

**THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM
IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND ITS EXPEDIENCY
OF ITS USE IN UKRAINE**

According to the "Strategy of sustainable tourism and health resorts development in Ukraine", which was worked out by the State Committee of tourism and health resorts in Ukraine, the following prerogative issue was pointed out, namely, the creation of integrated information system in tourism. This is aimed at providing an access to information for tourism and for the subjects of tourist activities. The next priorities are the following of Tourist Information Centers (TIC) network, the creation and support of official, state and regional tourist internet portals, functioning and deepening the international cooperation with the aim of sustainable tourism development [1]. It is logical that the creation of integrated information system in the sphere of tourism is extremely important for the modern tourism of each country.

Furthermore, according to the Conception on the tourism and health resorts issues, worked out by the Scientific Center of tourism development (SCTD) created by the Resolution of the Cabinet Of Ministers of Ukraine in 2002, one of the main tasks of tourism in Ukraine is the creation of tourist information network [2]. The main aim of TIC's is the socio-economic development in the cities and regions as a priority activity of economics.

The above mentioned idea is especially actual in the process of EURO-2012 preparation, when Ukraine jointly with Poland will host the European football championship. Due to these circumstances, the current issue is very important and actual both for Ukraine and for all specialists and tourism professionals, in particular.

In this respect the experience of Czech Republic seems to be very interesting and useful. The Czech Republic organized similar events (e.g. in 2004 – the World Ice Hockey Championship) and it is also well-known by a well-developed network of local TIC's. the TIC's are of special interest, and so are the tourist firms and agencies because they are the "screen" of the

country, with which the tourists guests and visitors actually get acquainted virtually first.

The deepening of international cooperation in the tourism sphere is very important, especially taking into account the European experience and practical activities and the activities of Vyshegrad group in particular.

When the activities of the Council of Economic Mutual Help had stopped, and so did the cooperation between the countries of socialist countries, the Czech Republic had to handle the issues of entering the EU and of fast and effective approach to the principles, norms and standards which Europe has been using. It became especially important in the sphere of tourism. That is way, immediately after the November events in 1989, the Czech Republic has actively studied the European experience of recreation and tourism with the aim of establishing and implementing the similar institutions in the country. The peculiarity of tourism development in the Czech Republic (as in other countries of former socialist countries) was the country's transition to market principles of economy and it resulted in the use of a number of European countries' experiences, in particular the neighboring countries, the Federative Republic of Germany and Austrian Republic.

Thus, in 1993 a state public organization Czech Tourism was formed and its aim was to promote the recreational and tourism possibilities of the Czech Republic both abroad and in the country.

Till 2003, the organization which founder and curator is the Ministry of Local Development of the Czech Republic was called the Czech Center of the Touristic Movement. Nowadays, the Agency of "Czechtourism" has over 600 information centers all over the country and it has representatives in 26 countries in the world, it actively promotes its activities through its own specialized publishments, advertisements and Internet materials in 20 languages. Official touristic information centers (OTIC – there are about 330 of them) are authorized and certified by "Czechtourism" and they are the tourism subjects. Their objective is to promote a concrete service (hotel, recreation or service), a region (reservation, district etc.) or to promote whole Czech Republic. A very important task is also a one-type mark and logo of OTIC's. The status of "Czechtourism" partner for such a service is free of charge. However, for such a service the partners of Agent tours are obliged to carry out, the OTIC's visitors' monitoring. Such kind of cooperation is a common example of free- of charge franchise.

The organizational structure of “Czechtourism” underlines its role and tasks in the touristic sphere of the country. A special attention is paid, in particular, to the economic and marketing trends, and also to the trend’s researches and innovations in tourism. Especially important are the issues of information supply in tourism and the work with mass media [3].

The “Czechtourism” budget has been increasing every year. Thus, if in 2003 the budget of the Agency was 198,907 mln. Czech kronas, in 2004 it made 321,488 mln., in 2005 – 253,215mln., in 2007 – 351,495 mln., in 2009 – 375,853 correspondingly [4].

