

Tourism in the Polish regions within the Central European Transport Corridor CETC ROUTE 65

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Abstract

The main aim of the article is to present the importance of tourism in Polish regions within the Central European Transport Corridor CETC ROUTE 65. Four of Polish voivodeships (West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole) are signatories of CETC ROUTE 65. The tourist accommodation and its occupancy are examined, as well as tourist traffic in these four provinces. The analysis of tourism in the West Pomeranian region is the result of research, done under the development project titled 'Research on and modelling of mode-integrated transport system in the West Pomeranian region with a focus on the Central European Transport Corridor North – South CETC ROUTE 65', financed by the National Research and Development Centre in the years 2009–2011 and research project "Port logistic centres as stimulants of the development of ports, port towns and seaside regions. Research, modeling, concept of location, operations and management", financed by the National Science Centre in the years 2011–2012. The research was co-ordinated by Czesława Christowa at the Maritime University of Szczecin.

Introduction

In accordance with Lisbon Strategy, tourism has been recognized as one of the priority directions of European Union's cohesion policy. Tourism is treated as an important factor in regional policy. It plays a part in economic and social development of the region.

The volume, structure and dynamics of inbound tourist traffic have an influence on the economic activity development orientated to its adoption. The larger tourist traffic is the stronger tourist function develops in region and tourism plays an essential role in regional economic system [1, p. 597–598].

There is an opinion, that Europe is the most popular tourist destination in the world. It was confirmed by Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) on the information meeting focused on the situation and development prospects of tourism sector in the world on 22 May 2013. The conclusion of the meeting was that Europe is still the region with the largest share of

income from the tourist economy. In 2012 the share was 43% of the world's income. Transport policy aimed at an increasing the number of connections was indicated as the main challenges and objectives of the UNWTO [2].

The tourism is directly related to the transport. It is necessary for tourists to reach their destination and navigate within visited region [1, p. 604]. Transport services belong to basic tourist services. They are considered to be a dynamic factor in the development of tourism and its support [3, p. 291–292].

There are different criteria which are applied by tourist to choosing means of transport in its trip. In addition to financial, technical and security aspects, the transport accessibility to region is very important. The transport accessibility is not only the grid of transport links inside and outside the region. It is also set of facilities, necessary to transport operations in given area called transport base of tourism [4, p. 166]. Much better transport base of tourism, ensuring the transport accessibility

to specific area, more attractive as a destination. Therefore, progress in transport field has influence on development of tourism. New solutions for transport stimulate an increase in carrying capacity in quantitative and a spatial aspects. They improve also comfort of traveling.

One of the initiatives in expansion of transport networks, transregional and transnational is proposal to establish the Central European Transport Corridor CETC ROUTE 65. Its route runs from Southern Sweden, through the Baltic Sea and Central Europe, to the south of Europe. The history of this idea is long and is described in [5, p. 538–540]. The first official declaration took place in 2001, but in 2013 project still has not been implemented. Currently, (in the year 2013) 17 partner regions have acceded to the agreement on establishing the CETC ROUTE 65. Four of Polish voivodeships (West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole) are signatories of this corridor.

The area of Polish partner regions within CETC ROUTE 65 is a 21.2% of the total area of the country. In the year 2011 [6, p. 17] it was inhabited by 17.3% of the population in Poland. 43.5% of the population of these four regions is located in Lower Silesia voivodeship, and only 15.3% in Lubusz voivodeship. West Pomeranian and Lower Silesia voivodeships represent 64.7% of the total area of these four areas.

Due to the close relationship between transport and tourism, and plan of establishment and development of the Central European Transport Corridor, it is useful to carry out an analysis of the tourism in Polish regions, partners CETC ROUTE 65. The purpose of the creation of the corridor is to increase the competitiveness of regions within it, and as a consequence the development of tourism.

Characteristics of the tourist accommodation

West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole voivodeships are regions with various importance of tourism in their development. These areas differ in tourist facilities and also the volume, structure and dynamics of tourist traffic.

Tourist facilities include these elements, which ensure proper functioning tourist reception area¹, with assumption, that all needs of the tourists are met [7, p. 55]. It consists of tourist accommodation, catering units, transport and accompanying.

