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# **The Impact of Culture on Tourism**

**CASE STUDY OF THE SLOVAK  
REPUBLIC**

**Office of the Žilina Self-Governing Region**



# The Žilina Self-Governing Region, Slovak Republic

## *Introduction*

The Žilina self-governing region (ŽSGR) lies in the north-west of Slovakia and covers 6 810 km<sup>2</sup> of territory, which forms 13,8 % of the territory of the Slovak Republic. The territory of the ŽSGR belonged to the Liptov, Orava and Turiec counties from the Middle Ages until 1923. The western part of the region used to belong to the Trenčín county. The Žilina region was constituted in 1949, involving the Považská Bystrica and Ilava districts – which presently belongs to the Trenčín region. The region has administratively been operating until 1960.

The Žilina region was reconstituted in July 1996 by the Act on Administrative and Territorial Division of the Slovak Republic.<sup>1</sup> Presently, under the territorial administrative system of the Slovak Republic, this territory belongs to the ŽSGR. Reform of the public administration and new state organisation are characteristic features of the period, which precedes the constitution of the ŽSGR. The National Council of the Slovak Republic adopted the Act on self-government of higher territorial units and the Act on elections to the bodies of self-governing regions in 2001.<sup>2</sup>

The ŽSGR represents an autonomous, territorial and self-governing unit of the Slovak Republic; it is a corporate body that administers its property and receipts autonomously, and guarantees and protects the rights and interests of its citizens.

The scope of state administrative bodies has been transferred as well to bodies of the self-governing regions, embracing the spheres of transport, civil protection, social aid, territorial planning, school system, physical culture, dramatic activities, health services, human pharmacy, regional development and tourism. Žilina town is an administrative seat of the region.

The property of the region is not a property of the state, the region is authorised to administer its property autonomously, in conformity with rules of administration and usage of property defined by the Regional assembly. Receipts and expenditure of the region are not a part of the state budget of the Slovak Republic, with the exception of state subventions provided from the state budget.

The activity of the region results from the purpose of its foundation to execute self-government of its territory and guarantee universal development of its citizens through its bodies and their consultative bodies, advisory whether executive units.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Act of NC SR No.221/1996 of the Statute on Administrative and Territorial Division of the Slovak Republic.

<sup>2</sup> Act No. 302/2001 of the Statute on self-government of the higher territorial units; Act No.303/2001 of the Statute on elections to bodies of self-governing regions.

<sup>3</sup> Statute of the Žilina self-governing region, 2002.

## *Symbols of the region*



The coat-of-arms of the region is divided into four fields and was derived from those of historical self-governing units, as the region spreads on part of the territory of the historical Turiec and Orava counties.

The division of the region into historical regions - Orava, Liptov, Turiec, Kysuce, Horné Považie - is still used until present because of tradition and because it precisely determines particular parts of the region.

The ŽSGR has 11 districts, 315 municipalities, 18 of which are cities. Its population as of 31 of December 2006 was 695 326. The region borders the Czech Republic and Poland and from a geomorphologic point of view it has a multi-shaped character. From valley flows (Váh, Kysuca, Turiec and Orava), to agricultural and forest country over non-residential mountainous area of crest range of High and Low Tatras, Choč hills, Great and Small Fatra, Javorníky and Strážovské hills. It is a mountainous region, the settlement of which is mainly concentrated in valleys with a high concentration of citizens in cities.

The territory of ŽSGR is the area with the highest density of protected areas in Slovakia (four national parks, three land protected areas, protected areas, natural reservations, natural creations and protected repositories).<sup>4</sup>

## *Cultural potential*

Based on the number, importance and utility of the national cultural monuments which are located within the territory of ŽSGR, the cultural potential of this territory is evident. It belongs mainly to the sphere of cultural heritage and benefit should be derived from it to increase the accessibility and attractiveness of cultural values. Together with cultural monuments, traditional (folk) culture with continual, periodic single activities (folk ensembles, festivals and showings, open-air museums, traditional crafts, customs and rituals, dancing and music), is an important part of the cultural heritage within the territory of ŽSGR. A number of them are part of the wide Slovak system of shows focused on folk culture and art, accordingly in different interest-art activities.

In 2006, the Monument office of the Slovak Republic in the Žilina self-governing region registered 4 826 movable monuments (3 367 monumental subjects, 1 459 cultural monuments) and 1 373 immovable monuments (1 356 monumental objects, 917 national cultural monuments).

