

ANALYSIS OF TOURISM AND AGROTOURISM MANAGEMENT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND AUSTRIA

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Abstract

ŠIMKOVÁ EVA. 2014. Analysis of Tourism and Agrotourism Management in the Czech Republic and Austria. *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis*, 62(4): 811–824.

The paper discusses the importance of rural tourism and sustainable rural areas development. It highlights the role of tourism in dealing with problems of rural areas and agriculture sector in the Czech Republic. After theoretical description of a system approach to rural tourism development, the author continues by a practical part where she compares tourism and agrotourism management in the Czech Republic and Austria. Austria has been chosen as a representative of a state with developed tourism system and tourism management. Selected aspects of management systems are then compared and proposed for improvement in tourism/agrotourism. Critical key factor for successful development of activities in rural areas (therefore including agrotourism services) are then presented.

Keywords: rural areas, management system, rural tourism, agrotourism, partnership

INTRODUCTION

Until cca the 19th century, holiday and free time spending in rural areas was primarily a matter of wealthy people. Since the 20th century, however, other communities have also taken their part. Road and railway infrastructure development, as well as higher economic income of ordinary people, and free time availability increased demand for rural tourism. Rural areas then represented some escape from everyday stress, technicized and urbanized world into nature world with human desire for regeneration of internal energy (Mikula, 1995).

Rural areas changed significantly during the 20st century due to industrialization of agriculture. People moved to large cities, and from the economic view, countryside fell further down. Natural function of agriculture, such as landscaping, gradually declined (Majerová *et al.*, 2003). Apparently, new strategies for revitalization of countryside in the context of its sustainable development must have had emerged. In the Czech Republic, these tendencies were gaining on importance after joining the European Union in 2004. It can be said that all

EU member states want to increase quality of life, decrease regional disparity and support sustainable development in different areas of the country (MRD, 2006b).

The significance of agriculture as a driving force to the rural area development in Western Europe and also in Central Europe has been gradually declining in last decades (Van der Ploeg *et al.*, 2000). That results in some instability and unclear prospects for local employment. Development of rural areas is often put in connection with rural tourism as an important tool for their revitalization (Garrod *et al.*, 2006; McAreavey and McDonagh, 2011; Pourová, 2002; Stříbrná, 2005). Most of the approaches to the development of rural areas are often based on approaches that specifically highlight economic benefits (local economic development, capital inflow, new employment opportunities). Weaver (1986), however, notes that tourism cannot be regarded only from the economic point of view, but should be also examined from the viability of the destination. Rural tourism requires high-quality countryside. On the other hand, infrastructure development causes its

gradual “urbanization”. As a result of this conflict, typical rural landscape features’ vanishes. Yet, new “uncontaminated” areas are nowadays more and more preferred by investors, and that all create a “vicious circle”.

As we can see, rural development is not simple. It is actually a very complicated process because rural areas play various roles that arise from their core characteristics – agricultural countryside, cultural heritage, green infrastructure, rural landscape:

- countryside is “a food supplier” (there is a connection with concepts of general food security and sustainable livelihoods),
- countryside is a “nature protector” (a problem of sustainable landscape in relation to industrial agriculture).

This shows that planning is very important part of development-supporting activities. Agricultural businesses and also other subjects providing rural tourism services may develop independently. However, rural development as a whole requires coordinated planning of regional development among individual business subjects, because any eventual conflict may cause adverse or even irreversible harmful impacts. It is therefore apparent that diverse elements require interrelation and coordination of the whole tourism system.

Tourism management and organization (including rural tourism and agrotourism), either at national or regional levels, is often the most overlooked part of tourism in the Czech Republic. Even though tourism is purely a market-oriented economic section, there are still issues that tourism market can not provide. Therefore, tourism in general must be managed and promoted at the national level. More specifically, it shall be done in the following areas: legislation, activity coordination and tourism management, marketing support, diversification of economic activities in rural areas (MRD, 2006a). All these are important activities that may be inevitable for effective development of all tourism segments, including rural tourism/agrotourism.

OBJECTIVE AND METHODS

The paper highlights the role of tourism in dealing with problems of rural areas and agriculture sector in the Czech Republic, emphasizes sustainable development of rural areas, and also inevitability of system approach in tourism management. The aim of the paper is to compare selected aspects of management systems used in tourism/agrotourism in the Czech Republic with those used in Austria and propose key factors for improvement of tourism including agrotourism management, which could be applied in the Czech Republic.

The paper has been prepared and results are presented upon strategic qualitative and quantitative research, comparative analysis, as well as additional analysis of publicly available literature. The article, in the framework definition and basic setting, is based on results

of an extensive analysis of tourism development and literature on rural tourism/agrotourism. The literature included conference presentations, as well as articles published in prestigious journals. Additional information has also been gathered from the Internet, scientific seminars and discussions with competent personnel during author’s one-month study stay in Austria (May, 2013). The key factors for tourism/agrotourism development have been identified on the bases of the questionnaire research performed during the first half of 2012. The survey was done by direct questioning. There were two kinds of questionnaires: questionnaire for tourists and questionnaire for mayors of selected Czech municipalities. Out of the, 935 respondents, there were 583 tourists and 352 municipality mayors. Both questionnaires were published on the Internet. Questionnaire intended for tourists dealt with the safety and security of tourism environment and its relation to negative features of pathological character. Some questions were focused on the quality of accommodation, and safety and security in the respective tourism destinations. Questionnaire intended for mayors was focused on the existence and importance of strategic planning for municipalities. Mayors were also asked to describe ways of preventions of tourism-related negative effects, and the level of cooperation in safety protection in municipalities concerned, forms of inter-municipality cooperation being used in the Czech Republic and benefits gained from such cooperation in respect to tourism. Remaining questions were about tourism activities and benefits of tourism for municipalities.

Due to the robust size of the management system and also limited capacity of the paper, the author chooses the following issues of comparison: subjects of tourism and agrotourism management, conception and vision, importance of tourism/agrotourism for national economy, historical aspects and traditions in agrotourism.

