



MINISTERSTVO DOPRAVY, VÝSTAVBY
A REGIONÁLNEHO ROZVOJA
SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY

Destination management and eurofunds



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What plans does the Tourism Section at the Slovak Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development have for the next four years? What plans do you have to support Slovak domestic tourism?

Answering such a simple question requires mentioning a whole range of measures being taken in the tourism sphere. First of all, I would emphasize that the development of the tourism industry is influenced by a whole range of departments and industries, including those dealing with the environment, agriculture, regional development, foreign affairs and financial matters. Most of these industries will be contained in the Strategy for Tourism by the Year 2020. This document is currently being prepared and processed in cooperation with the representatives from professional associations, self-government agencies and the professional public. We would like to submit the strategy to the government during the April 2013 session.

We have concluded that the direction of government tourism policies must change. This should take effect primarily in a concept-oriented approach, with improved coordination of subjects. Destina-

AmCham recently interviewed with Ivana Magátová, the new general director of the Tourism Section at the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic. Ms. Magátová served as the Commissioner General of the SR at the Shanghai Expo 2010.

tion management must play a key role, along with the collection of euro funds. The Tourism Section must focus on realistic goals and take advantage of surrounding countries, which offer a strong market of approximately 110 million people. Since one of the main trends in tourism is the shortening of stays combined with increasing frequency, we need to focus on weekend tourism and short-term tourism. The location of a great number of sights, including thermal baths, castles, manors, mountains, and cycling paths, along the state borders is conducive to such a model. We are also planning to develop Slovakia as the congress destination.

Next, it will be necessary to channel euro funds mainly to the non-commercial sphere, which provides important additional services. Examples of this include the services that serve as the actual purpose of a tourist's visit, such as wellness facilities, cycling paths, hiking paths, and reconstructed cultural and historical sights. When compared to the surrounding countries, this is what is missing or underdeveloped in Slovakia. On the other hand, Slovakia currently has enough accommodations.

Looking to the future, it seems that bringing the level of competitiveness in the Slovak tourism industry will be facilitated by bringing the economic conditions

in tourism up to the same level as neighboring countries. We believe that it is necessary to provide more substantial support to the development of the spa industry in order to raise the quality level. The spa industry is one of the most significant forms of tourism – tourists at these facilities have long stays that include both boarding and accommodation services. Stronger participation from the Ministry of Health is necessary since that department is responsible for such facilities. We live in an age of information, which has a great influence on the tourism industry. It is important to cooperate with newly-established local and regional tourism organizations to form regional tourist information offices so that both tourists and entrepreneurs know where to obtain relevant information. We must take advantage of all available information technology, including the Internet and social networks, to augment these efforts.

Next year the Ministry is planning to introduce a new National Strategy for Tourism by the Year 2020. What are the topics the strategy will focus on? How do you plan to make sure the strategy is effective and relevant?

In the short-term, we need to prepare and subsequently implement the Strategy for Tourism Development by the Year 2016 while still looking ahead to 2020. The tourism industry must become more dynamic and competitive. We will

cooperate with regional tourism organizations, analyze their activity and the benefits brought in by state subsidies. It will be necessary to support all services, even those that are not as profitable, such as swimming pools, cycling paths, hiking paths, because they are very important areas of tourism. There are a great number of tasks facing us, but I am convinced they will be accomplished one by one.

How could AmCham contribute to improving of the situation of the Slovak tourism industry?

How can AmCham help facilitate successful organization for tourism in Slovakia?

We very much appreciate the activity of the Chamber because it brings together a great many subjects and individuals from all around the world with rich experiences and even real results in tourism. By linking the long-standing tourism industry experience and the potential for new tourism that our country offers, we can form a strong base for further development of the Slovak tourism industry. We must take advantage of these opportunities and cooperate to prepare the essential proposals for future steps in tourism business.

Of course, it is not enough only to prepare strategies and resolutions. These must also be implemented. Therefore, we see opportunity for cooperation in the follow-up stage as well, when the conclusions and tasks are actually being carried out. Here, further opportunity opens, whether through cooperation or through help provided to self-government institutions and newly-established tourism organizations. In the end, cooperation with Slovak businesses is possible too, as is cooperation with scientific and academic institutions across the country.