National cultural monuments within the territory of ŽSGR embrace archaeological localities, castles, mansions, curies, churches, folk architecture, city monumental reservations, burgess houses, palaces and villas, monumental boards, monumental reserves of folk architecture, monumental zones, historical monuments, science and technical monuments, parks, gardens, historical greenery, by road plastic arts and crosses.

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<sup>4</sup> **national parks:** Tatranský národný park, Národný park Nízke Tatry, Národný park Malá Fatra, Národný park Veľká Fatra; **land protected areas:** Horná Orava, Kysuce, Strážovské vrchy

***The most attractive cultural resources in particular regions of the Žilina self-governing region:***

**ORAVA REGION**

• **Monuments:**

- Orava castle (Oravský Podzámok) – the largest well-preserved and the second most visited castle in Slovakia
- Wooden chapels – Tvrdošín, Leštiny, Istebné
- Folk architecture – Museum of the Orava village (Zuberec), Bobrova raľa (Podbiel)
- Slanica art island – sacral and naive art exposition on the island in the centre of the largest Slovak dam

• **Events:**

- Podhorie folkloric celebrations (Zuberec) –international folkloric festival
- Shepherds´ days (Malatiná) – international festival of shepherds´ culture
- Revived Orava crafts (open air museum in Zuberc)
- Thurzo´s celebrations
- Night viewings of the Fabulous castle (Orava castle)
- Rafting on the Orava river – Nižná n. Oravou – Podbiel, Horná Lehota - Oravský Podzámok

**LIPTOV REGION**

• **Monuments:**

- Likava castle – castle ruins
- Churches – Church in Ludrová – Gothic church from the 13th century with a unique wall-painting from the 15th century
- Wooden church in Svätý Kríž – one of the largest wooden churches in Europe built in 1693
- Folk architecture – Vlkolínec – village registered in the UNESCO world heritage list as a unique land and residential architectonic complex; Museum of the Liptov village ( Pribylina)
- Archaeological open air museum Mara – Havránok – reconstructed objects of the Celtic and medieval culture
- Sheep breeding tradition museum (Liptovský Hrádok) – Walachian shepherds and sheep breeding tradition are unique and specific parts of traditional folk culture of Slovakia

• **Events:**

- Východná – international folkloric festival
- Photo forum (Ružomberok) – international salon of art photography, exposition of works of art photographers from all over the world
- Summer photography school – international workshop and photography festival

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## TURIEC REGION

- **Monuments:**

- Castle ruins – Blatnica castle, Sklabaňa castle
- Folk architecture – Museum of the Slovak village (Martin)
- Slovak chamber theatre Martin – significant professional theatre scene in the entire Slovakia

- **Events:**

- Fantasy biennale (Martin) – international competition in children's art
- Library art biennale (Martin) – international competition in library art
- Touches and relations (Martin) – Slovak professional theatres festival

## KYSUCE REGION

- **Monuments:**

- Folk architecture – Museum of the Kysuce village (Nová Bystrica – Vychylovka)
- Technical monument – Historical dead-end forest railway train

- **Events:**

- Beskydy celebrations (Turzovka) – international folkloric festival
- Oščadnická heligónka (Oščadnica) – national competitive performance of "heligónka players"
- Goral celebrations (Skalité) – international folkloric festival

The tinkers' tradition is a special phenomenon. One part of the middle Považie region (from Púchov to Žilina town with the entire Kysuce region) was given the name "DROTÁRIA" by writer Anton Bielek. In the times of the tinkers' tradition conjuncture, when about ten thousand tinkers were spread in the world, it consisted of 156 settlements, villages and towns. Drotária was geographically set in the following districts – Bytča, Čadca, Kysucké Nové Mesto and partly Žilina and Považská Bystrica districts. Nowadays, the tinkers' tradition is experiencing a renaissance. The number of tinkers' tradition masters is continuously increasing. Various tinkers' tradition events and festivals are held in Kysuce region and Žilina town.

## HORNÉ POVAŽIE REGION

- **Monuments:**

- Budatín castle (Žilina) – medieval castle
- Tinkers' tradition exposition
- Castle ruins – Strečno castle, Lietava castle
- Folk architecture – Čičmany
- Slovak bethlehem (Rajecká Lesná) – carving work of master Jozefa Pekara, moments of the Slovak history, architecture, folk traditions are materialised into one entity. This unique carving work is 8,5 m long, 2,5 meters wide and 3 meters high.

