
SUSTAINABILITY AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN PÉCS WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE 2010 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROGRAMME

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A b s t r a c t

The relationship between sustainability and tourism proves to be a very relevant issue of today's economic and social development debates. Expansion and further and further development on the one hand enforced by the world market and sustainability, and localisation on the other hand enforced by the local population are facing with each other for decades now.

This paper deals with this up-to-date issue focusing on Pécs's tourism industry especially from the point of view of its sustainable aspects. Of course, these investigations are strongly connected to the city's urban development issues as well so in this article we try to appoint a combined view of the city's urbanisation and tourism issues. The actuality of the topic could also be highlighted in that the city is the Cultural Capital of Europe in 2010, so in this respect apart from the general perspectives of its tourism and hospitality industry, further developments of tourism is investigated as well.

1. INTRODUCTION

Dealing with the topic of sustainability and tourism, first we have to give clear definition of terms. In this article, we used the definitions of the National Tourism Development Strategy of Hungary 2005-2013. So in this respect we understand the under mentioned definitions as follows:

Sustainable development

Sustainable development defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987 as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Environmental protection and management is essential to sustainable development. (Hungarian Tourist Authority, National Tourism Development Strategy of Hungary 2005-2013, 2005)

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Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism is a concept that seeks to address the long-term environmental and socio-cultural issues surrounding uncontrolled tourist development worldwide. An extension of ‘green’ tourism, it is part of a much wider global debate on sustainable development, highlighted by the Brundtland Report in 1987 and the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. Sustainability must permeate every area of tourism. (Hungarian Tourist Authority, National Tourism Development Strategy of Hungary 2005-2013, 2005)

Sustainable development in tourism

The sustainable utilization of the natural and cultural attractions is highly important for tourism; in the utilization of resources the irreversible negative processes must be prevented. Presently, sustainable tourism is only a theoretical concept in Hungary. In spite of different initiatives the indicator system suitable for the verification of the sustainable operation of the developments and the comprehensive regulation are missing. (Hungarian Tourist Authority, National Tourism Development Strategy of Hungary 2005-2013, 2005)

So from the point of view of the Hungarian ‘practice’ in terms of optimalization of the effects of tourism on quality of life we can state that the industry is morally responsible to prevent those damages, which threaten future generations. Due to this, three specific objectives will ensure the optimalization of the effects of tourism:

1. Optimalization of the effects on society
2. Preservation of cultural heritage
3. Optimalization of the effects on environment

Based on the above mentioned, the most important results and novelty of this article we believe is that it tends to collect and highlight those connecting points between sustainability and tourism in the case of the City of Pécs demonstrating the importance of linkage between modern tourism and urban development.

2. METHODOLOGY

During the research work of the article we used several methods of investigation. As the most important primary source we have to mention questionnaires completed by the tourists attending and visiting Pécs. Although these questionnaires were mainly been filled in 2001, the recent field trips and surveys show that the information gathered earlier has not been significantly changed.

As secondary sources, we elaborated and worked on the materials formerly carried out by the Tourism Department of the Institute of Geography in connection with city tourism development of Pécs and also tourism development concepts, the National Tourism Development Strategy and the Pécs2010 Cultural Capital programme was elaborated, just to mention the most important applied literature.

The research work is also confirmed by that the two authors of the article live and work in Pécs of course, so apart from the ‘usual’ research methods, up-to-date empirical information is visualised as well in the article.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. The development of tertiary sector

The development of *tertiary sector* is quite advanced today, although this is at least as much due to the crisis of industry in Pécs as to the advance of commerce and other service branches. Situated along a significant market axis, the commercial role of the city was traditionally strong, its attraction zone extending well into areas beyond what is today the southern state border. Although the south-Slavic wars brought about temporary fallback, Croatian shopping tourism still remained significant – decreasing, though – after pacification. The transformation of retail trade and spatial structure in the city started in the late 1980s: FEMA, built in the city outskirts, and “Kereskedők Háza” established as part of the architectural rehabilitation of the downtown city areas provided the city with artistically modern shopping malls that met all contemporary requirements. The monopoly of “ABC” food stores that were built in every housing district was first broken by flexible small shops, then by huge hypermarkets appearing in the transforming industrial zones. The deconcentration of

