558	CZ	981	CZ	1 122
	HU	924	HU	443	PL	510	HU	600	HU	625
	PL	438	PL	408	HU	466	PL	274	PL	473
Trebíšov	CZ	1 266	CZ	1 136	CZ	835	CZ	941	CZ	845
	PL	405	PL	609	PL	526	PL	350	PL	293
	HU	324	HU	310	HU	424	HU	346	HU	182
Michalovce	CZ	4 326	CZ	3 426	CZ	2 716	CZ	2 132	CZ	2 061
	PL	3 036	PL	1 539	PL	1 149	PL	1 248	PL	989
	DE	1 195	DE	1 019	DE	939	DE	773	DE	778

Note: CZ – Czech Republic, HU – Hungary, PL – Poland, DE – Germany, IT – Italy, UK – Great Britain, RO – Romania, CN – China, AT – Austria, US – USA, KR – South Korea.

Source: Self-elaboration according to data provided by the Statistical Office of SR, 2014.

Table 4: Number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments in selected districts of southern Slovakia

Districts	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Index 09/08	Index 10/09	Index 11/10	Index 12/11
Senec	158 657	121 282	79 793	99 406	129 393	0,7644	0,6579	1,2458	1,3017
Dunajská Streda	151 843	101 892	105 746	108 639	145 587	0,6710	1,0378	1,0274	1,3401
Galanta	56 290	38 205	32 140	33 560	41 814	0,6787	0,8413	1,0442	1,2459
Šaľa	12 110	5 201	5 611	5 160	5 470	0,4295	1,0788	0,9196	1,0601
Nitra	226 889	180 075	227 009	203 288	173 151	0,7937	1,2606	0,8955	0,8518
Komárno	61 746	56 388	57 596	49 542	51 135	0,9132	1,0214	0,8602	1,0322
Nové Zámky	289 487	242 029	231 894	220 822	212 098	0,8361	0,9581	0,9523	0,9605
Levice	92 926	80 847	90 469	92 934	83 608	0,8700	1,1190	1,0272	0,8996
Veľký Krtíš	41 812	39 850	38 446	35 742	16 018	0,9531	0,9648	0,9297	0,4482
Lučenec	40 566	25 292	27 456	33 690	30 046	0,6235	1,0856	1,2271	0,8918
Rimavská Sobota	112 421	131 885	123 760	108 023	97 039	1,1731	0,9384	0,8728	0,8983
Revúca	25 659	14 974	15 427	18 344	23 469	0,5836	1,0303	1,1891	1,2794
Rožňava	88 955	60 148	46 387	43 736	39 804	0,6762	0,7712	0,9429	0,9101
Košice	283 225	220 178	262 660	254 233	228 309	0,7774	1,1929	0,9679	0,8980
Košice - okolie	65 703	60 144	50 980	54 346	53 417	0,9154	0,8476	1,0660	0,9829
Trebišov	46 824	48 001	33 610	35 615	26 848	1,0251	0,7002	1,0597	0,7538
Michalovce	126 369	111 951	94 267	86 020	74 677	0,8859	0,8420	0,9125	0,8681

Source: Self-elaboration according to www.statistics.sk, 2014.

Development of the number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments was from 2008 to 2012 unstable in selected districts. We can say that it corresponded to the development of the number of guests in hotels. In 2009 compared to 2008 there was a decrease in the number of overnight stays in accommodation establishments with the exception of Rimavská Sobota and Trebišov District. In 2010 and 2011 the number of overnight stays grew in 8 districts, in 2012 only in 6 districts. Although Nové Zámky District was concerning the number of overnight stays on the second place after Košice, year by year the number of overnight stays during the studied period declined. Other districts where the number of overnight stays from 2008 to 2012 continuously declining were Veľký Krtíš, Rožňava and Michalovce District. While the number of guests in Veľký Krtíš District decreased in 2012 compared to 2011 by 55%. These districts suffer from high unemployment and decrease in the number of domestic and foreign tourists.