- **Events:**
  - Jánošík's days (Terchová) – the greatest international folkloric festival in Slovakia
  - Tinkers' tradition festival (Žilina) – the only event of this kind in the world, with many events devoted to the tinkers' tradition
  - International meeting of master tinkers (Žilina) – international workshop
  - Bethlehems (Žilina) – biennale of traditional Bethlehem exposition

### ***Development and Potential of Culture - SWOT Analysis***

SWOT analysis results are based on the survey organised within the *Cultural Policy* from *A to Ž* project in the period from May to September 2005. It describes the strength and weaknesses, threats and opportunities for development and potential of culture in the Žilina Region based on expert knowledge in the following areas of art: theatre and dance, visual art, libraries - cinema, culture centres and the like, cultural heritage.

#### **Strengths (internal attributes of entities and cultural environment)**

- tradition and historical continuity of culture and art; awareness of the relevance of culture
- cultural heritage and its uniqueness, platform for interconnecting culture and tourism
- existence of (relatively) sufficient number of entities in the sphere of culture, good quality in the performance of cultural activities (folklore and folk culture)
- sufficiency of premises and spaces for the performance of cultural activities
- openness (interest) of entities and individuals towards changes
- interest in increased expertise, more effective management and responsible governance (administration)
- effort to diversify the variability of financial resources (the search for alternative resources of finance)
- introduction of “small” grant systems (targeted distribution of resources)
- gradually developing international cooperation

#### **Weaknesses (internal attributes of entities and cultural environment)**

- lack of strategic planning
- failure to establish long-terms and other plans or poor on-going assessment and evaluation of long-term plans
- too rigid (red tape, economic point of view, lack of values) planning of processes in the area of culture
- little managerial experience and knowledge in the area of strategic planning
- long-term lack of finance for the support of all cultural activities included in current development plans (the conflict between plans and possibilities)
- lack of leaders, prominent personalities are leaving
- failure of decision-making bodies to set and differentiate priorities in development and public resource finance

- insufficient communication between decision-making bodies (authorities) and the executive bodies (the organisations)
- conflict of priorities among cultural institutions working in the same area in the region
- insufficiently efficient systems of management (obsolete processes)
- weak system of motivation factors (human resources)
- lack of finance (public resources) and real sponsorship
- the contradiction between the mission (objectives) and real possibilities (particularly the institutions of the Self-Governing Region), lack of economical independence of entities
- poor technical equipment in entities and at premises
- poor or inadequately targeted promotion and lack of awareness and information
- lack of professional communicators
- inconvenient structure of employees in institutions and organisations (deficient personnel audit)
- lack of possibilities to get human resources (NGO – lack of permanent employees)
- lack of relevant and long-term international contacts and partnerships

**Opportunities (external effects of the environment)**

- new possibilities of financing (EU grants, NGO – opportunity to receive 2% of assigned income tax, sponsoring, activation of both corporate and individual donors)
- change in budgetary rules for entities in the sector of public finance (keeping own resources)
- change of financing from public resources – division into contracts (focused on continual activity) and grants (focused on one-shot projects)
- enhancing the professional level of organisations
- relatively good basic economic, geographical and demographic conditions of the region
- plenitude of potential attention to the culture, sufficient numbers of audiences
- evaluation of the assessment criteria for the successful accomplishment and efficiency of cultural projects and activities
- new ways of engagement and utilisation of cultural monuments

**Threats (external effects of the environment)**

- indirect politicisation of strategic planning processes (functioning “from election to election”)
- dogmatism in planning (objectives according to resources instead of resources according to objectives)
- non transparent distribution of public funds
- remaining manifestations of authoritative management of processes in the field of culture

- decision-making (municipal government) without taking into consideration eventual impacts of the decisions on the field of culture
- weak cultural awareness of decision-makers in the area of both state administration and private sector
- commercialisation of art and culture (influence of the media)
- lack of positive motivation from administration (decision-making) bodies at the level of the Self-Governing Region and the local self-governments
- long-term absence of the strategy for state cultural policy
- insufficient perception and definition of public interest in the field of culture
- poor reflection of cultural activities by the society, poor participation of the society
- poor interest of the media
- unprofessional and unsystematic approach of founders (public sector)
- political interventions into the management of organisations and processes (public sector, public funds)
- unfavourable (inconvenient) legislation (public sector)
- lack of independent financial resources aimed at the support of cultural activities (in the sector of public funds), inconsistent fiscal decentralisation
- the absence of tax benefits for donors and business entities
- economically weak population (low “purchasing power” in relation to cultural activities)

In the analysis outcomes, we can observe that common features significantly prevail (cross-sectional characteristics) and there are less specific features typical for individual fields of culture. It means that the given characteristics of both entities (subjects) and environment are articulated and felt as the common ones – regardless of the specific area of culture (as cultural heritage, folk culture, art and others).

