Indeed, tourism represents a priority for many coastal areas, where a decline in economic activities has led to a fall in incomes and increased unemployment. The diversifi cation of activities from just fi shing to tourism is supported by the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) as part of local development strategies. EU rural development policy is also of considerable importance to the tourism sector. Through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the Commission can support, among other things, the establishment of businesses active within rural tourism, the development and promotion of agri-tourism and capitalisation on the cultural and natural heritage of rural regions, including mountain areas.

Cohesion policy has allowed more than EUR 6 billion to be directly targeted to support tourism, representing 1.8% of the total budget. EUR 3.8 billion is allocated for the improvement of tourist services, EUR 1.4 for the protection and development of natural heritage, and EUR 1.1 billion for the promotion of natural assets. In addition, support for tourism-related infrastructure and services can be provided under other headings, such as innovation, promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises, information technology applications and human capital. Other instruments include other European structural funds (ERDF, ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the seventh framework programme for research and development (FP7), which will continue to fi nance the setting up of specifi c projects. Between 2007 and 2013.

In 2007, four new fi nancial instruments were set up to provide technical assistance to improve access of SMEs to microfi nance and to support urban development. Here, the Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas (JESSICA) is of particular importance. An initiative of the European Commission developed by the European Commission in co-operation with the European Investment Bank and the Council of Europe Development Bank, JESSICA promotes sustainable urban development by supporting projects in the areas of urban infrastructure – including transport, water/waste water, energy, heritage or cultural sites – for tourism or other sustainable uses, redevelopment of brownfi eld sites – including site clearance and decontamination, the creation of new commercial fl oor space for SMEs, IT and/or R&D sectors, university buildings – medical, biotech and other specialised facilities and energy effi ciency improvements.

Finally, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) is of particular importance to tourism because it has supported the creation of European networks for competitive and sustainable tourism since 2008.

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TENDENCIES OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SLOVAKIA

Slovak tourism, an important element in its development has been the accession of Slovakia to the EU. Though the area of Slovakia is not big in size, it is generously endowed with tourist attractions. Slovakia is similar to other inland European countries such as Austria and Switzerland in term of continental location and variety of tourist attractions. Slovakia with its small area, but conveniently located in the heart of Europe and including rich natural and cultural attractions offers to visitors a constantly growing hotel market with increasingly higher quality standards for services.

The tourism potential of Slovakia is quite vast, covering almost all key forms and types of tourism. Practically all over Slovakia there is a wealth of cultural, historical and natural attractions which may be utilized for tourism. In term of the year round exploitation, it is important that there are 9 national parks, 14 protected landscape areas, numerous lakes, extensive forests, almost 4,000 caves out of which 12 are publicly accessible. The religious monuments throughout all Slovakia belong to the pearls of culture and history. Very special and precious wooden churches in eastern Slovakia are unique.

Almost 62% of the country is created by mountains and mountainous areas what makes good conditions for development of winter tourism in Slovakia. This is one of the few competitive advantages of Slovakia compared to the neighbouring countries (apart from Austria). There are more than 1,200 thermal and mineral springs in Slovakia which creates conditions for the year round development of spa and health tourism. Thermal springs, mostly in the area of South-West Slovakia, create good conditions for stays in the thermal baths. There are more than 40 such thermal baths. Newly built aqua parks are very popular in the recent years. Their combination with mountain resorts is very attractive and much sought for. The mountain regions with very good climate, especially in High Tatras, allow Slovakia to develop climate spas.

Although the hotel business in Slovakia has not a rich history as for example in the United States and the European countries like France or Germany, it achieved a comparable level with the hotel business in the neighboring countries. In 2014 in Slovakia there were 3358 accommodation establishments (with 61 333 rooms with a capacity of 156 569 beds), within which there were 638 hotels. The hotels were concentrating 29 354 with a capacity of 67 626 beds, which accommodated approximately 1 724 941 of visitors more than half of tourists guested in the accommodation units. The number of overnights in accommodation establishments in Slovakia reached 4 885 213 tourists in 2014.

The view of the structure of tourist demand in Slovakia shows a dominant position for guests in the surrounding countries, especially from the Czech Republic (28,3%) and Poland (13,9%), followed by Germany (11,8%), Hungary (7,6%), United Kingdom (3,9%) and Austria (3,8%).

Demand among visitors to Slovakia is focused mainly on mountain holidays (29%), winter sports (22%, but a first-placed 47% during winter), visits to family and acquaintances (11%), and waterside holidays (also 11%). These three preferences in what attracts foreign visitors account for 72% of overall demand. After them come round trips and spa visits. Interest in all other types of tourism is below the level of 5%. The visitors expressed the least interest in shopping tourism (Table 1).