Analysis presented in this paper has three parts:

1. Analysis of tourism and agrotourism management systems used in the Czech Republic and Austria.
2. Evaluation of tourism and agrotourism management used in the Czech Republic.
3. Summary and proposal of key factors for improvement in tourism and rural tourism management and development of rural areas in the Czech Republic.

The comparative analysis started with a desk research, during which the author monitored available sources. Then, upon an analysis of gathered information, the author proposed steps for improvement in tourism and rural tourism management to be applied in the Czech Republic.

Note: Due to a wide spectrum of rural tourism activities, and also due to the fact that there are many definitions of rural tourism, the author has focused primarily on agrotourism.

Theoretical Background

System Approach to Rural Development

Sustainable development can be understood as a dynamic balance between economic and social development on one side and environment protection on the other. However, development is realized by particular community in the relevant area (Herová, 2007). Sustainable development therefore relates to the particular area (countryside) that has to carry sustainability features similar to those of a local community.

In order to understand sustainable rural development, analysis of relations between agricultural business environment (Petrin and Gannon, 1997), local ecosystems (providing natural resources), countryside (space relations and structure), local community (social infrastructure of an area), and service providing institutions (supplies of energy, fuel, tourism services, etc.) is needed.

System approach to rural development shall be based on an analysis of the environment, obstacles, weak points and also following features:

1. Economic activities (employment, business activities).
2. Natural resources (landscape, biodiversity).
3. Technology used in agriculture.
4. Infrastructure (transport, communication, social infrastructure, green infrastructure).
5. Performance of competent subjects (institutions, service providers).
6. Education of the competent subjects.
7. Social capital of the rural locality.
8. Cooperation between businesses, researchers and politicians.
9. Rural settlements and historical features.
10. Local customs (traditions, festivals, crafts etc.).

System approach to the rural development inevitably leads to an analysis of a multifunctionality of agriculture and to a conception of sustainable livelihoods. Multifunctionality of the agriculture includes four types of functions that are provided by agricultural companies (Huylenbroeck *et al.*, 2007): green function (deals with landscaping, conservation of biodiversity), blue function (deals with water management), yellow function (relates to agricultural activities during the development of local cohesion, identity, exploitation of cultural and natural heritage in agrotourism) and white function (food safety and food security protection). The concept of sustainable livelihoods emphasizes a development of needs and priorities of local people (Serrat, 2008).

Analysis of agriculture multifunctionality reveals that agriculture activities can participate in a wide spectrum of tourism. Even though rural tourism is hardly ever a highly profitable one, it shall at least provide material wealth so that economic, socio-

cultural and ecological balance is sustained. It is therefore necessary to:

1. *Solve problems of rural areas by sophisticated approach.*

This means to analyze areas not only by their attractiveness (traditions, folklore, history,...) and local infrastructure capacity (there may arise problems between residents and visitors regarding water sources, waste-water treatment), but also from the social dimension (hospitality) and social capital of the locality (e.g. McAreavey, 2006).

2. *Manage entrepreneurs in the region* – problems of strategic management (e.g. Garrod *et al.*, 2006), destination management (e.g. Királ'ová, 2005) and destination marketing (e.g. Palatková, 2006).
3. *Think about to what extent local community and local area are resistant to negative impacts of tourism* (e.g. Deery *et al.*, 2011; Garrod *et al.*, 2002; Haley *et al.*, 2005).

System approach to rural development management leads to the concept of "Integrated Quality Management /IQM/ of rural tourist destinations". According to this concept, "improving quality in tourist destinations is an essential requirement in satisfying tourists' needs, in enhancing competitiveness of the tourism industry, and in ensuring balanced and sustainable tourism development" (EC, 1999a, p. 9).

What does IQM mean to tourist destinations in practice? According to EC, tourist destination (including rural destination) should be:

- "well organized, pulling together, and knowing what it wants to achieve through tourism;
- concerned about all the aspects of the visitors' experience and the impact on local people, and the environment;
- committed to monitoring and improvement, as an ongoing processes" (EC, 1999a, p. 12).

As publication of EC (1999a) further states, main roles of the IQM approach for rural tourist destinations are:

1. Cooperation on the *strategy* definition (clear strategy, effective communication, and partnership).
2. Delivering *quality* at all stages of the visitor experience (marketing and communication, quality of tourist services, information providing, local production and gastronomy).
3. Application of effective *quality management and monitoring processes* (understanding visitor needs, monitoring impact on the local economy, community and the environment).

Subjects of Tourism Management

As some authors state (e.g. Galvasová *et al.*, 2007; GaREP, 2008), effective tourism development is based on effective cooperation among individual actors. GaREP also states that in the development of a region, cooperation is interrelated with "deliberative democracy". That is defined as "a form of democracy in which public deliberation is

central to legitimate lawmaking" (2008, p. 122). In the cooperation process, a number of subjects having different views to particular problems can be found. These subjects may be divided into the following groups (GaREP, 2008):

- *shareholders*, i.e. subjects cooperating during the process of preparation and realization of individual tourism activities (such as municipalities and commercial subjects),
- *stakeholders*, i.e. subjects influenced by tourism activities, or having impact on them (such as local residents, investors and employees in the region, visitors, ...),
- *placeholders*, i.e. subjects of the region where the given activity takes place (such as ministries, regional or local authorities, national park or sanctuary authorities, ...).

The authors state that subject classification to the above mentioned groups is not definite. Depending on the situation and subjects being solved, it can actually lead to some degree of penetration of individual positions. An alternative classification of subjects from the economic point of view may be a sector-based classification of the national economy: public, entrepreneurial and civil sectors (GaREP, 2008):

Public sector is a determinant for making of favorable conditions and environment for regional development by activities of tourism. In particular, it represents preparation of suitable localities, construction of technical infrastructure, social life support, and development of trails, cycle-tracks and hippo-tracks. Marketing is also very important tool of promotion activities for the benefit of tourism development. The public sector, whereby by public administration is thought (i.e. subjects of public service and self-government), is financed from public finance sources.

Entrepreneurial sector (also called profit-oriented or commercial sector) is financed from finance sources mostly provided by entrepreneurs. In tourism, this sector is represented by individual entrepreneurs, who provide services in accommodation, catering or free-time activities (sports and cultural centers, rental agencies etc.).