As for the impact on the environment (surroundings), threats outnumber opportunities, thus resulting in the conclusion that strategies in the area of culture have to consider and cover the environment and its surroundings. As for the negative impact, socially and politically sensitive topics appeared (corruption and lack of transparency of public funds, bureaucracy, authoritarian management), resulting in the necessity for a specific, distinctive communication strategy with a decision-making sphere in the effort to achieve changes in the status quo.

It follows from the above-mentioned results of the analysis that for further development of culture, the Žilina Self-Governing Region has a well established initial basis of cultural traditions and potential interest of inhabitants in cultural values. The positive sign is also the readiness of the creators and distributors of culture for systemic changes (including the changes in fundamental economic relations), which will provide for development of culture in future. At the same time, it is inevitable to stress that in the cultural context of ŽSK (just as is the case of Slovakia as a whole) there still remains restraints, restrictions and stereotypes from the previous regime, resulting in persisting problems and issues in the existence and development of culture. Only a systemic solution of these issues can provide for sustainable development of culture in ŽSK.

## ***The Biggest Issues for Creators and Promulgators of Culture***

### **Finance Resources for Cultural Activities and Events**

- insufficient and not comprehensive solutions for financing the cultural activities (legislation options, fundraising, private donors, solutions based in a solid concept)
- lack of commercial activities and services of some cultural organisations under ŽSK's scope of powers
- insufficient funds for collection, digitalisation and maintenance of the manifestations of intangible (immaterial) cultural heritage and manifestations of contemporary culture
- too few opportunities to put together resources from different levels of state administration (i.e. Ministry of Culture, self-governing regions, municipalities)
- lack or absence of funds earmarked for culture in the budgets of small municipalities
- insufficient readiness of organisations to draw EU financing (projects)
- marked disproportion in the allocation of the amount of funds between the "persisting" budget finance system (for organisations) and project finance system (grant schemes and contributions for individual projects or activities) at the level of the budget of the self-governing region
- lack of funds for institutional grant schemes (i.e. support of institutions which are not within the scope of ŽSK's funding powers)
- ineffective coverage of some activities which can be outsourced by organisations
- lack of possibilities for fundraising
- lack of funds for revitalisation of cultural heritage objects and for covering the insurance for real estate and the art works in depositories and expositions of cultural organisations and during transport of art works
- lack of mutual cooperation, cooperation with volunteers and collaboration of organisations differing in legal form
- dependency on the budget of the funder (including the political dimension), non-existing strategic finance planning of the organisations (dominance of operative planning)
- non-transparent co-financing of activities and events of the cultural organisations under ŽSK's funding powers by partner organisations

### **Efficacy of Work and Motivation of Human Resources**

- lack of effective tools to increase personal motivation of human resources, insufficient activity and quality of skills of some specialists employed by organisations
- inadequate financial remuneration of managers and specialists working in cultural organisations – fixed salary tables
- outsourcing is not utilised – even though it is financially more efficient and in some cases better from the professional outcome viewpoint

- the absence of a strategic plan for human resource development at the level of self-governing region
- average, weak general skills of employees (PC skills, command of foreign languages)
- lack of language and communication competencies of human resources, inadequate enhancing of know-how in the area of the presentation of aims, values and projects, as well as in the area of fundraising and culture marketing
- absence of university education of some specialists working in the cultural organisations under ŽSK
- lack of opportunities and incentives for the increase of personal qualification competency and enhancing specialisation skills
- lack of personal responsibilities in the performance of activities and how these are carried out
- not enough sensitivity, or indifference and passivity in enhancing aesthetic values of premises and keeping the spaces clean and tidy for the visitors of cultural organisations
- inadequate communication with self-government, creators and leaders in the area of culture, with the communities within the region
- labour relation disputes which draw too much from the human resource capacities and also from the funds of cultural organisations