An essential element of the tourist facilities is the tourist accommodation, which represent all the objects where tourists can spend the night, outside the place of their living.

The state of tourist accommodation in Poland and West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole voivodeships in the year 2011 is shown in the table 1. Characteristic of the tourist accommodation includes figures and selected indicators, which are often used as gauges of the tourist development of the region. The Baretje's and Defert's rate is one of the most commonly used indicators in case of evaluation of tourist accommodation. It is measured in number of bed places per 100 inhabitants [8, p. 41]. In spatial analysis other indicators are used, for example number of bed places per 1 km², called the tourist accommodation density rate.

The data presented in a table 1, have been divided into collective and individual tourist accommodation establishments. This classification is used by Eurostat. Particular attention is paid to hotels and similar establishments, as a separate category among the collective accommodation.

In the year 2011, there were 257,391 bed places (around 28% of all places in Poland) in 7219 collective and individual tourist accommodation establishments (24.2% of all objects in the country) in the four voivodeships. 71.2% of bed places were in the collective accommodation facilities. These figures are related to total area of the four voivodeships. However, 59.6% of the total number of bed places were located in West Pomeranian, 8.8% – Lubusz, 27.4% – Lower Silesia and 4.2 – Opole. West Pomeranian voivodeship is the leader of this group in terms of the number of bed places. However, in terms of the number of bed places only in hotels, the situation is different. There were more than 20 thousand of bed places in hotels in Lower Silesia voivodeship only. It represents almost 11% of all bed places in hotels in Poland. At the same time, it is more than half of bed places in hotels situated in four mentioned regions.

The results of the analysis of the Baretje's and Defert's rate, as gauge of the tourist development of the region, for Poland and four regions, show, that tourism in West Pomeranian voivodeship plays the most important role. This rate for West Pomeranian, calculated in relation to collective tourist accommodation establishments, is the highest. In Lubusz and Lower Silesia voivodeships this rate is higher than the average for Poland, while in Opole is lower. In case of the individual tourist accommodation establishments, Baretje's and Defert's rate only for West Pomeranian exceed

¹ Tourist reception area is each piece of space with accepting function and tourist facilities. It can be a single object, resorts, tourist region, as well as the whole country [8, p. 28].

Table 1. The state of tourist accommodation in Poland and West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole voivodeships in the year 2011 (own study based on [9])

Specification	Poland	West Pomeranian voivodeship	Lubusz voivodeship	Lower Silesia voivodeship	Opole voivodeship
Collective tourist accommodation establishments					
Number of facilities	7 039	845	280	692	116
Number of bed places	606 246	106 676	18 944	49 551	8 213
Number of bed places per 100 inhabitants (Baretje's and Defert's rate)	1.6	6.3	1.9	1.7	0.8
Number of bed places per 1 km ² (the tourist accommodation density rate)	1.9	4.7	1.4	2.5	1.2
Occupancy rate of bed places [%]	34.6	44.6	28.0	29.8	25.2
Hotels and similar establishments (hotels, motels, boarding houses, other hotel facilities)					
Number of facilities	3 285	208	139	360	64
Number of bed places	252 511	17 367	7 531	27 942	2 923
Number of hotels	1 883	93	65	202	32
Number of bed places in hotels	186 968	11 247	4 605	20 208	1 657
Occupancy rate of bed places in hotels [%]	35.0	40.6	33.2	32.1	30.9
Individual tourist accommodation establishments					
Number of facilities	22 817	3 206	251	1 630	199
Number of bed places	309 056	46 812	3793	20 870	2 532
Number of bed places per 100 inhabitants (Baretje's and Defert's rate)	0.8	2.8	0.4	0.7	0.2
Number of bed places per 1 km ² (the tourist accommodation density rate)	1.0	2.0	0.3	1.0	0.3