retail trade, and its strengthening in the easily accessible marginal areas forced traders in the historic city centre into a situation completely outside the chances of competition. Where stores maintaining higher prestige were able to survive for a while, shops offering cheap Asian goods appeared beside and instead of them. ECE, a German company having gained experience in the transformation of post-socialist retail trade, boosted this process in 2004 by establishing its new regional shopping mall in an almost-downtown plot formerly accommodating various industrial facilities. The big losers of this process are traditional department stores: both the ones in the centre and the ones established in decentral locations have gone through several rounds of transformation. The most recent retail-trade investments were made in the eastern edge of the city, because these were less well supplied districts which have been left untouched by the first 15 years of transition (TRÓCSÁNYI, A. – AUBERT, A. – GONDA, T. 2001).

3.2. Revitalisation in the historic city centre

The boundaries of the historic downtown of Pécs are clearly marked by the line of the city wall and certain streets that were adapted to the wall directions. This relatively large area that includes the majority of the 400 registered protected heritage buildings, has maintained its dual structure comprising a religious and a secular centre (Dóm and Szent István squares, and Széchenyi-square, respectively) since medieval times. Diverting the traffic load and transforming the functions of the downtown area have been current issues for three decades now. The central square lost its original marketplace function long ago, and also the intersections of main traffic routes have been moved outside this area. The tram line eliminated in 1952 ran across Széchenyi square and connected the eastern and western city areas. Bus lines, too, now meet in the centre, but outside the walls, and when the main road 6/A was built, car traffic was forced further to the south and then cross-traffic in the downtown area was strictly limited. Relieving the centre from traffic was continued in other directions, too: the bus terminal at Kossuth-square was eliminated in the 1980s, the northern divert road, even including a tunnel section, was built in several stages, entry to the protected area was restricted to permit-bearers, and pedestrian precincts were established.

These processes together lead to a situation in which the protection of city values, quite in line with popular heritage protection principles, is becoming a priority. Thus a process has started – although is still far from completion –, in which the downtown area is gradually turned from a living centre to a monument-city. One indication of such attempts was the fact that the city management initiated the declaration of the entire historic downtown area as a UNESCO World

Heritage Site, but this was not successful. Finally in 2000 the ancient, Early-Christian remains, located in the north-western segment of the city which was traditionally a religious centre, were enlisted as World Heritage.

Among traditional city centre functions, commerce should be a strong element, in addition to the administrative character. One of the great losers of the concentration process in trading is the commercial offer of the downtown area, sited in the high-prestige, expensively hired shops (which in fact never extended beyond not more than just four streets of the city centre). As early as in the mid-1990s, the first smaller shopping mall was opened on the fringes of the central area, thus projecting the direction of further development. The greatest shock, however, was delivered by the appearance of hypermarkets and mall-type shopping centres that offer mass-products relatively cheaply but at least at less expensive prices than those found in shops in the inner city. New palaces of consumption, these facilities have distracted the vast majority of younger substantial buyers. Banks, insurance companies and various other business services have also moved in this direction: because of traffic restrictions and the chronic lack of parking facilities they are forced to seek more accessible places. As a consequence of dropping shop rental fees associated with the decline of the commerce function in the centre, even shops with relatively low prices spread could appear in the heart of the city, such as Asian clothing-profile ones. Compared to that, it is quite exhilarating that goods trading functions have partly been replaced by *catering*. The increasingly marked tourism and university character of the city generates reliable demand for cafeterias and restaurants: in pedestrian precincts these businesses operate as seasonally open-air facilities in the streets (PIRISI, G. – TRÓCSÁNYI, A. 2006).