#### **Organisational and Managerial Relations**

- absence of clear targets and visions of cultural policy in Žilina Self-Governing Region
- problems with non-existent, and/or not updated and not fulfilled/unattainable vision and mission of organisations
- missing concept of management and development in at least the medium-term perspective
- missing tools for motivation (incentives) to utilise public funds efficiently and to increase the share of financing generated by business initiatives in the organisations themselves
- inflexible and under-funded system of wages and salaries as well as of remuneration of employees of cultural institutions
- insufficient marketing of cultural activities, events and projects
- too much bureaucracy in managerial and organisational relations
- absence of clearly set framework and measurable criteria (indicators) for the performance of basic activities of cultural organisations by ŽSK as founding body
- absence of clear rules for the evaluation of activities carried out by cultural organisations and for monitoring these activities
- lack of clear rules of cooperation between ŽSK and cultural organisations founded by ŽSK (principles of cooperation and performance of activities summarised in a single document)

## **Infrastructure, Facilities and Technological Equipment**

- low quality of provided services
- weak aesthetic aspects of the facilities, spaces, expositions and promotion of cultural organisations
- insufficient offer of cultural events in the areas far away from centres
- incomprehensive quality services for visitors of events and offers of the cultural organisations under ŽSK
- lawsuits relating to ownership of buildings that render impossible the procurement of financing for refurbishment and restoration from EU funds
- ineffective operation of the buildings (real estate) administered by the cultural organisations under ŽSK's scope of founding powers
- inadequate insurance coverage of the buildings and assets of the cultural organisations under ŽSK's scope of founding powers
- lack of finance for repairs of all buildings and intangible properties of the cultural organisations under ŽSK
- inadequate technological equipment of the cultural organisations under ŽSK's scope of founding powers

## **Miscellaneous**

- insufficient realisation of innovations
- insufficient quality and reach of the presentation of the activities carried out by the cultural organisations under ŽSK
- inadequate information policy<sup>5</sup>

## ***ŽSGR – a founder of cultural organisations***

Žilina self-governing region administers 23 cultural organisations with various scope of activities. There are four museums, five galleries, two theatres, two observatories, five regional cultural centres and five regional libraries.<sup>6</sup>

Founding relation has advantages and also disadvantages. The effort and ability of ŽSGR to resolve problems in the sphere of culture are advantageous. Solutions are conceptional, financially based (contributions from the ŽSGR budget, loans, grant system, financial support for acquisition, etc.), based on advantages of central service purchase for ŽSGR, on freedom and independence of cultural contents guarantee, further autonomy of organisations in working with human resources.

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<sup>5</sup> From cultural values to value of culture (Development strategy of the Zilina self-governing region) 2007. p. 25-29

<sup>6</sup> **Museums:** Považské múzeum v Žiline, Oravské múzeum P. O. Hviezdoslava v Dolnom Kubíne, Liptovské múzeum v Ružomberku, Kysucké múzeum v Čadci

**Galleries:** Oravská galéria v Dolnom Kubíne, Považská galéria umenia v Žiline, Galéria P. M. Bohúňa v Liptovskom Mikuláši, Turčianska galéria v Martine, Kysucká galéria v Čadci

**Theatres:** Slovenské komorné divadlo Martin, Bábkové divadlo Žilina

**Observatories:** Hvezdáreň v Žiline, Kysucká hvezdáreň v Kysuckom Novom Meste

**Regional cultural centres:** Regionálne kultúrne stredisko v Žiline, Kysucké kultúrne stredisko v Čadci, Oravské kultúrne stredisko v Dolnom Kubíne, Liptovské kultúrne stredisko v Liptovskom Mikuláši, Turčianske kultúrne stredisko v Martine

**Libraries:** Žilinská knižnica, Kysucká knižnica v Čadci, Oravská knižnica A. Habovštiaka v Dolnom Kubíne, Knižnica G. Fejérpatoky-Belopotockého v Liptovskom Mikuláši, Turčianska knižnica v Martine

These come under disadvantages: an abundance of bureaucracy in managing and organisational relations, insufficient cooperation of particular departments of the Office of ŽSGR, an absence of evaluation rules and monitoring of cultural organisations' activity, not always sufficient financial resources to fulfil all spectrum of roles and intents of organisations, a reduced degree of a legal subjectivity of cultural organisations, frequent centralisations of management, a restriction in evaluating of employees, no stability of a political scene,<sup>7</sup> no balance in conditions needed for commercial activity.