3.3. Analysis of tourism supply in the selected southern regions of Slovakia

In a destination the existence of infrastructure is inevitable for tourism development. From 2008 to 2012 the number of accommodation establishments was the highest in Nové Zámky District, Rožňava, Dunajská Streda and Košice District, where the main tourist attractions and subregions with better potential for tourism development are located. The lowest number of accommodation establishments was in Revúca and Šaľa District. The situation of tourism supply correspondents with the demand expressed by the number of guests in accommodation establishments. In the annual comparison, the development was more or less stable. In 2012 compared to 2011 there was a significant increase in the number of accommodation establishments. In 14 districts their number increased, only in one remained unchanged. The most significant growth was recorded in Galanta (80%), Dunajská Streda (69%) and Revúca District (57%) where was the highest increase in the number of guests in 2012 comparing 2011 (Table 5).

Table 5: Number of accommodation establishments in selected southern districts of Slovakia

Districts	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Index 09/08	Index 10/09	Index 11/10	Index 12/11
Senec	37	32	29	29	39	0,8649	0,9063	1,0000	1,3448
Dunajská Streda	66	65	62	58	98	0,9848	0,9538	0,9355	1,6897
Galanta	16	14	15	15	27	0,8750	1,0714	1,0000	1,8000
Šaľa	9	9	9	9	9	1,0000	1,0000	1,0000	1,0000
Nitra	38	46	45	44	52	1,2105	0,9783	0,9778	1,1818
Komárno	47	46	44	40	47	0,9787	0,9565	0,9091	1,1750
Nové Zámky	107	112	105	102	126	1,0467	0,9375	0,9714	1,2353
Levice	33	36	35	34	41	1,0909	0,9722	0,9714	1,2059
Veľký Krtíš	18	20	15	14	15	1,1111	0,7500	0,9333	1,0714
Lučenec	21	19	17	18	22	0,9048	0,8947	1,0588	1,2222
Rimavská Sobota	27	27	26	25	31	1,0000	0,9630	0,9615	1,2400
Revúca	12	8	7	7	11	0,6667	0,8750	1,0000	1,5714
Rožňava	95	81	77	74	73	0,8526	0,9506	0,9610	0,9865
Košice	59	62	63	64	56	1,0508	1,0161	1,0159	0,8750
Košice - okolie	40	36	36	36	39	0,9000	1,0000	1,0000	1,0833
Trebišov	24	23	24	24	26	0,9583	1,0435	1,0000	1,0833
Michalovce	48	46	51	50	52	0,9583	1,1087	0,9804	1,0400

Source: Self-elaboration according to www.statistics.sk, 2014.

The number of beds was the highest in Michalovce District, which two times exceeded the number of beds in Senec District that was on the second place. The comparison with the number of accommodation establishments in Michalovce District shows that compared to other districts there were less accommodation establishments but with large capacity. This was the same in Senec District. In contrast, in the districts of Nové Zámky, Košice, Rožňava and Dunajská Streda there were rather more accommodation establishments with smaller capacity (Table 6).

Table 6: Number of beds in accommodation establishments in selected districts of southern Slovakia