Civil sector (also called non-profit sector) is represented by organizations of the non-profit character. These operate mainly in sport and free-time activities, science & research, and environment protection. These activities are closely linked to the development of tourism infrastructure (such as construction and maintenance of pathways), products with ecology-based activities, and those focused on protection of local traditions and craftsmanship.

As for the above mentioned characteristic, tourism can be perceived as a complex system with many diverse elements (diversity of organizations and variety of operating styles) and interactions (interactions of a system with its surrounding, interactions within the system). As a consequence,

there may be a conflict of interests between individual components of the system. It becomes apparent that the diversity of components and mutual interactions requires effective coordination of the whole tourism system. Destination management, which covers issues such as managing visitors, determination of carrying capacity, application of sustainable tourism indicators, effective use of socio-cultural, historical and natural potentials in a destination, is nowadays in focus of many subjects. These subjects are called Tourism Organizations (TOs), Destination Companies (DC), or Destination Management Companies (DMC), and represent subjects which initiate and manage the whole tourism development process in cooperation with commercial subjects, state sector, as well as local inhabitants and various associations. Their primary task is to effectively coordinate activities of all subjects concerned in a particular destination, react to market conditions and apply principles of visitors' and destination management in practice (Kiráľová, 2005).

In this respect we can mention some existing destination management researches done in the CR as well as abroad. It is Enterprise plc., which is active in the development of regional policy, municipalities, cities and regions (available at <http://www.enterpriseplc.cz/cz/index.php>), CzechTourism (available at <http://vyzkumy.czechtourism.cz/>), or Chambery Graduate School of Business (2011). In abroad it is Blain, Levy and Ritchie (2005), Buhalis and Spada (2000), Alvarez (2012), web portal Sustainable Tourism. Additionally, there is Pechlaner and Osti (2002), who analyze destination management in regions and subregions in Italy, or Bartl and Schmidt (1998) and Palatková (2006, 2011), who describe destination management system.

Another valuable source is the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (AIEST): this organization is often described as a real catalyzator of scientific-research activities in the field of tourism. The association in its work thoroughly exerts a system approach to problems of tourism. Besides analysis dealing with impacts of terrorism, natural disasters and the current economic crisis to the global tourism development, these are also problems dealing with destination management.

The Role of Rural Tourism in the Development of Rural Areas

Discussion on rural development often leads the role of agriculture, arguing that agriculture is not able to provide economic stability in rural areas (Van der Ploeg, 2000). Therefore the focus is redirected to non-agricultural entrepreneurship – for example enterprise in rural tourism, esp. agrotourism. The agriculture sector, however, may play the opposite role to tourism. Agriculture plays the productive role (food production), but non-productive roles become more and more

apparent – socio-economic function (contributing to the viability of rural areas and to balanced territorial economic and social development) and environmental function (preserving rural environment and landscape) (EC, 1999b). Currently, the agriculture sector goes through difficult times. That results in lower economic growth and falling employment rate. On the other hand, in accord with the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union, diversification of activities towards non-agricultural ones is preferred and supported (EC, 2012). One of the opportunities to revitalization of rural regions and to solving problems of the negative trend in agricultural production is promotion of tourism in the countryside (i.e. rural tourism in various forms – agrotourism, ecoagrotourism, village tourism etc.) (e.g. Garrod *et al.*, 2006; Pourová, 2002; Sharpley and Vass, 2006).

Rural tourism is believed to be a supportive element for the economic and social development, because it draws on a cultural heritage and natural environment (Šimková, 2012). Tourism is important source of income, creates new working opportunities, supports traditional hand-made manufacturing, folklore and other cultural traditions, represents rural life, protects the original landscape character, contributes to the use of rural areas' natural, cultural and historical potential, and revitalizes gastronomic traditions (e.g. ECEAT, 1999; Stříbrná, 2005).

There is no doubt that tourism and rural development are directly related. There is a number of supporting documents for the period of 2007–2013 and the upcoming period 2014–2020, which shall ensure that Czech cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced. Among others there are mainly strategic policies (financial support tools) such as “European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development” (EAFRD), “Integrated Operational Program” (IOP), “The State Tourism Policy Concept for the period 2014–2020”, “Strategy of the Regional Development for the period of 2014–2020”.

IOP, administered by the Ministry of Regional Development, is a document dealing with general problems in regions, such as modernization of public administration, quality and availability of public services, regional development support, tourism support (MRD, 2007).

EAFRD promotes competitiveness in agriculture, food processing, and forestry as well as better environment and quality of life in rural areas, including diversification of rural agriculture. These activities are supported by “Rural Development Programme” (RDP) that defines policy of rural development in the Czech Republic for 2007–2013 and the upcoming period 2014–2020. RDP is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture. The program is promoted in four main priorities (axis), which set main area of rural development. Axis I: competitiveness of agriculture, is on competitiveness of agriculture and forestry. Axis II: biodiversity, water and soil protection,

is focused on quality of the environment and the countryside. Axis III: quality of life and diversification of agriculture in rural areas. Axis IV: LEADER, supports rural micro region and local development by applying the LEADER method. Rural tourism support is enclosed primarily in Axis III, covering rural life style and its increase, and diversification of agriculture and other economic activities via tourism. Additionally, it is Axis IV, the main priority of which is to increase the capacity of local rural community and business networks to support human capital, innovate and co-operate in order to challenge local development problems. Axis IV also supports Local Action Groups (LAGs) (MA, 2006).

Note: In 2007, “National Network of Local Action Group” was set up, aiming to support activities, cooperation and dissemination of experience of LAGs (more at <http://nsmasr.cz/>).

Total budget PRV for the period of 2007–2013 is EUR 3.6 bn, of which 23% is for Axis I, 54% for Axis II, 18% for Axis III, and 5% for Axis IV. Actual state of implementation of RDP can be found at web site of eAGRI (available at <http://eagri.cz/public/web/mze/dotace/program-rozvoje-venkova-na-obdobi-2007/>). There is also a list of projects financed by the RDP in program period 2007–2013 (available at <http://eagri.cz/public/web/mze/venkov/uspesne-projekty-prv/vyhledavani/>).