### ***Financing of culture in ŽSGR***

Cultural organisations under the administration of ŽSGR represent organisations with subscription form of economy. A part of resources are based on receipts from respective activity of subscription organisations.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, as a motivational element, it is possible to consider those organisations, which are, when comparing with organisations of same type, able to gain incomparably higher receipts in same conditions. Motivation for this differentiated distribution of subvention is mostly based on evaluation of statutory bodies and managing authorities, greater evaluation of property in administration of cultural organisations, use of financial resources to purchase collection objects, library funds, etc.<sup>9</sup>

Another financial resource is based on grants. Cultural organisations process a great number of projects to obtain support and finances for their operation and investment activities, majority of which were supported. From 2002 to 2007, an average of 50 million Slovak crowns per year were obtained, which is, in relation to total budgetary resources provided to cultural organisations, approximately 1,74% of the total budget of ŽSGR.

ŽSGR financially supports, from the budget of the self-governing region, subjects under the funding administration of other bodies.<sup>10</sup>

Cultural activities are also supported from budgets of cities and municipalities in ŽSGR. Financing and expenditure ratio of culture are very diversified and conditioned upon many objective and subjective factors.

According to a tax reform in Slovakia, no tax allowance or exemptions concerning cultural activities are currently applied in Slovak Republic. The only tax tool applied is a direct assignation of 2% of a tax for registered gain less organisations from various spheres of generally profitable activities including spreading and preserving of cultural values. In most cases, there is an absence of know-how of cultural organisations to attract individual donors, which is very important in gaining 2% tax.

For the use of EU funds in 2007-2013, a strategic document was elaborated by the Slovak government, called the "National Strategic Reference Framework". This document determines national priorities which will be co-financed from structural funds and the Cohesion fund. According to the Regional operation program in relation to culture, there are interesting activities under priority axis 1 – *Development of facilities of civil infrastructure* (to support, for example, libraries, galleries museums, etc.). The priority axis 2 is also interesting – *Improvement of territory equipment, Regeneration of*

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<sup>7</sup> Four year electoral period including change of deputies and personnel at the Office of ŽSGR cause dependence of organisations under the administration of ŽSGR on decisions of deputies (preferring own interests), political impacts, frequent insufficient information whether lassitude.

<sup>8</sup> According to § 22 č. 303/1995 of Statute on budgetary rules according to latest dispositions.

<sup>9</sup> Subsidised budget of cultural organisations under the administration of ŽSGR - theatres - 75%, galleries – 89%, observatories – 90%, libraries – 90%, cultural centres – 88%, museums – these are the most evident differences among particular organisations – in a scale of 50,51% to 75%.

<sup>10</sup> General binding regulation of ŽSGR No. 4/2004 on providing donations and subventions from the ŽSGR budget and Annex to this regulation

*residences* (reconstruction of socio-cultural objects etc.) and *Assistance to tourism infrastructure*. The following are some activities within the scope of a public sector in the territory of Slovakia and which aim to effectively use a tourism potential for cultural purposes:

- investment activities focused on the renewal of localities significant for their value concerning natural and cultural heritage
- assistance in building and reconstruction of facilities promoting tourist attractiveness of a complex tourist programme with all year usage (art workshops, festivals, presentations of a national folklore, customs and traditions, folkloric museums, etc.)
- non-investment activities as assistance to creation of an integrated offer of tourism products with emphasis on effective usage of natural and cultural potential
- assistance to renewal and reconstruction of cultural – educational paths and similar activities with a direct relation to tourism

About sponsorship as one of possibilities how to involve private companies in this process, it is a lot said about it, but less done in real. Interest in art and increasing amount of finances circulating over here are balancing with interest in sport. Post-industrial society has reached the highest level in history and culture with art as forms of spare time activities, as forms of additional education and forms of (re)presentation for companies, which are getting more and more attractive.

Important part of financing is represented by earnings coming from their main and additional activities, which, apart from other, manifest “market “ potential of particular organisations in a process of spreading and making cultural values accessible. This part of financing depends on sort of particular activity and character and property size, which is under the administration of particular organisations.

Advantage of own activity resources is their independence and freedom of their use - in contrary to founder contributions, grants whether sponsor receipts they are not fixed to concrete purpose and organisation can use them for various purposes. For development of own resources of cultural organisations ŽSGR recommends to cultural organisations to guarantee education and trainings in spheres linked with marketing and business, further to stimulate organisations to increase a number of visitor and share of receipts from main activities, to stimulate increase of quality of services, evaluate business ideas and financial independence of cultural organisations, to stimulate business in culture.