Districts	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Index 09/08	Index 10/09	Index 11/10	Index 12/11
Senec	6 193	6 047	5 811	5 757	6 350	0,9764	0,9610	0,9907	1,1030
Dunajská Streda	3 496	3 439	3 218	3 117	4 160	0,9837	0,9357	0,9686	1,3346
Galanta	1 003	985	982	984	1 281	0,9821	0,9970	1,0020	1,3018
Šaľa	452	440	419	423	438	0,9735	0,9523	1,0095	1,0355
Nitra	2 510	2 779	2 876	2 928	3 930	1,1072	1,0349	1,0181	1,3422
Komárno	1 520	1 630	1 543	1 437	1 435	1,0724	0,9466	0,9313	0,9986
Nové Zámky	4 827	5 145	5 022	4 865	5 345	1,0659	0,9761	0,9687	1,0987
Levice	1 901	2 041	2 034	2 033	2 721	1,0736	0,9966	0,9995	1,3384
Veľký Krtíš	1 071	1 068	985	995	1 003	0,9972	0,9223	1,0102	1,0080
Lučenec	1 217	1 047	951	962	1 046	0,8603	0,9083	1,0116	1,0873
Rimavská Sobota	1 473	1 474	1 445	1 357	1 339	1,0007	0,9803	0,9391	0,9867
Revúca	602	524	533	386	456	0,8704	1,0172	0,7242	1,1813
Rožňava	2 327	2 056	1 977	1 958	1 922	0,8835	0,9616	0,9904	0,9816
Košice	3 604	4 348	4 158	4 157	3 296	1,2064	0,9563	0,9998	0,7929
Košice - okolie	1 358	1 177	1 179	1 288	1 348	0,8667	1,0017	1,0925	1,0466
Trebišov	1 536	1 534	1 554	1 557	1 600	0,9987	1,0130	1,0019	1,0276
Michalovce	13 169	12 835	13 292	13 389	13 521	0,9746	1,0356	1,0073	1,0099

Source: Self-elaboration according to www.statistics.sk, 2014.

The number of beds in accommodation establishments was more or less in line with the development of accommodation establishments in the studied period. In Nitra District the number of beds from 2008 to 2012 increased, on the contrary, in Rožňava District declined.

3.4. Improvement of tourism development in the southern regions of Slovakia

Southern Slovakia has different character than the northern regions of Slovakia. Most tourist regions in this area have supra-regional importance and despite the lowland region they have attractions, which have long-term potential to increase the importance of the regions to the national level. We consider the development of summer tourism associated with water sports and bathing in water and thermal water in Danubian lowland, business and religious tourism in Nitra and Košice, cycling, cultural, wine and rural tourism to be the most perspective.

Popular in the past decades became the tourism attractions with a thematic character. Common and interconnected themes may have synergy with several positive effects. Thematic routes concerning castles have potential to develop in Veľký Krtíš, Lučenec, Rimavská Sobota and Rožňava District. Wine routes can develop in all the southern districts of Slovakia. Especially important are the attractions of Tokaj wine region with connection to Hungary.

Forasmuch as it is a border area, the cooperation with Hungary appears to be very important. This is proved by the number of Hungarian guests in accommodation establishments in southern districts of Slovakia, who have stable position in the structure of foreign visitors. Some municipalities have already been engaged in cross-border cooperation programs and through various grant schemes received funding to build cycling and nature trails along the Danube, or to link Hungary and Slovakia by ferry. Slovakia and Hungary can create and offer complex tourism products transcending boundaries aimed at natural and cultural heritage of Slovak Karst and Aggtelek National park, Muran Plateau National Park, Duna – Ipoly National park and other valuable boarder areas.

Danube and its tributaries can be considered as one of the most important attractions of this area. For its international importance and links with other countries in its catchment area, the Danube also provides many opportunities for tourism development.

4. CONCLUSION

A comparison of the supply and demand of accommodation establishments shows that in some districts the number of accommodation establishments far exceeded their visit rate. Košice District is the only studied region of national importance and had the highest number of guests, which greatly exceeded the number of guests in other districts. Košice District was followed by Nové Zámky, Nitra, Senec and Dunajská Streda District. According to the number of accommodation establishments Nové Zámky District was the first, followed by Rožňava, Košice, Dunajská Streda and Michalovce District. Since districts Rožňava, Nové Zámky and Dunajská Streda reached a lower number of guests than Košice and Nitra District, but had a higher number of accommodation establishments, we can conclude that these districts are oversized in the number of accommodation establishments.

Potential to improve the tourism development in the southern regions of Slovakia have according to tourism attractions several forms of tourism. The most appropriate seems to be summer tourism associated with water sports and bathing. Perspective is also cycling, business and rural tourism, wine and cultural routes, spa and wellness tourism, cave visiting and natural treasure of national parks and Danube River especially in collaboration with Hungary.

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