There is a number of good examples (“good practice”) of effective use of EU funds and/or state funds in projects focused on support of the Czech countryside, such as support of local traditional hand-made manufacturing, folklore and other cultural traditions (heritage of the region). As an example, projects realized through RDP in Axis III are presented in Tab. I, and projects realized through RDP in Axis IV in Tab. II.

The realized projects indicate that within the program period 2007–2013 rural tourism activities were in real focus and supported. There is a number of good practice examples, such as LAG Pošumaví, LAG Poodří, LAG Posázaví, ecological institute Veronica Hostětín in White Carpat. Additionally, there are projects of the “Foundation of Partnership”, such as “Cyclist welcome”, “Moravian wine trails”, “Greenways”, which support local rural areas and services provided. Less exposed destinations are supported by EDEN (European Destination of Excellence) program operated by the European Commission. There is one common goal of these institutions in sustainability area, i.e. careful and responsible use of natural and cultural values, and promotion of sustainable prosperity of regions and local people. Hostětín village is a classical example of sustainable development in Bílé Karpaty region, where cooperation of the village with non-profit organizations allows for a number of pilot projects focused on local resources, energy saving, renewable energy generation (such as solar or biomass), rural tourism etc. (see www.hostetin.veronica.cz).

I: *Projects realized with the RDP support (Axis III) – (in CZK mil.)*

Region	Project name	Amount of the support	Project characteristics
Jihočeský	Multi-purpose hall in Řepice	9.067	Construction of a multi-purpose building for the social, cultural, educational and sport activities in Řepice.
Jihomoravský	Biogas station in Domašov	20.239	Building of a biogas station – employment support, use of waste from beef-raising.
Karlovarský	Reconstruction of the church St. Kateřina	3.444	Construction and restoration in church protection.
Královéhradecký	Sewage system in Kosičky	24.363	Construction of sewerage system in Kosičky.
Vysočina	Multi-purpose building in Velká Chýška	10.903	Construction of a multi-purpose building in Velká Chýška (residence of municipal authority, information center, library).
Liberecký	Reconstruction of a church in Polevsko	4.514	Reconstruction work of a church in Polevsko.
Moravskoslezský	Set up of a mini brewery	1.486	Brownfield reconstruction into a mini brewery.
Olomoucký	Wastewater liquidation	32.530	Construction of a new canalization and sewerage plant in Radslavice.
Pardubický	Adaptation of an agricultural farmhouse to agrotourism	2.454	Adaptation of an agricultural farmhouse for agrotourism, including sport area in Mladoňovice – Lipina
Plzeňský	Renewal of a castle garden in Svojšín	2.590	Renewal of a castle terrace, garden and park in Svojšín.
Středočeský	Trail path Tuchom	0.552	Building of a natural trail, including information boards, rest places, sportgrounds, playgrounds, fireplaces.
Ústecký	Construction of a carpenter workshop in Merboltice	1.192	Renovation and building of a carpenter workshop in Merboltice.
Zlínský	Bakery in Přílepy	4.043	Reconstruction of an existing building to a bakery.

Source: MA (2012)

II: *Projects realized with the RDP support (Axis IV) – (in CZK mil.)*

Region	Project name	Amount of the support	Project characteristics
Jihočeský	Landscape work in Bradáčov	0.109	Landscape work in Bradáčov, construction of rest zones and information panels.
Jihomoravský	Rural traditions in Bohemia and Moravia	4.134	Revitalization of local traditions in gastronomy and agrotourism, promotion of fruit growing, wine making, beekeeping etc.
Karlovarský	Creation of an art workshop in Dolní Rychnov	0.316	Creation of a workshop for art and other free-time activities for young people in Dolní Rychnov.
Královéhradecký	Saving of the monuments in battlefield near Hradec Králové	0.449	Saving of 24 battle monuments from 1866 in the battlefield near Hradec Králové.
Vysočina	Reconstruction of an open-air cinema	0.158	Reconstruction of projection equipment and an open-air cinema in Moravské Budějovice.
Liberecký	It is nice in here!	2.984	Reconstruction of exhibition arrangements near Turnovsko and Podralsko for promotion the region traditions.
Moravskoslezský	Natural gym Annaberg	1.003	Construction of a natural gym in Andělská Hora for sporting, relaxation and rehabilitation activities.
Olomoucký	Upgrading of the Sagittarie activities	0.665	Reconstruction of Eco-center Sagittarie in Křelov.
Pardubický	To smallest children	2.496	Construction of garden houses for family with children in Poličsko and Boskovicko.
Plzeňský	Protection of rural municipalities Dolnolukavicka	0.846	Reconstruction of 9 rural monuments in Dolnolukavicko.
Středočeský	Manufacturing of an acacia wood	1.199	Manufacturing of wood, biomass, production of the wood semi-products, firewood, pellet ACACIA in Liběchov.
Ústecký	Reconstruction of chapels in areal Kalvárie in Ostrá	0.447	Reconstruction of 14 chapels of The Way of the Cross in Ústecko region.
Zlínský	Saving of a vicarage in Buchlovice	1.600	Saving of a vicarage with a center for youth and exposition of A. Hrabal in Buchlovice.

Source: MA (2012)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Comparison of Some Aspects of Tourism Management System Used in the Czech Republic and Austria

Management System of Tourism and Agrotourism in the Czech Republic

Tourism in the Czech Republic is a very important part of national economy. Share of tourism on economic indicators is presented in Tab. III.

The Czech Republic can boast with a number of well-preserved architectural monuments (there are 12 Czech historical monuments on the UNESCO Heritage List). The Czech Republic is also rich in natural wonders (e.g. four national parks: National Parks of Krkonoše, Šumava, České Švýcarsko, Podyjí; over 1,200 state-protected landscape areas, and also many other beautiful places). One third of the country is covered with hilly regions, abounding in woodlands and meadows giving opportunities for agrotourism (MagConsulting, 2011).