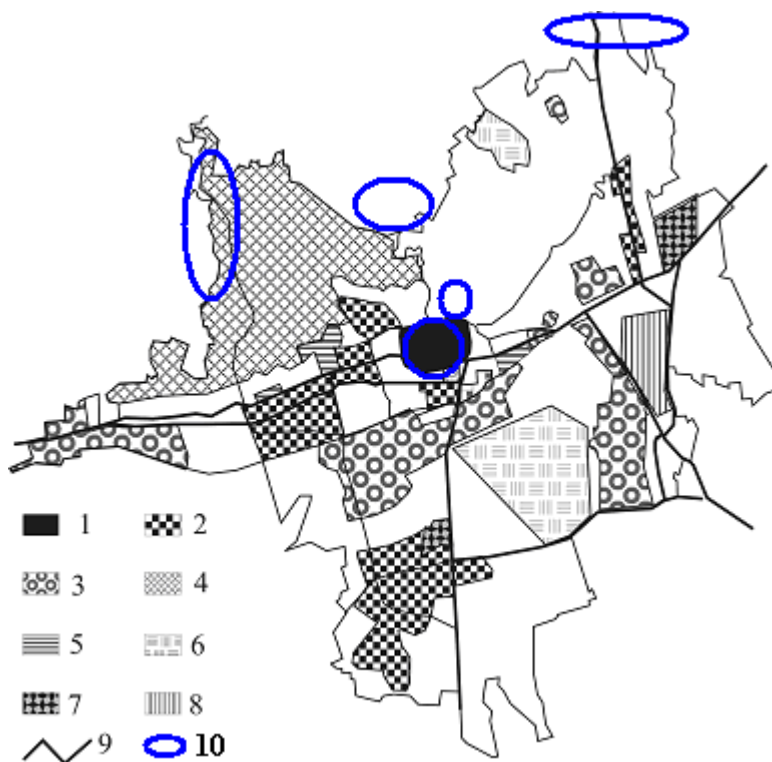
3.3. Degrading recreational areas

Pécs has never been a city of spacious parks and well-arranged green areas. This fact has been somewhat balanced by the presence of Mecsek Hills with its forests and popular excursion grounds both close to the city and a bit further off. In the 1960s a continuous recreational zone formed in the hillside, with a zoo, amusement park, children's railway, ski run, walking paths for smaller family tours, and a forest court with gym stations all serving the aim of entertainment at the standards of those times. These facilities and institutions still exist, but mostly just as their own caricatures, without hardly any advance during a course of the past 40 years. Other recreational areas in town are quite scattered, their locations determined by factors such as the presence of densely populated concrete panel housing areas and formerly unbuilt areas. After 1990, as financial resources became scarcer, the effect was quite strong in this respect. Out of the two most

important lidos, Balokány – the one near the Zsolnay porcelain factory – was closed down, and the same thing has happened to quite a few sports institutions: an illustrative example is that during the past 15 years nine football teams were dismissed in Pécs, and this also meant – apart from a few exceptions – the elimination or selling off of sports grounds used by them.

Although there have been plans for establishing a large green area including parks, sports grounds and spa, for which a recultivated area that could relatively easily be made accessible would be provided, no funding has yet been found for such a grand investment. The same factor is the greatest obstacle to relocating the city zoo – currently failing to meet EU standards – to a more spacious and modern facility.

Fig. 1. The functional urban morphology of Pécs



1. Historical downtown; 2. Housing estates; 3. Functionally changing brown fields; 4. Outer residential zone; 5. University campuses; 6. Recultivated mining zones; 7. Former military location; 8. Industrial Park; 9. Major roads; 10. Tourism and recreational areas.

Ed.: Pirisi, G.

3.4. Evaluating today's tourism in Pécs

This next chapter tends to provide an evaluation of the recent tourism trends of Pécs. It seems by no means favourable and determining from the point of view of tourism that the early-Christian cemetery was pronounced as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Gaining this award, Pécs received such absolute attractions with which:

- It can open with significant chances to the international markets, especially towards the overseas;
- A determined character of its heritage supply has been formed, significantly altering from its concurrency;
 - Since among the domestic World Heritage Sites this is the first one from the South Transdanubian Region (as the Busójárás in Mohács became the second), so its uniqueness is unquestionable;
 - This is the only World Heritage Site in Hungary from the Roman ages;
- The heritage attractions of the city could be organised to a complex tourist product and programme due to unambiguous governing principles.

