







Focus on:
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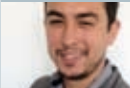
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Successful Tourism in Slovakia – Challenge, but an Achievable Goal

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Unlike many other countries, Slovakia has not typically focused on tourism as a main economic stream, despite the fact that domestic tourism represents a primary source of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for a country and taxes are also a primary source of income for the state budget. 1989 was supposed to change this. That year the doors were opened for the Slovak population and gave them the possibility to travel, gain the experience and see the world. However, the message being spread abroad has not been supported enough to truly make a change in Slovak tourism.

Over time, Slovakia has slowly learned how to profit from tourism and, more importantly, how to become competitive as a tourist destination. When it comes to tourism, most Slovaks understand that it is crucial to cooperate, just like all other nations do. As a small country, Slovakia can learn from the mistakes of other countries and save time in the learning process. As representatives of the Slovak republic, responsible for tourism and its growth, we wish to implement the knowledge we now have and create a country full of genuine, unforgettable experiences.

We are standing here now with an incredible gem in our hands: foreign tourists see it, businesses see it, and the state sees it. Therefore, it is time to improve the quality of the services provided in Slovakia and develop offerings equal to our competitors. Slovaks should be proud of this beautiful country. It is full of undiscovered history, both a former empire and peasant culture, along with authentic traditions, unique, natural landscapes, healing springs and spas, important UNESCO heritage sites, and warmhearted people welcoming tourists to the new heart of Europe. If tourism is well-developed, visitors will want to return again, new visitors from nations like China or India will want to explore, and businesses will be tempted to invest here.

Intensive development of tourism is very closely linked not only to the quality of services provided, but also to the industries that support tourism, such as transportation, construction, and regional development. There is great emphasis on the environment and sustainability, so the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic (MDVRR) has the best strategic position to facilitate Slovakia's transformation to a tourist paradise.

To demonstrate our commitment to this, MDVRR is currently working on a strategy for tourism development in Slovakia until the year 2020. Part of this strategy will actively involve the public, including professional tourism organizations and academics, in the preparation of this document. The goal of this strategy is to increase the competitiveness of tourism by better using its potential and in doing so balance regional disparities and create new job opportunities. Promotion of tourism policy as a sector of public interest, dynamic development, and increasing the attractiveness of Slovakia as a holiday destination are key issues in the MDVRR strategy.

It is often said that "Travel is the only thing one buys that makes one richer." It is time to work together to make both Slovakia and other nations of the world richer.

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