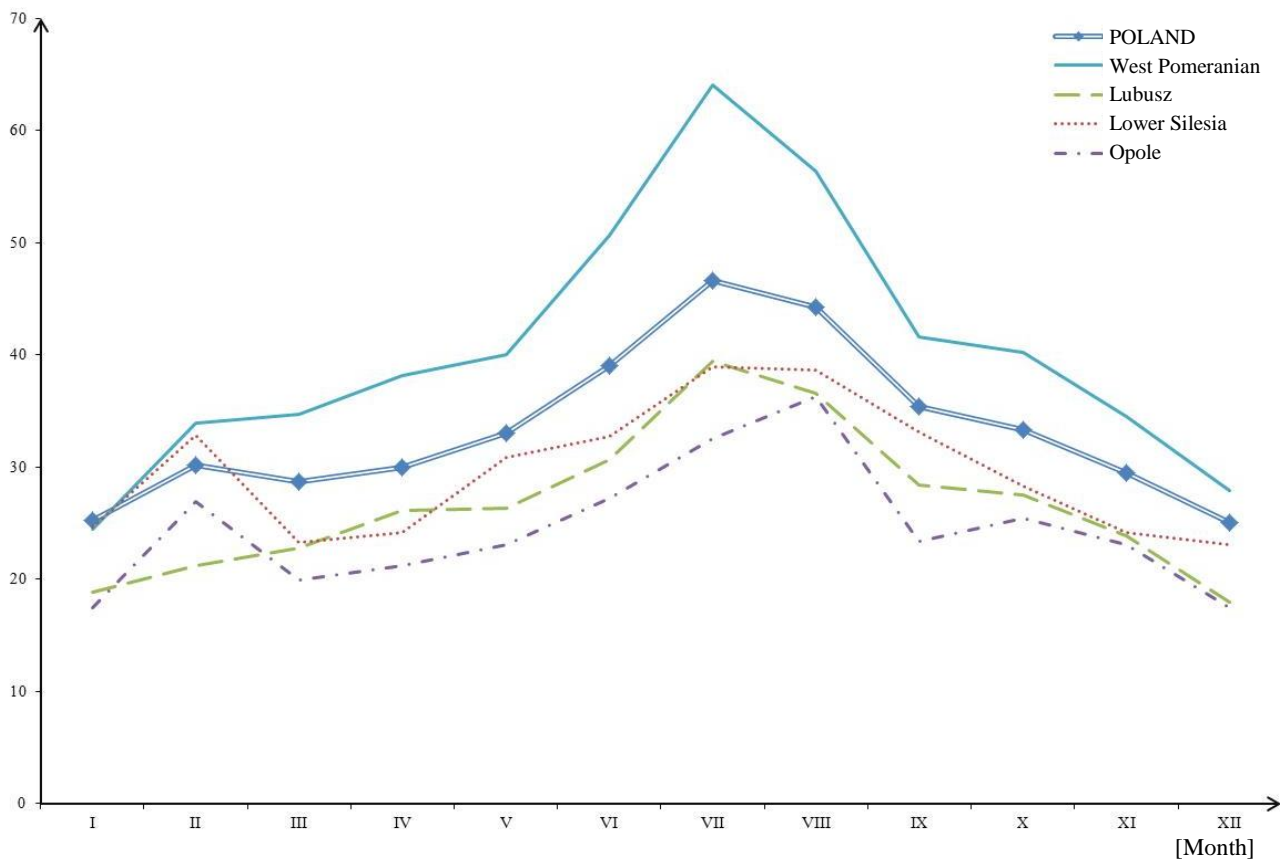


Fig. 1. Occupancy rate of bed places in a collective tourist accommodation establishments in Poland and West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole voivodeships in the year 2011 (in %) (own study based on: [9])

the average for Poland, while in other regions is lower.

According to the analysis of second rate, pointed out in table 1, it is possible to observe the similar situation. The highest rate is in West Pomeranian voivodeship, which means that there is the highest density tourist accommodation (collective and individual). On the other hand, Opole voivodeship is characterized by the lowest density tourist accommodation.

On the basis of the occupancy rate of collective tourist accommodation establishments, there is unused potential in Poland and in four regions. In the year 2011 this rate only for West Pomeranian exceeded the average for Poland. It was the highest rate in Poland, but only 44.6% of the available bed places were occupied (during the year). On the other hand Opole voivodeship was characterized by the lowest occupancy rate of collective tourist accommodation and it was the worst result in Poland. However, tourism is seasonal. Therefore, in the figure 1, it is presented occupancy rate of bed places in collective tourist accommodation establishments in Poland and West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole voivodeships in the year 2011. It is shown figures for monthly data.