Holiday spending in the Czech countryside is appreciated since early 20th century, when families went to summer houses to live up in accord with rural habits and the environment. Tramping and time spending in family cottages are also well known traditions of Czechs. Contemporary agrotourism (including ecology agriculture that is based of ecoagrotourism), however, is rather new phenomena as it appeared after 1989. In most cases, however, agrotourism business provides additional income to other primary agricultural activities (of vegetable or animal character) (Pourová, 2002). The exact number of agrofarms in the CR is not currently known, it is only estimated to few hundreds.

Note: Number of agrofarms can be derived from the statistics of the Czech Union of Rural Tourism.

In January 2014 there were 92 members in the Union. These had in total 375 sites, of which 200 were certified (see <http://www.svazvt.cz/files/clenove.htm>). See also "Agrotourism in the Czech Republic" (Dudák and Pavelka, 2012) for a list and brief description of 71 agrotourism subjects and 239 providers of agrotourism activities in the CR.

The private sector practices most of the activities in tourism in the CR. Since its priority is profit maximizing, the private sector very often does not bother with consequences of business activities on local residents and the environment. That responsibility is often taken over by the public sector, whose mission is to set desirable directions of the area development and to coordinate activities of particular actors with the goal to gain the biggest advantage from their activities. There are different competences at different levels of the public sector, as well as tools used for achieving their goals (GaREP, 2008). In the Czech Republic public sector is from the hierarchical point divided to central, regional and local levels:

The *central level* is represented by the Ministry of Regional Development (MRD) and the Czech Head Office of Tourism (called CzechTourism). The Ministry of Regional Development is a central organ of public service in respect of tourism affairs. The state policy is focused on the support of regional development, bringing legislation closer to that of EU. The primary goal of CzechTourism is to promote the Czech Republic abroad as a tourism destination, monitor visitors and analyze demands of visitors in the Czech Republic.

The *regional level* is represented by regions. Regional institutions manage tourism activities in their respective regions through tourism divisions. Their competences mainly include setting of tourism development regional conception, its management and revision. Some regions are managed by professional destination companies, or clusters (e.g. Centrála cestovního ruchu

III: *Tourism share on economic indicators (%)*

Indicator	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 ¹	2020 ¹
Share of tourism on:							
consumption expenditures	6.6	6.6	6.9	6.8	6.2	6.2	6.6
government expenditures	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.8
capital investment	13.2	11.7	11.8	11.4	11.0	10.5	12.4
export	12.5	12.2	11.8	11.3	11.9	11.4	9.3
import	7.4	6.9	7.3	7.1	7.1	6.9	5.8
STI on:							
employment	2.1	2.1	1.9	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.8
GDP	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.7
STE on:							
employment	11.0	10.9	10.7	10.2	10.2	9.8	10.9
GDP	12.0	11.7	11.5	11.0	10.8	10.4	11.9

Source: MagConsulting (2011)

Note: ¹) Forecast. STI = share of tourism industry – direct impact only. STE = share of tourism economy – total impact (direct and indirect – generated).

Východní Moravy in Zlín region, Vysočina Tourism in Vysočina).

Tourism at the *local level* is the competence of cities and municipalities. Affairs that are of interests of municipalities and their residents (to support tourism activities for the benefit of the development of the whole destination) belong to their individual force. All these subjects may form partnerships (e.g. voluntary association of municipalities, local action groups /LAG/, Public-Private-Partnerships /PPP/, euro regions) (Galvasová *et al.*, 2007). The most important actors at this level are local or regional tourism organizations (TOs), members of which are among others also municipalities. The main task of TOs is to manage and develop tourism activities in the given region.

Rural tourism and esp. agrotourism is in the competence of the *Ministry of Agriculture*, which acts as an information source, provides training, financial support in the form of grants or financial loans. Financial support for agriculture activities is available within "Rural Development Programme" (MA, 2006).

Subjects involved in rural, or agriculture tourism activities are similar to those in general tourism. However, due to very specific features of rural areas, specialized organizations at national or European levels emerged. One of the most important ones is the non-profit organization ECEAT (European Centre for Eco Agro Tourism). ECEAT is based in the Netherlands, and among its members is also the Czech branch. Its main task is to promote sustainable development in rural regions through responsible tourism. At present the organization is involved mainly in the design of a quality assessment system for sustainable development (system ECEAT QUALITY LABEL), and of an already running program called Heritage trails, focused on regional gastronomy support (more at <http://www.eceat.cz/>).

ECEAT closely cooperates with the Czech *Union of Rural Tourism*. Its goal is to support economic

and cultural activities, traditions and natural environment in rural areas (more at <http://www.svazvt.cz/index.htm>). Additionally, its tasks involve promotion of its members' interests (businesses in rural areas), setting standards in accommodation-providing services, and monitoring of its application into practice. The most important product probably is a project called "Holidays in the countryside". This project supports rural accommodation activities – in cottages, apartments, small camping sites and at farms. The recently opened information website became an important information-sharing source and communication tool (more at <http://www.prazdninynavenkove.cz/en/>).

Unfortunately, the quality of agrotourism services is not currently managed at the national level. In agrotourism-related accommodation services can be applied standards that exist in accommodation generally. However, these standards are also subject of certification rules, while certification is provided by professional certification bodies. These bodies also act as a monitoring organ. In agrotourism, these are mainly private accommodation services (subjects are "star-quality" certified), guarant of which is the Union of Rural Tourism. ECEAT, on the other hand, operates the already mentioned "eco" quality system ECEAT QUALITY LABEL. This system evaluates subjects from the sustainability view (economic, social and environmental development) (Burian and Gryndlerová, 2010).

Management System of Tourism and Agrotourism in Austria

Austria is among the top 10 most developed countries in the world by income from tourism. Share of tourism on economic indicators is presented in Tab. IV.