Table 1

Types of tourism that interest foreign visitors to Slovakia

Object of interest	**winter**	**summer**	**autumn**	**2014**
Winter sports	29.3	16.0	18.0	19.6
Mountain holiday	13.0	18.7	17.8	17.1
Waterside holiday (thermal baths, water sites)	9.5	18.1	9.9	12.0
Visit to family, acquaintances	10.3	8.7	10.6	10.0
Urban cultural-historical holiday	5.4	9.8	8.7	8.4
Shopping tourism	6.5	6.2	8.2	7.4
Transit	8.7	6.9	7.0	7.3
Spa visit	5.2	3.2	8.1	6.3
Round trip (for getting to know the countryside, culture and history)	4.2	5.7	5.3	5.2
Rural tourism	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.5
I don’t think I’ll visit Slovakia again	5.6	4.2	3.8	4.2

Among *Czech citizens*, the most numerous guests, the purpose of their visits to Slovakia in autumn 2014 were most often business trips and family visits, which together accounted for 45% of Czech visits. Among *Poles*, the most stated purposes were holidaying and shopping tourism (as they were in autumn 2013). *Austrian guests*, a smaller group, were typically in Slovakia on transit journeys, business trips and visits to family or acquaintances. Among *Hungarians*, transit journeys clearly prevailed, coming a clear distance ahead of shopping tourism, visits to family or acquaintances, and business trips. For *Ukrainians* in autumn 2014, the purposes were typically shopping journeys and transit, followed by visits to family/acquaintances and business trips, which all together accounted for 96% of the visits. Among *German guests*, an exceptionally large share come here only in transit. Among the various groups of guest coming from other countries, the most frequently stated purposes for visiting Slovakia were transit journeys and cultural-cognitive tourism.

Domestic tourism together with inbound tourism is a source of gross domestic product; it creates employment and accelerates regional development with a multiplying effect on the activity of related sectors. Among economically advanced states, domestic tourism has become a springboard to the development of their foreign tourism. If what was offered within Slovakia's domestic tourism were sufficiently competitive, it would possibly influence a partial change in demand for outbound tourism, with the domestic market being able to absorb a considerable part of the demand. In terms of the balance of tourism, this would be an undisputed benefit to the Slovak economy.

According to selective findings by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic (SU SR), 45% of Slovak citizens had a long holiday either in Slovakia or abroad in the summer of 2013. In comparison with 2012, the share of such holidays was lower by 1.6 points. The main reasons for not going on long holidays (either domestic tourism or outbound tourism) concerned: – finances 45.8%; – health 15%; – not leaving place of residence 10%; – work 8.5%; – family 8.2%; – taking a holiday only once every few years 5.4%.

It is clear from this summary that tourism is luxury for some classes of the Slovak population. Our domestic tourism is therefore stagnating. In several states (for example, Switzerland, France, Hungary) the development of domestic tourism is supported by the use of traveller's cheques. There are no plans as yet to implement them in Slovakia, even though neighbouring states (Poland, Hungary) have been effective in offering their citizens financial support to encourage them to spend holidays in their own countries. In its marketing and promotional activities, the Slovak Tourist Board (SACR) will have to devote more attention to the promotion of domestic tourism.

In terms of outbound tourism among Slovak citizens in 2014, the most popular destinations were Croatia, Greece, Italy, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Tunisia, and Spain. Holidays typically lasted 8 to 14 nights and were taken mainly during the summer season. As for the mode of transport, 35.3% travelled by bus, 31.2% by private car, 25.4% by plane, and 6.2% by train. Hotel-type establishments were the main type of accommodation with 51% of the holidaymakers staying in them; private rented accommodation was used by 16.6%, private non-rented accommodation by 14.4%, and campsites by 10.7%

One of the important parts of the offer of tourism, domestic and foreign inbound as well, is cultural and historical landmarks of Slovakia. Mining has also such potential for tourism. Only combination of good conditions, developed infrastructure of tourism and quality services creates base for the tourism to comply with the tasks and function as expected.

KONSTANTIA DARVIDOU

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISM IN GREECE

Greece competes in the tourism market to a large extent only from the limited number of countries. The main consumers are the citizens of the EU or other European countries. A main goal of the arrival of tourists to Greece is beach-resort tourism. Therefore, as the main competitor is geographically close to the coastal countries of the Mediterranean region in the same climate zone, which now are countries of mass tourism (Bulgaria, Egypt, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Portugal, Turkey and Croatia).

The fact that they are the main competitors confirms the comparison of the dynamics of arrival of tourists to these countries and Greece in the pre-crisis and crisis. When compared to the main competing countries, we can determine who is ahead of Greece, or to whom it is inferior.

Enough clear comparative advantages of Greece in the international market of tourist services, in the case where Greece ranks high in the rankings. Greece, a country traditionally oriented to tourism, has formed a number of competitive advantages: historically the primary (climate, coastline, historical and cultural sites) and secondary (hotel chain, health, aviation infrastructure, support and attention to the area by the government).