The results of the analysis of the occupancy rate of bed places in collective tourist accommodation establishments from January to December 2011, show that the highest rate was noticed in West Pomeranian almost every month. A larger seasonal concentration was observed during the summer months in all regions, but the largest in West Pomeranian – one of the Polish coastal regions. A higher rate also occurred in Lower Silesia and Opole voivodeships during the winter holidays. It is

due to its geographical location. The lowest rate was noticed in Opole, with the exception of February. The highest occupancy rate of bed places was observed in West Pomeranian in July – 64.1%. It means that over 35% were not occupied, so tourism potential was greater. The increase of tourist traffic depends on accommodation accessibility and as well as other elements of tourist facilities. Catering units, transport and other factors play an important role in tourism development, but it is not subject of this article. However, higher occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments could affect growth of the other needs of the tourists.

Analysis of tourist traffic

Tourist traffic is a phenomenon of a social and economic nature, its participants create demand for goods and services, which causes certain consequences in the tourist reception and transit areas. It creates the phenomenon of tourism, if it is supplemented with economic, organizational and legal system, including support for tourist traffic, system of coordination and supervision carried out by specified institutions [10, s. 12].

The volume of tourist traffic is measured in number of tourists accommodated in facilities, number of overnight stays and occupancy rate of bed places. According to these criteria, analysis of tourist traffic in 4 Polish regions (partners CETC ROUTE 65) were made.

Table 2 shows the comparison of the number of tourists and overnight stays in the collective tourist accommodation establishments in West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole voivodeships in the years 2001 and 2011 with a focus on change,

Table 2. Comparison of the number of tourists and overnight stays in collective tourist accommodation establishments in West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole voivodeships in the years 2001 and 2011 (own study based on [9, 11])

Specification	Voivodeship	Number of tourists accommodated total	Number of foreign tourists accommodated	Number of overnight stays total	Number of overnight stays of foreign tourists
2001	West Pomeranian	1 366 900	276 000	8 813 700	1 031 800
	Lubusz	474 000	128 900	1 134 600	197 600
	Lower Silesia	1 686 300	315 200	5 688 600	793 000
	Opole	149 000	30 500	386 400	63 500
2011	West Pomeranian	1 863 559	401 654	9 928 007	2 234 941
	Lubusz	669 609	176 501	1 333 716	246 862
	Lower Silesia	2 026 726	430 745	4 998 693	1 028 065
	Opole	241 554	32 346	568 663	79 949
Change in % 2011/2001	West Pomeranian	36.33%	45.53%	12.64%	116.61%
	Lubusz	41.27%	36.93%	17.55%	24.93%
	Lower Silesia	20.19%	36.66%	-12.13%	29.64%
	Opole	62.12%	6.05%	47.17%	25.90%

expressed as a percentage. According to the figures, West Pomeranian voivodeship is the leader of this group in terms of the number of overnight stays now and ever. In Lower Silesia voivodeship, there are more tourists accommodated in collective facilities, but their stay is shorter than in West Pomeranian. In Opole voivodeship, now and ever, number of tourists is the lowest. The total number of overnight stays in collective tourist accommodation establishments in four regions in the year 2011 was almost 30% of all overnight stays in Poland. Nearly 34% of all overnight stays of foreign tourists in Poland were in this area.

Due to the varied importance of tourism in the development of these four regions, comparison of absolute numbers, has rather informational role. More interesting are the conclusion from analysis of changes which occurred in these regions in 2011 in comparison with 2001.

Compared to the results of the 2001 survey, the number of tourists and overnight stays has increased in almost all of four voivodeships in 2011. The biggest growth of number of overnight stays of foreign tourists was recorded in West Pomeranian voivodeship – 116.61%. But the biggest growth of number of tourists accommodated was observed in Opole Voivodeship – 62.12%, the smallest in Lower Silesia – 20.19%. There was also growth of number of overnight stays in Opole. The decline occurred in only one category. The number of overnight stays in Lower Silesia has decreased by 12.3%.

The share of foreign tourists in total number of tourists accommodated in collective tourist accommodation establishments in the year 2011 was observed in West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole voivodeships respectively 21.55%, 26.36%, 21.25%, 13.39%.