Thanks to very favorable conditions Austria became a very important agrotourism destination. But it hasn't always been so. According to historians,

IV: *Tourism share on economic indicators (%)*

Indicator	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 ¹	2020 ¹
Share of tourism on:							
consumption expenditures	14.3	14.2	14.0	14.1	13.7	13.6	14.8
government expenditures	4.8	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
capital investment	14.3	13.3	12.8	11.6	13.0	12.6	12.5
export	15.6	14.6	13.6	13.5	15.3	14.2	13.9
import	14.3	13.7	13.4	13.1	14.1	13.7	10.9
STI on:							
employment	5.1	4.9	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.5	6.1
GDP	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.1	5.2
STE on:							
employment	15.1	14.4	13.6	13.4	14.3	13.4	17.5
GDP	14.0	13.4	12.9	12.5	13.2	12.5	15.4

Source: MagConsulting (2011)

Note: 1) Forecast. STI = share of tourism industry – direct impact only. STE = share of tourism economy – total impact (direct and indirect – generated).

not a very long time ago Austrian agrotourism had just a tiny share of the tourism industry. Even though farmers gathered up to various associations, these were very often only associations with regional impact. Not only agrotourism businesses faced problems in marketing of their products, but also in the definition of their core products. However, it was the state of Austria that helped significantly and provided institutional support (Pourová, 2002).

At present, the Austrian government together with individual representative federal provinces provide financial support to high-quality tourism development. The government supports also promotion of Austrian tourism. That is done through the *Austrian National Tourist Office* (ÖW – Österreich Werbung).

Tourism in Austria is organized by the *Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth* (BMWfJ – Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend, more at <http://www.en.bmwfj.gv.at>). BMWfJ is the competent authority for the following tourism-related issues: law, tourism statistics, international cooperation and financial support to tourism. Agrotourism is actively governed by the *Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management* (Bundesministerium für Land- und Forstwirtschaft, Umwelt und Wassewirtschaft, more at <http://www.lebensministerium.at/>). Even though Austrian tourism legislation is governed at the national level, individual federal provinces have quite a high level of autonomy. And as such, they can set own legislation, directives or procedures. That also applies to marketing activities and tourism service promotion within their regions.

At the top of agrotourism organizations in Austria is the *Farm Holidays Association* (Urlaub am Bauernhof). The Association has about 3,000 members, such as family farms. The main goal of the association is farm promotion and providing information on the relevant destination. The main project of the Association – “Holidays on the Farm” has started in early ‘70s, and in 1991 got its final organizational structure. Its central and managerial body is the Farm Holidays Union. At the level below, there are state unions (in federal provinces in Austria). The ultimate level is formed by agrotourism service providers. The Association grants the “Holidays on the Farm” awards to best business subjects depending on quality of service they provide. Certified subjects are then awarded with a logo with a daisy flower on it, put into a publicly available database and as such further promoted (more at www.urlaubambauernhof.at).

Tourism in Austria is, according to the Federal Constitution, in the competence of particular federal provinces that formulate policies of the tourism development and related legislation (this legislation relates to the tourism development and its financing). On the federal provinces level, there are autonomous organizations dealing with lower level of regional and local tourism organizations.

Economic chambers also play important role in the Austrian tourism management system. Membership in these economic chambers is compulsory. At the national level there is the Economic Chamber of Austria (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich). The Chamber has specialized divisions, such as division for the gastronomy, hotels, spas, travel agencies, cable railways and lifts. Economic chambers operate also on the federal provinces level. Active participation of the economic chambers on the tourism management in Austria guarantees active partnership between the public and private sectors.

Evaluation of Tourism and Agrotourism Management System in the Czech Republic and in Austria

As stated above, author compares selected aspects of tourism and agrotourism management system used in the Czech Republic and Austria (subjects of tourism and agrotourism management, conception and vision, importance of tourism/agrotourism for national economy, their historical aspects and traditions). The evaluation and identified shortcomings of the tourism/agrotourism management system in the Czech Republic is based on strategic documents and analysis (such as Kírálová, 2005; MRD, 2006a; Srb, 2002 etc.), as well as questionnaire research.

Rural tourism (also agrotourism) is a modern form of tourism. Despite of gradual development of agrotourism in the Czech Republic, the demand for holiday and free time spending at farms is still small. Rural tourism in the CR has different features than rural tourism we can see in countries such as Austria, Germany, Italy, France or Poland. In these countries, agriculture is built on relatively small family businesses, for which tourism of any kind brings quite important part of their total revenues, next to the main agricultural activities. The Czech rural tourism is, on the other hand, based on accommodation services. This applies also to agrotourism. Only recently Czech subjects begun to provide also other services, usually those related to some particular trends in the demand. Very often this includes horse riding (hippotourism), hunting, birdwatching, sport equipment rental services, relax and wellness. Traditional home products, such as agriculture products, or bio products, although relatively high-demanded by consumers, are very rare to find. This is mainly due to the fact, that rural tourism services are not provided by farms or agricultural subjects (as happens in tourism developed countries), but mainly by entrepreneurs (or accommodation providers) offering primarily their cottages or apartments for recreational use (Burian and Gryndlerová, 2010). These usually have nothing common whatsoever with the agriculture industry. As such, this is not agrotourism, but only its alternative form – village tourism.

In other countries, the situation is different. For example in Austria, where agrotourism is considered to be born (Burian and Gryndlerová, 2010). There it enjoys much higher attractiveness than other kinds of rural tourism. As the authors state, the reason for such attractiveness is a *tradition* of small family-owned agricultural businesses. It may also be approach to *innovations* and very sophisticated *educational system* in tourism. As an efficient marketing tool appeared is the already mentioned *daisy logo*. The Austrian system of tourism management can be classified as very effective. It has clear *vision*, *sustainable development* and *organization structure*. Additionally, its advantages include clear definition of *competences* of all interested parties, *professional management* of tourism organizations (educated and experienced employees) and sophisticated system of tourism service *quality evaluation*, including *legislation* (specific law on tourism implemented in all state provinces). Tourism is financially *supported* by the state and other organizations. Austrian regions are managed by *tourism organization*, i.e. in the Oberösterreich region it is the Oberösterreich Tourism Destination Company. Such *cooperation* between a tourism organization and public and business levels, allows for effective coordination of activities in the region. Additionally, *tourism sustainability* principles are effectively applied (EC, 2008).