It is an important positive feature of the city that the cultural offers of Pécs's tourism development concept provided concrete results. The great scale cultural events of the city are able to expand regional and sometimes national or even international attractions from the low season to the high season.

The city though could preserve – in spite of the negative effects of the latter years – its outstanding attraction centre role in the region confidently.

We can also state that parallel with the accommodation broadening and flare of the city – though at a slightly smaller ratio – quality development was experienced as well. The basics of this development were provided by the city's gastronomy and hospitality industry developments. Due to this phenomena, tourists attending the historic city centre or its neighbouring areas can select from the high quality restaurants and public houses. Also the pedestrian areas of the city centre provide an ever effervescent summer life worthy to a great city.

The opinions about the city are by no means favourable in terms of the attending tourists. The majority of both domestic and international tourists is satisfied with the local services and return back to Pécs with pleasure.

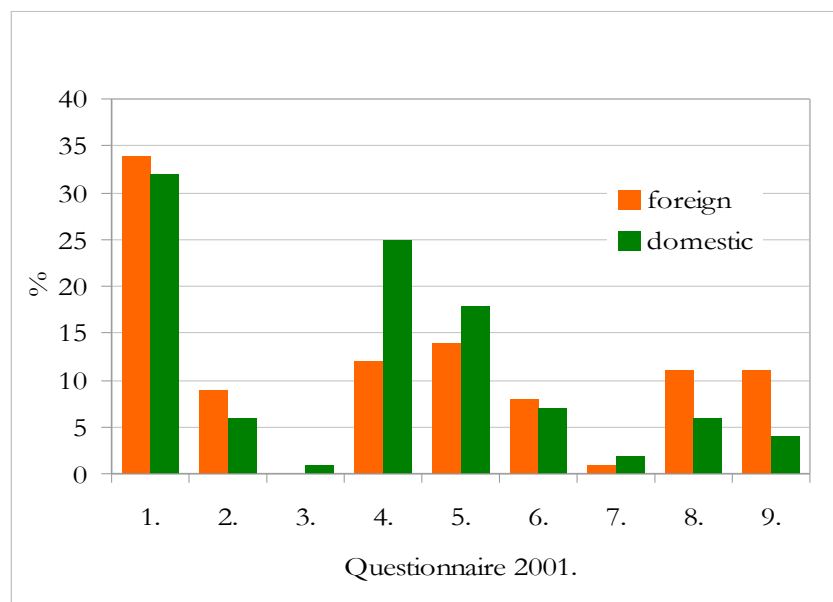
It is also favourable in terms of tourism development that the region's development plans all contain tourism as a priority. It can also be favourable if we consider the domestic central and decentralised development sources for tourism (Pécs Megyei Jogú Város Turizmusfejlesztési Konceptiójának Módosítása, 2003).

Besides the favourable features we also have to highlight some negative effects as well. The city can only preserve its positions compared to its rivals – the big cities of Hungary – really hardpressed. The renewing supply of the concurrent cites mainly strengthened in terms of its summertime leisure attractions, the business services and fairs. Several rivals started to build – or even finished up – with great conference centres and quality accommodation developments.

Another problem of the city's tourism industry is that it is unable to take advantage of its possibilities of wine tourism. Its supply is still underdeveloped, Pécs can not fulfil the role of the traditional centre of the Meccsakalja wine region.

From our point of view we would like to emphasize that the greatest problem pointing way beyond tourism is the city's traffic and access problems although the M6 motorway already has been established at the end of March, 2010 (BERKI, M. – CSAPÓ, J. 2006).

Fig. 2. Determining features of Pécs based on the opinion of its tourists



1. City of rich historical past, traditions and monuments; 2. Episcopal city, religious centre; 3. Mining-industrial centre; 4. University city; 5. City of mediterranean mood; 6. City of tourism and festivals; 7. City of commerce, services and trade; 8. City of arts; 9. City of wine and gastronomy
 Source: Modification of Pécs County Rank City's Tourism Development Programme, 2003

The Most Important Sights of the City

Among the three most important sights of Pécs first of all the cultural memories and monuments were mentioned. At the highest ratio (80%) the Basilica of Pécs, and the Minaret (Dzsámi) is mentioned. From the museums the most well known is the Csontváry Museum, followed by the Zsolnay and the Vasarely Museums. Numerous tourists highlighted the small inner city streets as significant attractions of the city. Out of the cultural memories the Mecsek Mountains, the TV tower and the Tettye district was also meant to be important in terms of tourism sights of Pécs. As it is clearly shown in the recent years the importance of the World Heritage Sight was not enough present in the tourists' perception but it is also experienced that its role is growing year by year.