The foreign tourists accommodated in collective tourist accommodation establishments within West Pomeranian voivodeships, mainly came from Germany (more than 73%) and Scandinavia (the Danes – over 8%, the Swedes – about 3%) [12, p. 13].

In Opole voivodeships, German tourists were also in the majority. Besides, the Dutch (about 5%),

the Czechs (around 4.5%), the Italians (approximately 3%), the Brits (almost 2.9%) and the French (about 2.8%) were accommodated in this region [13, p. 7].

The largest group of foreign tourists in Lower Silesia voivodeships were also the Germans, but only about 40%. In this region also the Brits (almost 5%), the French (about 4%), the Spaniards (over 3%), the Dutch (almost 3%) and the Czechs (around 2.5%) were accommodated [14, p. 8].

In Lubusz voivodeships the Germans were not the largest group of foreign tourists only. The Russians were in the majority – 26.7%. The Germans were around 21% of all foreign tourists in this region. A high percentage of tourists were the Belarusians (10.8%), the Lithuanians (10.6%), the Ukrainians (8.2%), the Latvians (5.8%) [15, p. 11].

The results of analysis of structure of foreign tourists accommodated in four voivodeships in 2011 show, that the Germans were in the majority. It is the largest group of foreign tourists in collective tourist accommodation establishments in Poland. More than 45% of them were accommodated in these four regions.

In case of analysis of tourist traffic many indicators can be used. Some of them are treated as intensity rate. Schneider rate and Charvat rate are the most popular. First of them is measured in number of tourists accommodated per 100 inhabitants. Second of them is measured in number of overnight stays per 100 inhabitants [16]. In spatial analysis also other indicators are used, for example number of tourists per 1 km² [8, p. 41], called the tourist traffic density rate.

The tourist traffic intensity rates and the tourist traffic density rate in Poland and West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole voivodeships in the year 2011 is presented in the table 3. The rates presented in the table 3 confirm varied tourist traffic intensity and density in these four regions. Schneider rate and Charvat rate in West Pomeranian voivodeship were the highest in Poland. In Opole these rates were the lowest among the four regions. The tourist traffic density rate in Lower Silesia voivodeship was the highest.

Table 3. The tourist traffic intensity and density rates in Poland and West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole voivodeships in the year 2011 (own study based on [9])

Specification	Poland	West Pomeranian voivodeship	Lubusz voivodeship	Lower Silesia voivodeship	Opole voivodeship
Number of tourists accommodated per 100 inhabitants (Schneider rate)	56.22	110.07	66.23	70.43	23.48
Number of overnight stays per 100 inhabitants (Charvat rate)	149.60	586.39	131.92	173.70	55.29
Number of tourists per 1 km ² (the tourist traffic density rate)	68.69	81.41	47.87	101.61	25.66

Conclusions

The area of Polish partner regions within CETC ROUTE 65 is a 21.2% of the total area of the country.

West Pomeranian, Lubusz, Lower Silesia and Opole voivodeships are the regions with various importance of tourism in their development. These areas differ in tourist facilities and also the volume, structure and dynamics of tourist traffic.

The highest density of the tourist accommodation is in West Pomeranian voivodeship, the lowest in Opole. However, the occupancy rate of tourist accommodation is still too low.

The total number of overnight stays in collective tourist accommodation establishments in four regions in the year 2011 was almost 30% of all overnight stays in Poland. Nearly 34% of all overnight stays of foreign tourists in Poland were in this area.

Compared to the results of the 2001 survey, the number of tourists has increased in all of four voivodeships in 2011. It means that these regions are more and more popular.

West Pomeranian voivodeship is the leader in terms of the number of overnight stays. In Lower Silesia voivodeship there are more tourists accommodated in collective facilities, but their stay is shorter than in West Pomeranian.

The results of analysis of structure of foreign tourists accommodated in four voivodeships in 2011 show that the Germans were in the majority. It is the largest group of foreign tourists in collective tourist accommodation establishments in Poland. More than 45% of them were accommodated in these four regions.

In 2011 the tourist traffic density rate in Lower Silesia voivodeship was the highest.

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