These statements correspond with the results of the on-line research focused on tourists and municipality mayors. Questionnaire research revealed the following risks and opportunity factors in tourism development. Critical success factors are preventive action to avoid negative phenomena, feeling of safety in a tourism destination, existence of a strategic development plan, strategic planning for long-term development of a municipality, inter-municipality cooperation for tourism activity development, favorable conditions for tourism development, tourism being beneficial to municipalities and their development. Risk factors: experience with the occurrence of pathological phenomena in a tourism destination, very few municipalities do monitoring of visitors attendance, low participation of entrepreneurs and interest groups (in development activities, safety protection), multiple membership in various forms of partnership.

Shortcomings in the Management System of Tourism and Agrotourism in the Czech Republic

As already mentioned, agrotourism in the Czech Republic is not following the way which is in neighbouring countries. It is not only due to different development of the Czech agriculture industry, but also due to the lack of support of agriculture activities (as it is seen abroad). In the CR, there is a lack of *clear vision* and there is no single common *conception* of state administration, resorts, including the one of agrotourism. Conditions

for the development may thus be different region to region (Kostková, 2010). Very bad situation is also in the cooperation among businesses, more specifically not only in the agrotourism but also among providers of other services (Pourová, 2002) including very limited cooperation with the public sector (Srb, 2002).

It is the *organization structure* and *management* of tourism (including rural/agrotourism) that are among main problems for faster and more efficient development of tourism in the Czech Republic. That is the outcome of almost all studies and analyses of this particular industry. Unlike what we can see in countries like Austria and Switzerland, "tourism management in the Czech Republic is not properly developed and its level rather corresponds to what the mentioned countries had in 50's to 70's of the last century", according to Srb (2002, p. 8). At those times, cooperation was really simple and in most of cases focused only on promotion and advertising. The above relates to the following general problems seen in the Czech Republic:

- a) Definition of the organizational structure and tourism management.
- b) Lack of a single and generally accepted TO structure.
- c) Lack of cooperation in tourism.
- d) Low efficiency of groups of interest.

Ad_a) In the Czech Republic, the tourism organizational structure at regional and district levels are still developing; at local levels very often do not exist at all or in limited numbers (MRD, 2006a). In fact, *diversity* and very often also *penetration* of individual *hierarchic levels* of TOs exist. At the national level there is no TO however, some tasks are being done by CzechTourism and Association of Tourism Regions.

At the regional level, TOs exist, but are rather disorganized; the same can be said about those at local levels. (CzechTourism, 2008). As Kírálová (2005) states, there is no particular pattern of a TO development. In practice it works in such a way that a TO structure is sought for rather unpredictably and on existing local conditions. In this respect GaREP (2008, p. 124) mentions "unprofessional management from public subjects in setting up and development of tourism organizations".

Ad_b) *Nonexistence* of a single and generally accepted TO structure and *unclear competence* of national, regional and local levels of tourism management has been already admitted by the Ministry of Regional Development (MRD, 2006a). There are seven legal forms for regional and local TOs in the Czech Republic. However, majority of them are of interest groups of corporate bodies and generally beneficial society (CzechTourism, 2008).

Ad_c) *Cooperation of subjects* is rather questionable. As Srb (2002) states, only public subjects (municipalities, micro regions, regions, state) participate in rural management. Only rarely the businesses sector is also involved. According to

GaREP (2008), commercial businesses are reluctant to participate in TOs because of relatively small experience with tourism activities. Commercial subjects thus do not have enough knowledge and experience with business activities in tourism and more specifically with good practice seen abroad. It is not about economic, legal, or ecology-related knowledge in business doing and nature protection, but rather about general managerial skills and risk management – thus skills inevitable for current business environment.

Ad_g) Reasons for inadequate penetration of commercial businesses into tourism management at the lowest level are difficult to identify. However, as Srb (2002, p. 8–9) states, it is because of “little cooperation of tourism-oriented businesses and almost *non-existence of interest and lobbyist groups* in the CR”. The same states GaREP (2008), saying that there is so far no group of subjects for a particular business activity (e.g. such as a group of accommodation providers). The absence or inefficiency of the groups is a big problem for effective tourism management. Efficient partnership and cooperation between public and private sectors is a “prerequisite for TOs and thus also for efficient and effective tourism management in a given region” (Királová, 2005, p. 6). In the Czech Republic, however, we can sometimes identify existence of *multiple partnerships*, i.e. some subjects are involved in multiple cooperation groups. Such cooperation makes communication very difficult; additionally, cooperation principle is often misunderstood. This may lead to “self promotion” of business subjects or of private interests (Galvasová, 2007; GaREP, 2008). Hudečková and Lošťák (2008) also state that such cooperation may result in “quazi-partnerships” and as such lead to entirely different results than is desired synergy effect.

Another disadvantage in agrotourism is the lack of understanding of municipalities in the tourism development. Despite of the legislative measures (Law 128/2008 Coll., on municipalities), according to which municipalities are required to develop their regions, municipality development plans are very often too general. Very rarely municipalities understand the importance of tourism for local development and adequately implement it into development planning (GaREP, 2008).

Proposal for Improvement of Tourism/ Agrotourism Management in the Czech Republic

Results of the above presented analysis of selected aspects of tourism and agrotourism management system in the Czech Republic and Austria suggest that it is impossible, or currently would be inefficient, to simply copy and implement the Austrian model in the Czech Republic. Tourism management in tourism-developed countries is based on a conceptual approach of all interested subjects. Development of rural tourism –

especially agrotourism is closely linked to historical development of agriculture and also tradition of holiday spending at farms. Additionally, tourism development in these countries is based on a long-term, continuous cooperation of all subjects in the region (Srb, 2002).

Currently, conditions for implementation of similar tourism management systems are not favorable enough. The Austrian model, however, can be a source of inspiration for further tourism development in the CR. It can also be legislative and conceptual documents currently being prepared or realized by responsible parties at the top level (esp. Ministry of Regional Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of the Environment, CzechTourism), which play a major role in building more efficient tourism in the Czech Republic for the coming period 2014–2020. The following is a summary of recommendations for each problematic area of tourism and agrotourism development:

1. *Tourism legislation*: Specific tourism-related legislation, which would set up strategic direction for tourism development. That means setting up a specific tourism management structure, definition of competencies within such organization structure, setting rules and procedures for financial support at individual organization levels, as well as tourists' protection.
2. *Institutional settings within tourism sector*: Providing support in setting up tourism organizations and tourism unions, definition of roles, interrelations and coordination of activities among subjects.