Borderless city – ideas for the transformation and modernization of city structure

Some of the above problems are familiar – ore even trivial – for many of the citizens, politicians and intellectuals thinking reliably about the future of Pécs. Not even economic transition has been fully completed in the city, and structural transformations in the physical sense will naturally take a longer time. Putting the problem the other way round: could the deliberate transformation and modernization of settlement structure stimulate the delayed transformation of economic structure?

Of course, Pécs has a concept for future: revising the concept is just being done, for two important reasons: firstly, after a long preparation, the city has won the right of being nominated from Hungary as the Cultural Capital of Europe in 2010. Secondly, planning for the 2007-2013 EU budgetary period has been launched, and it is considered by city management that in this period Pécs should become one of the growth centres of the country, with life quality (environmental industry, health industry, cultural industry) being in the centre of development. The two concepts of course rely on each other.

The slogan of the Cultural Capital proposal – „Borderless city” – has several possible interpretations. It refers to the Balkan on the one hand, to which region one traditional route was leading through Pécs. On the other hand, however, it means also deliberately braking down both virtual and physically existing boundaries within the city. The choice of sites for the key investments of the Cultural Capital project reflects the intention to interlink city quarters separated by brown-fields, and to enlarge existing cultural spaces with locations which until now were *terrae incognitae* in that respect. The latter usually appear in urban spaces quite expressively; in the case of Pécs between the traditional and the modern but unfashionable quarters. According to the

concepts thought up, these boundaries are to be dissolved by means of the new strategy, thus creating an integrate, post-modern urban image. The ultimate goal of course, is the long-desired structural change: to create cultural economy which is able to fill in the spaces left by the decline of industry, and which can turn the town into a regional centre in the wide international sense.

Making the strategy come true is to be achieved by five key projects. Though each includes certain elements of the traditional culture concept and cultural development theories, the ways they intend to turn things into reality are specific of Pécs, relying on and taking advantage of local characteristics. The *conference (and music) centre (Pécs conference and concert centre)* is thought to be essential, and in its size should be matching one of the largest universities of Hungary. It will be sited in the Balokány facility which used to be a combination of a popular lido and a public park with declining prestige in the industrial era, but now being completely out of order.

The second grand plan, maybe the most renown on the national level, is the creation of the *Zsolnay cultural quarter*. The buildings of the manufacture with famous history are architectural and industrial monuments, but experience from recent years show that goods production in itself cannot support the factory any longer. In line with post-modern principles of urban design, the new functions will be mixed: the plot with secessionist buildings and a park will house an industrial thematic show park, an arts incubator house, a creative complex and galleries of the Faculty of Arts, as well as restaurants and a hotel.

If one approaches further along the main axis of the town, beside Zsolnay-factory and the Balokány area towards the centre, a currently empty plot is reached which is planned to accommodate the building of the *South Transdanubian regional library and knowledge centre*, integrating the functions of the existing city and county libraries, thus making a prestigious home for thus important background service of knowledge-based society.

With a total of 5,300 square metres floor space, the project of *Grand Exhibition Place - Reconstruction of Museum Street* includes the renewal of historic buildings in Káptalan Street, the development of the old County Hall and Building No. 2 of the Modern Hungarian Gallery at 5 Papnövelde Street. The planning site also includes the public spaces in Káptalan Street, the museum gardens and the public spaces in Papnövelde Street (<http://www.pecs2010.hu>).