The second, a very important so called “player” on the tourism market and especially on the internal one is the Association of the Czech Republic regions. This is an open, non-governmental, non-party organization which united the interests of all 14 administrative regions (13 regions + the city of Prague). It was founded in 2001 and registered as a status of the association of judicial persons protecting the interests of all regions’ inhabitants. One of the main organs of the Association are the Committee on Tourism and the Committee on cultural protection of the monuments [5].

The Ministry of Local (Regional) development of the Czech Republic is a methodical and coordination body for all participants involved in the tourism of the country. Their relations are regulated by the document Conception of state policy in tourism of the Czech Republic for the period of 2007-2013 and it is the document which takes into account all the possibilities of the tourism development in the country. Alongside with this, the Ministry’s important aim is to use the legal possibilities for the creation of all the possibilities for tourism development in the country and to achieve better conditions for the clients’ protection with the help of transparency. It is also very important to determine clear rules for the touristic company’s activities and for tour operators, too. The Ministry is an active participant of all international forums in tourism and it regularly presents its activities at special conferences and exhibitions. Additionally, the Ministry with aim of tourism development in the Czech Republic, implements a number of projects financed by the structural funds of European Union [6].

A very important tool of introducing the new tendencies at the market and with the aim of tourism promotion is the participation in international forums and tourist exhibitions. The following exhibitions are well recognized in the Czech Republic, like GO – An International exhibition of industrial tourism and Regiontour – An International Exhibition of touristic possibilities of the

regions, which are held annually in the city of Brno. These exhibitions are the largest in the Central Europe; they are representative places of tourism focused on regions. Only in 2001 842 subjects of tourism from 24 countries all over the world took part in the work of these exhibitions. 33 242 people attended the exhibitions and 403 mass media representatives had reported about these events.

With the aim of self-organization on the newly created market of touristic services, a number of public organizations are functioning in the Czech Republic. The most famous are the Association of tourist agencies, the Association of the Czech tourist agencies and agenttours, the Association of tourist Information Centers of the Czech Republic (ATIC) and the Association of the hotels and restaurants of the Czech Republic.

The first Association (ACK-CR) was created in the August of 1990 as the first union of tourist agencies in the Czech Republic. Nowadays it comprises 196 tourist agencies and agenttours, and 80 members of the market related to tourism (transport enterprises, exhibitions, specialized Mass Media, vocational establishments, insurance companies, statistic, analytical firms etc.) [8].

The second organization (ACCKA) was founded in 1991 and it has 250 members-professionals in the tourism branch. Since 2005 ACCKA has been the member of the prestigious European Association ECTAA, which unites the interests of national associations, unions and agencies of tourist companies of EU countries [9].

The third (A.T.I.C.) Association is a professional, independent organization which is functioning in the sphere of tourist information centers. The Association coordinates the activities of its members, represents its interests in the government, provides sharing experience between them, etc. its executive body is the Secretariat Specialists who are certified according to the norms ISO 9001-2008. All the TIC's which are the members of A.T.I.C. should keep to certain standards according to which a special category is conferred to each TIC [10].

The fourth one (AHR CR) is a professional, non-profitable organization which aim is to promote business and support its own members, hotels, restaurants and also rendering services on entrepreneurship for the owners and its employees. AHR CR is the member of the European Confederation of the hotels and restaurants – HOTREC [11].

A number of international organizations interstate institutions play an important role in the tourism development of the Czech Republic. One of the

priorities of the Vyshegrad group (Vyshegrad group was founded in 1991) is the tourism development promotion in the region the member of which are Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary [12]. The International Vyshegrad Fund with the help of grants accomplishes the support of youth exchanges, international partnership and tourism. Priorities for the Fund are the issues of transborder cooperation including the cooperation with Ukraine [13]. This kind of the cooperation was the topic of the discussion at the International Conference "Ukraine and the Vyshegrad Four on the way to mutual beneficial relations" which was held in Uzhgorod in May 2010 with the support of the Regional Branch of the National Institute of Strategic Research in Uzhgorod [14].

