

## **Recommendation**

Tourism is a strategic sector in the Northern Hungarian region. Not only because in order to fill in the gap created during the economic structural change, it is plausible to strengthen a sector that is smart and a leading sector in the current situation. Tourism has indeed become such a sector in the last 20-30 years in the developed countries. This activity is of primary importance in this region also because this region is one of the richest regions in the country in tourist attractions. The natural values belonging to the North Hungarian Mountains, to its mountainous, hilly and valley lands, to the Tisza and to the following plain regions, as well as the monuments of the rich historical past can be found in this region in a large number. This richness means not only a possibility, but also responsibility. Tourism can play a determining role in exploring and preserving the values, in giving them over to the next generations and ultimately in building the national heritage.

Because of the importance of the sector and because of its role in sustainable development, in the creation of social cohesion and in forming regional identity beyond the economic growth of the region, tourism is in the centre of the current issue of the Strategy Papers. By highlighting some specific topics, we deal with the role of tourism in regional competitiveness and in the function changing of small villages, a special category of settlements and with the local tourism tax revenue. In the “Workshop” section, we publish the summary of the Tourism Development Strategy of the Northern Hungarian region for the period 2007-13. We start a new section called “Cross border cooperation”. In this heading, we publish the lectures of researchers from Kosice kept in the scientific conference in Miskolc in December 2006. We hope that beyond the scientific and higher educational workshops of the region, we will be able to give an insight to the works of the scientific workshops of the neighbouring regions beyond the borders.

Welcome the new issue of the North Hungarian Regional Strategy Papers and read it with interest!

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*Éva Dr. G. Fekete*

*Chief editor*

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# Summaries

**Zoltán Bujdosó – Lóránt Dávid – Andrea Herneczky - Géza Tóth:**

## **Indicators of the relationship between tourism and regional competitiveness by the example of the Mátravidék**

The majority of the settlements in Mátra has to face socio-economic problems such as negative migration balance, high unemployment rate, low number of enterprises or low income. One possible basis for development could be tourism, however, in terms of the number of hotels per inhabitants this region is below the rural average, therefore development is necessary. We have to notice that out of the 62 studied settlements, there were only 21 with hotels operating in the year 2005. Taking the data of the year 1996 as a basis, the number of tourists stayed in hotels in the Mátra increased by 9 % in a decade. This growth is relatively low compared to the national average of 33%. The picture is a bit different in the case of guest nights. Compared to the data of 1996, by the year 2005, there was a decrease of 7% in guest nights spent in hotels, while there was a 15% growth on a national level. Both in its share and in its tendency, domestic tourism is dominant in the region; therefore the enhancement of its international marketing is essential.

**Éva G. Fekete:**

## **Appearance and role of tourism in the function change of small villages**

Speaking about small villages (settlements with population below 500) and tourism two facts are usually assumed. According to the first one, nothing more than village tourism can be reckoned with, while according to the second one, tourism is considered as cure-all for keeping the small villages alive. The reality is, however, much more complex. On the one side, the significance of tourism in small villages cannot be overestimated since they can accommodate 4.2% of the tourists on national and regional level, though merely 2.2% of the tourists take this opportunity. At the same time, tourism assures a definitive change of 10-15% of the settlements. As beneficial change can be appreciated in these villages that opportunities are generated to complete the income of local families, the villages improve in looks, values rise to the surface thus improving self-respect and comfort-feeling of the locals, services are expanded, the guests transmit know-how, new models and innovations to the locals and accordingly solidarity gets stronger while social exclusion is diminished. All these together may contribute to keep the population from leaving the village. This can be achieved if the development of tourism is realized with respect to the social and corporate conditions. Otherwise conflicts may arise between the tourist enterprises and locals, between the guests and locals embittering their life, making the beneficial results impossible even the social exclusion can become more pronounced. According to the organization form as well as the relation to the village in question, the significant tourism services can be divided into three different groups. In the study, survey has been made of peculiarities of holiday villages showing enterprising and second-home-creating spirit, 2. characteristics of classical country hospitality rich in ecological and gastronomic aspects, 3. services of wellness and active tourism appearing in small villages. All these encourage an inevitable change of function for survival of small villages, but have different impact on the local development. Up to the form of tourism at a small village, the expected advantages and risks are diverse and different ways of development are to be applied. A holiday village may save the real estates and maintain the local population but at the same time, it may endanger the environmental aspects and curtail locals of material advantages. Locals can be drawn into tourists services thus traditions can be conserved, on the other hand we have seen unsuitable architectural and cultural solutions. Locals can be drawn also into village lodging facilities provided there is a suitable supply on labour force. Based on the three types of products, solutions have been set up, characteristics of supply and demand have been presented and proposals for development have been drafted.

**Zoltán Bujdosó – Lóránt Dávid – Edit Játékos:**

## **The role of local tourism tax revenue in the Northern Hungarian region**

There is hardly any settlement today that does not consider tourism as a great opportunity. In most of the cases, the lack of finance causes the biggest difficulty. This is especially true in the case of one of the least developed regions of the country, Northern Hungary. Although, taking stock of its various attractions such as health and thermal spas, climatic medical resorts, world heritage sites, wine regions, historic towns, religious and historic memorial sites, national parks, mountain resorts, we find a rather diverse offer for the visitors. The missing capital for developments may possibly be drawn from the income from tourism tax. We show in our study that there is an unfortunately low number (one-fifth) of municipalities in the region which actually utilize their legally granted right to tax. Higher incomes from tourism tax are characteristic of Heves county in general, and

on the level of municipalities, to those settlements which are historic towns, spas or popular mountain resorts. However, it cannot be claimed in a straightforward way that this tourism tax induces development in the tourism sector. There are some settlements where significant increase in terms of certain indicators of tourism development is matched with a considerable income from tourism tax (such as Mezőkövesd, Uppony or Regéc). Nevertheless, there is no such significant connection in most of the cases. What can be still acknowledged is that where there has been an obvious expansion of the sector, there will be higher incomes from the tourism tax. This in turn, can possibly help the local governments invest more in tourism development.

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