## **Tourism**

### **Forms of tourism**

There are often various combinations of particular forms of tourism within the framework of a product (a tour). Types and forms of tourism are continuously developing and involve participants which are interdependent.

In Žilina region it is possible to determine these basic forms of tourism:

- spa and wellness tourism
- countryside tourism and agro - tourism
- sport-tourist tourism
- cultural – educational tourism

Tourism is one of the most dynamic sectors in the development of human resources and economic activities. Natural features, cultural and historical monuments, folk architecture and traditions, sports-recreational activities and spa-healing facilities provide appropriate conditions for short stay visits all year round. The Žilina region has an enormous potential for the development of tourism. It has good linkage to international transport routes and border gate-ways, mainly to Poland and the Czech Republic, which stimulates the development of the economy and tourism of the region. A great number of activities reflect international cross-border cooperation which has been ongoing for several years.

The main role of marketing must be the creation of conditions for cooperation and coordination of activities of all actors involved in tourism development, with an objective to create, qualitatively and quantitatively, a wider range of goods and services for tourists and visitors.

Country tourism belongs to important forms of tourism. There is the close contact between tourist – visitor and local citizens. In the framework of citizens' education, it is essential to focus on training, to create a positive relationship with the host, and to eliminate language barriers. It is also important to support small and medium enterprises dedicated to use domestic resources. In this way, the increase of receipts and foreign exchange influx stimulate capital investment and develop small and medium enterprises in this sector. The local population should actively participate in providing services for visitors by, for example, promoting local culture, crafts, customs and folklore and by reviving old traditions. In areas where some types of service are lacking or absent, efforts should be made to re-educate or train the unemployed - or to attract young people to these professions - with the help of vocational schools and institutions specialised in this sector. Traditional products and specialities of a region (various forms of cheese - such as korbáčiky, oštiepky and parenice - wood products, ceramics and others) may interest visitors and give the region a unique and original character.

Receipts from tourism contribute to investments in the development of a city, a municipality, a region (*e.g.* infrastructure, environment). It is necessary to use more existing facilities or, in the alternative, establish new ones with higher standards. The quality of services offered can also be increased by the education and training of employees and businessmen involved in tourism.

The main priorities of tourism development in the Žilina self-governing region are the following:

- promotion of tourism activities at domestic and foreign tourism fairs, publishing of actual tourism materials about the Žilina self-governing region
- Organisation of joint fairs with cross-border regions
- presentation of geographic and tourist information on the Internet
- use of every form of cross-border cooperation
- complex completion of tourist centres, mainly additional services
- establishment of new cross-country ski routes and winter tourism in the region
- establishment of cycle-tracks for summer tourism
- promotion of organisations associating businessmen from the field of tourism and services

### **Propagation of tourism**

The website [www.slovakia.travel.sk](http://www.slovakia.travel.sk) is the new portal of Slovakia devoted to national tourism. It provides information about activities, attractions, accommodation, catering and other tourism services. It also features maps, events, packages, photos of Slovakia and interesting issues and news. Its aim is to inspire potential visitors to visit the country and to provide relevant information. It aims to facilitate the decision making process in the realisation, selection and planning a visit in Slovakia.

The following are categories that may be found in this website: *Actual events* ▪ *Inspiration according to motives* ▪ *Inspiration according to targeted groups* ▪ *Visual inspiration (photo gallery, web cameras, virtual viewings)* ▪ *Information about particular activities* ▪ *Maps* ▪ *Accommodation* ▪ *Practical information* ▪ *Contacts to professionals* ▪ *Product packages* ▪ *Catalogue*

The website [www.viator.sk](http://www.viator.sk) is a tourist information guide of the Žilina region. In this portal you can find all important information for visitors of the Žilina region (accommodation, catering, culture, history, monuments, interesting facts, national parks, protected areas, tourist tracks, transport, associations and information centres, tour operators, companies, etc.).

The website [www.regionzilina.sk](http://www.regionzilina.sk) is about the Žilina self-governing region which provides important information for citizens, visitors and those interested in the region.