An interesting tool of the cooperation in tourism is the Central European Initiative (CEI). Its members are the Czech Republic, Ukraine (an equal member since 1996). This regional union of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which was founded in 1989 is aimed at establishing multilateral cooperation in political, socio-economical, scientific and cultural spheres, at strengthening stability and safety in the region. 18 countries are the members of CEI; it also has a working group on tourism [15].

The Czech Republic has become the member of the International Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – OECD since December 1995. This organization which has been functioning since 1960 unites 33 most economically developed world countries, the majority countries of EU, the USA, Australia, Korea, Japan and others. The treaty with OECD was signed on the basis of European organization of economic cooperation with the aim of coordination of economic policy of the OECD countries-members and approval of rendering aid programs for the developed countries.

Within the framework of the Organization a Committee on Tourism functioning as a forum of monitoring, and exchange in the politics, structural changes which influence was formed the international tourism development. It support and promotes the sustainable economic increase of tourism development. Due to the Committee all the main missions of OECD on tourism are pointed mandate [16].

Since 1976 the Czech Republic (Ukraine – since 1997) has been the member of World Tourism Organization UN WTO and it is actively using its membership of this organization, especially in tourism [17].

Entering the EU (2004), the Czech Republic was the first to actively cooperate with the organs of EU touristic sphere, such as Tourism Advisory

Committee (TAC) which is an information-coordination and representative organ of tourism in Eurocommission and General Secretariat of the Council (SANCO), which is the working group on the consumers' rights protection. Its task is the trade liberalization (including touristic services) within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

What could be from the above mentioned issues the most useful for Ukraine? Taking into the consideration the fact, that the "third model". Is it the most suitable for the development of tourism in Ukraine? This model is widespread in the developed European countries, where the issue of tourism development is solved on the "basis" of certain many branches Ministry on the level of appropriate department [8, p. 95]. It becomes obvious that the first and the main task will become the creation of the most important segment of tourist industry, i.e. tourist information centers (TIC's). In this respect the experience of the Czech Republic might be the most useful, especially in the category of TIC.

Thus to the category "A" we can refer the TIC's which function 7 days per week, annually and which have the information about the whole Czech Republic. TIC's of this category should be constantly in the Internet contact, render free of charge information about the Czech Republic at least in 3 world languages; offer services of guides in the region, promote the reservation and accommodation of the tourists and provide guides all over the country. TIC's of this category are of 4 stars.

To category "B" we can refer the TIC's of regional importance, which function 6 days a week, annually and they give the information about the region and its location. TIC's of this category should provide free of charge information about its region at least in two world languages, offer guides' services and proved tourists' reservation and accommodation. This category is marked by 3 stars.

To category "C" – belong the TIC's of local level which function 5 days per week annually and give the information about its activities. TIC's of this category should render the information free of charge at least in one world language. It is marked by 2 stars.

To category "D" belongs to the seasonal TIC, which doesn't function annually 5 days per week (during the season) and gives information of its activity in one world language. This kind of TIC is marked by one star.

Thus, the classification of TIC's in the Czech Republic is enough flexible and very well adjusted to the local market of touristic services. It can also be

useful for Ukraine that the state governing in the tourism sphere is focused on non-free license, non-control punishment practice but on information, methodology and practical support of tax payers.

The above mentioned is actual because nowadays in Ukraine a full teal actual, general and systematic information concerning the present recreational resources and touristic possibilities is absolutely not available. The need is obvious, that is to stop and regulate the spontaneous development of tourism in the state, and in particular the creation, classification and TIC's activities as an important essential part of the country's tourism development.

The studied materials could be useful both for the tourism specialists and for the wide circle of professionals who work in the tourism and also for the representatives of law initiatives or other government and management authorities in Ukraine.

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