Note: This has been a problem discussed for a long time. It is also the main issue of “Support of Tourism Development Act”, which should come in force in 2014 (MRD, 2012). In addition there is “Amendment of Act No. 159/1999 Coll., on Certain Conditions of Business Tourism Activities”, being prepared to protect clients of tourism agencies. This amendment deals with client insurance issues in case of insolvency of a tourism agency.

3. *Conceptual management framework*: System management of tourism in regions, coordination of activities within regional development by the public sector, integrating tourism development to strategic activities at regional and municipal levels, setting strategic documents and procedures.
4. *Setting of tourism support by the public sector*: financial support (subsidies, grants, tax reliefs), methodic, information, advisory etc.

Note: The document “Support of Tourism Development Act” should define tourism system in the Czech Republic, its horizontal as well as vertical management system – three-stage organizational structure: national – regional – local, where each stage will have defined its roles, competences and duties, including financial support management (MRD, 2012). The document “The State Tourism Policy Concept in CR 2014–2020” shall set management system for other

levels, it shall deal with more specific problems and provide some practical solutions (MRD, 2013). Additionally, there are also general strategy documents being prepared for MAS LEADER, such as "National Strategy Plan LEADER 2014+".

5. *Quality of tourism-related services*: Focus and provide quality rather than quantity in tourism infrastructure development as well as individual services. To improve and centralize certification system of tourism (and agrotourism) services.

Note: Quality of services shall be supported by "Czech Service Quality System". It is a system primarily aimed for SMEs, while it should promote higher quality of services, know-how and general competitiveness (MRD, 2011).

6. *Support of environmentally friendly form of tourism* for ensuring of sustainable regional development.
7. *Support of handicapped people*: support of social tourism, bringing tourism closer to handicapped people.

Note: Social responsible tourism as proposed in the Madrid declaration (MRD, 2010a) is being promoted by "National Program of Support for Tourism 2010–2013" (sub-program "Tourism for All" (MRD, 2010b), in which supported areas are primarily reconstruction/development of rest areas, service centers for tourists and hygienic sanitation facilities for hikers, cyclists and disabled tourists, introduction/improvement of navigation and information system for hearing and sight impaired participants in tourism. Additional activity mentioned can be EDEN and its program "Travelling without barriers", or activities of the Association of Regional Brands to promote local products. New geoparks, such as NG Pobeskydí, NG Kraj Blanických rytířů, NG Železné hory, NG GeoLoci are also promoted.

8. *Education system*: Provide or support training of specialists in tourism, management and marketing. Additionally, disseminate information, knowledge and "good practice" to business subjects.
9. *Support of tourism-related innovations*: Support of research and development projects through grants, employment opportunities and exchange of team members.

Note: According to unofficial sources, the Tourism division of MRD has recently signed cooperation agreement with Brazil and Azerbaijan. Similar agreements are planned to be signed with Morocco, Albania, China and other countries. Additionally, there is also cooperation within Visegrad Group.

10. *Apply information technologies, statistics in tourism*: Implementation and use of new ICT in tourism (implementation of new tourism-related information and reservation systems),

and statistical evaluation of data on supply v. demand.

CONCLUSIONS

Rural tourism and also agrotourism becomes more and more popular way of business doing. It is not just a matter of fashion, but rather agrotourism represents personal relation to nature and the environment. This general trend is seen in the Czech Republic as well. Czech businessmen can source know-how from experience gained abroad and implement them locally under local conditions.

In order rural tourism (including agrotourism) to be a way for rural area development, appropriate business environment must be set up, including business support and infrastructure. Local community and the level of its participation in a decision making process must also be considered (DCLG, 2006). Tourism of any kind in general always relates to a particular locality and its community. If the community perceives tourism positively and accepts its economic role, then the community must be prepared to act as a host and protect local traditions and habits. It is some degree of a burden and as such must be managed in respect of social relations and intra-community connections, organization and management of all activities in the locality. Examples of tourism management in Austria show that the key factor for successful development of tourism activities, including activities in rural areas is an *effective institutional framework and cooperation among all interested subjects*. Effective management system in tourism together with municipality cooperation, involvement of entrepreneurs and local people can contribute to higher competitiveness of products representing particular region, people, habits, customs, or even atmosphere.

Even though it may be true that rural tourism/agrotourism is not yet as economically attractive as most of other sectors, it will eventually contribute to the protection of demographic structure of rural areas and support specific cultural heritage and environment. The question of whether it is only financial resources needed and income gathered from job availability comes up. Next and equally important sources are social capital, social network. These relate to cooperation and relation between people. Economic benefits alone are not strategic asset of rural areas, but it is rather the hope for "romantic" or "traditional" life.

SUMMARY

The paper discusses the role of tourism in dealing with problems of rural areas and agriculture sector in the Czech Republic, emphasizes sustainable development of rural areas, and also inevitability of system approach in tourism management. The aim of the paper is to compare selected aspects of management systems used in tourism/agrotourism in the Czech Republic with those used in Austria and propose key factors for improvement of tourism including agrotourism management, which could be applied in the Czech Republic. The paper has been prepared and results are presented upon

strategic qualitative and quantitative research, comparative analysis, as well as additional analysis of publicly available literature.

From the presented analysis it is concluded that the key factor for successful development of tourism activities, including activities in rural areas is an *effective institutional framework* and *cooperation among all interested subjects*. The paper also shows that there has been quite extensive spending in rural support in 2007–2013 from the Rural Development Program. Examples of good practice simply show that cooperation and partnership are the main basis for sustainable development of rural areas. The question is, whether in the next program period 2014–2020 there will be enough financial and institutional support made by relevant subjects, so that rural tourism/agrotourism can further develop. Legislative and strategic documents (esp. MRD, 2010b, 2012, 2013) for the coming period 2014–2020 should solve the problems of tourism development not only financially, but also by promotion of effective management of tourism at all levels. However, it is dependent on political will and whether these documents are put into practice.

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