Finally the plan for restoring *squares and public parks* of the town – which is the only programme to be achieved by June, 2010 – will contribute to the significant change of the overall appearance of the town, although achieved in minute elements. Pécs is aptly criticised because of the lack of green areas in the centre. The harshness of paved and tarmac surfaces will be softened if single-purpose spaces now subordinated to traffic are made multi-functional, if trees are planted,

playgrounds made more exciting, parks more alive, and by bringing to the surface karst water springing in the Mecsek hillside – now forced underground –, and thus using fountains and spilling streams for improving the microclimate of city squares (RONCZYK, L. – WILHELM, Z. 2006).

Of course, this complex plan cannot and will not broadly reform the structure of the city, but the objectives specified in it are widely accepted and desirable. There are promising signs in respect of accessibility and city traffic, both essential if high-rising ambitions are to be achieved. By summer 2006, the final section of the southern divert road has been completed, thus terminating a project having lasted for decades now. Soon another freeway can reach the town which can provide travellers a new divert route and will also greatly improve both national and international access to the city, even if the final trace cannot be considered to be ideal for Pécs. Yet another modern means of access to the town is the Pogány airport south of Pécs, with regular air traffic starting next spring. It is planned that inner connections between southern and northern city areas will be improved by establishing two new railway bridge crossings. In long-term plans it is discussed that city public transportation should be developed by establishing tram line(s), primarily along the most significant axis, also utilising available railway facilities and areas.

Pécs2010 and sustainability

According to the preparatory programmes of the Pécs2010 final programme, 2008 was the year of environmental culture and health care in Pécs. Here we have to mention that one of the city's most important new programmes is entitled "Eco-city–Eco-region Programme", aimed primarily at giving priority to an ecological approach and health-centred planning in decisions concerning the urban development of Pécs, in accordance with the thematic strategy of the European Union called "Urban Environment." It is also worth mentioning that according to experts, one possible breakthrough for the economy of Pécs and its region is health industry and health services.

But carrying out the aims of environment protection it is not only the city leadership but the local population as well needed. So in this respect the citizens of Pécs should also modify their attitudes and be aware of their health and environment. In this respect civilian organisations play and have always played an important role in the protection of the environment, often much more important than national or local governments. So that is why the theme of the 2008 "preparatory year" drew attention to civic initiatives, targeting mostly children and young people. These bottom-up initiatives are for example, that specific age groups could be involved and targeted in the protection of the environment and public health through the launching of international artistic competitions (in theatrical art, photographic art, literature, and visual arts). According to the 2010

Cultural Capital of Europe preparatory programme visions, one way to encourage the members of this generation to lead a healthier life is to present them with great sporting figures as role models. These leading figures of today's Pécs are mainly its swimmers and women's basketball team. The preparatory programme also highlighted the art of recent decades – called more exactly environmental art or arte povera – demonstrating several special aspects of the relationship of man to the environment. Based mainly on this idea by 2008 several sculpture parks has been completed in the green areas of Pécs. (Local Government of the City of PÉCS, 2006: Borderless City European Capital of Culture – Pécs, 2010 p. 88)

4. CONCLUSIONS

According to our research work, first of all we have to mention that sustainability is hardly enough highlighted in the urban development programs of Pécs, though considerable efforts were made so far in this respect. Sustainability and tourism on the other hand is even more rarely visualised as only high-sounding phrases are outlined occasionally in the mentioned programmes. Here we have to say that according to the National Tourism Development Strategy 2005-2013 of Hungary, presently, sustainable tourism is only a theoretical concept in the country. In spite of different initiatives the indicator system suitable for the verification of the sustainable operation of the developments and the comprehensive regulation are missing (Hungarian Tourist Authority, National Tourism Development Strategy of Hungary 2005-2013, 2005).

The article collected the connection points of sustainability, tourism and urban development focusing on primary researches, city tourism investigations and planning development programme or concept elaborations. According to this work the City of Pécs faces huge challenges in the near future in connection with its tourism industry and urban development as well, as in 2010 the City will be the Cultural Capital of Europe representing not only its citizens but in a way the whole country as well to the world. These challenges are now much more connected to sustainability. As mentioned earlier one of the most important preparatory programmes deals with the environmental culture of Pécs. These initiatives hopefully will generate the up and coming ones creating a more sustainable city and regional-cultural centre of the South-Transdanubian Region.

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