### **Regional associations**

Regional associations aim to provide relevant information in tourism, coordinate interests of the private and public sectors, help small municipalities formulate strategic marketing objectives considering budgetary and infrastructure constraints, help improve the environment, increase unification of interests of citizens, eliminate socio-economic disparities among regions, create new markets in tourism and improve off season tourism by organising events. Tourism associations should be fundamental elements of coordination at the regional level but at the same time should be a main actor in marketing. Associations should include not only private actors, but should involve self-governments as initiators.

Various civil associations and agencies play important roles in regional development. Tourism fairs also contribute to a great extent by presentations abroad.

## ***Tourism development in ŽSGR – results of SWOT analysis<sup>11</sup>***

### **Advantages**

- good geographical location considering north–south junction
- natural potential
- historic–cultural potential
- unique folk art, partly living folklore and crafts
- spa tradition, abundance of mineral and thermal springs
- general education level of citizens
- sufficient capacity of accommodation facilities
- large and less used housing fund in countryside
- good conditions for winter and summer tourism when comparing with V4 states

### **Disadvantages**

- under developed marketing and weak image of the region
- uncompleted motorway bypasses, insufficient use of airport for tourism purposes
- substandard socio-cultural and sports–recreational facilities
- state of many historic monuments that restricts their use for tourism
- lack of additional services for spare time activities in tourist centres
- quality of tourism services below required European standard
- substandard structure and quality of accommodation facilities
- substandard hygienic facilities
- absence of hotel linkage to international information and reservation services
- hotels not part of international hotel companies
- insufficient hotel equipment for congress tourism
- language barrier of tourism employees as well as of citizens
- low average salary in tourism, poorly motivated personnel, low customer orientation
- diffidence of foreigners concerning security of their property (theft)
- seasonal use of tourism capacities
- insufficiently completed information services in tourism
- instability of private sector
- absence of specific legislation stimulating environment for business development in tourism
- insufficient cooperation of self-governments and private sector

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<sup>11</sup> SWOT analysis has been elaborated as a part of document *Analysis and conception of tourism development in the Žilina self-governing region*. It has been elaborated by the Regional development department of the Office of ŽSGR in 2004.

- insufficient conceptual preparation of tourism development at every level
- lack of appropriate coordination at local and regional levels
- stagnation of domestic tourism as a result of living standard development in Slovakia
- unresolved system of local taxes and charges related to tourism
- lack of complex statistic information on offer as well as demand side
- lack of relevant statistic data

### **Opportunities**

- winter and summer tourism development according to natural potential
- use of spa not only for classic healing purposes
- development of additional services in tourist centres
- development of the offer on the basis of historic–cultural heritage
- good conditions for countryside tourism development – housing in countryside
- possibilities to focus on ecotourism (soft-tourism)
- congress tourism development in cities and centres of international importance
- cooperation with subjects involved in tourism – more effective, more active – reaching common objective
- taking advantage of relative competition, for example among regions offering comparable products

### **Threats**

- increasing competition from other self-governing regions, V4 countries and EU countries
- problems of accessibility to financial resources needed for investment; co-financing problems
- expected increase of tourism services prices and loss of this concurrence advantage
- slow increase of offer
- insufficient amount of financial resources for promotion
- focusing on more distant destinations (EU clients)

The creation of conditions for tourism development in the Žilina self-governing region as one of the factors of economic development and of the increase in citizens' living standards at a condition of effective use of all resources (natural, cultural, human, financial, material and technical and so on) and respecting require for sustainable tourism.

### ***Objectives of tourism development in ŽSGR***

- tourism legislative at national and regional level
- cooperation with actors involved in tourism at all levels, coordination tourism at regional level on basis of balanced partnerships
- promotion and initiation of creation of tourism regional associations, tourist – information points and tourist offices
- passportisation of tourism in regions of the Žilina region (offer analysis)
- profiling of regions in the Žilina region according to tourism
- monitoring of tourism activities financing
- demand analysis
- private sector promotion
- presentation of the Žilina region as a target place
- cross-border and intra-state cooperation
- information system
- systematic education and forming of tourist awareness of citizens
- preparatory and presentation materials
- monitoring of environmental encumbrance of territory and capacity of communities from a tourism point of view

Tourism, in accordance with the country's natural cultural and historical heritage, plays an important role in the economy of the Žilina region. Culture is an essential part of tourism and for many visitors, culture and cultural heritage are the greatest attractions and fundamental incentives to visit the Žilina region. At present, several steps are necessary to make the region more attractive and to increase the number of visitors, improve the quality of tourism services and offer unforgettable experiences.