

## **Tourism in Destination South Bohemia before the accession into the European Union**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this article is to create basic theses and formulations for a long-term observation of complex spatially-temporal and socio-economic processes connected with tourism.

**Key words:** processes of spatial distribution, differentiation and optimisation of bed capacity, valorisation of environment for tourism, land use

### **Introduction**

As a consequence of the new act concerning districts ordering, there are regional development programs created in the Czech Republic which go hand in hand with the strategic plan of tourism development. Contemporary level of the relationships within the system of tourism reflects the long-term development of location and selective conditions of the geographical environment of the tourism market. Disposals of individual districts regarding the tourism implementation and development have arisen independently on the new administrative ordering.

The present supply of regional products reflects the long-term socio-economic process with a manifestation of human ability to activate tourism potentials (land-use) in their environment. As a result of this long-term socio-economic process, there is a partial functional and value differentiation and a consequent tourism hierarchisation in the context of the observed regions.

The history of Czech lands in the period of the last century has shaped the present market supply and demand. As the essential and significant transformational stages of the above mentioned shaping, it is important to mention the following phases of transformation:

- **from Austria-Hungary to Czechoslovakia** – the transition from an established tourism infrastructure of the multinational state offering the Adriatic sea coast

and also the broad alpine territory in the context of the very inception of modern tourism into the small developed inland state of Czechs and Slovaks

- **from developed bourgeois Czechoslovakia to a socialist state** – the strong diversion from worldwide tourism trends connected with the passive and active tourism reduction, the institutionalisation (bound tourism) and the strong central planning of the regional development (see The tourism regionalisation)
- **transformation from socialist state to a state with the elaborative market economy** – the rapid growth of entrepreneurial subjects together with the rapid growth of accommodation and catering capacities with consequent optimisation processes on the tourism market, the cross-border regions development (for example travel agencies crashes) (Šíp, 1998)
- **division of Czechoslovakia into two independent states in 1993** – the restructuralisation of the infrastructure and demand for the domestic or passive tourism, a negative influence on the tourism development in the Czech-Slovak borderland (Šíp, 2002)
- **the period before the accession into the EU** – the tourism restructuralisation especially connected with the approach of the legislative and business frame of the EU which is manifested primarily by the quantitative and qualitative optimisation of the contemporary differentiation processes.

The Region of South Bohemia represents an organizational unit at the level of NUTS 3 and together with the neighbouring Plzeň Region constitutes the superior administrative unit NUTS 2. Tourism and recreation have always composed a significant element of the regional development. A great potential for the further development lies above all in the cross-border co-operation. Review of the South Bohemia tourism development in the last 6 years is submitted in this paper.

#### **Primary potential on the offer's side**

Natural and social preconditions determine characteristics of a contemporary demand as well as the basic profile of a contemporary visitor of South Bohemia.

**Natural preconditions** are in the central part of the region formed by South Bohemian Basins mutually separated by the elevation of Lišovský Práh Ridge. Both Basins are surrounded by Central Bohemian Highlands in the north, Šumava in south-west, Novohradské Hory Mountains in the south and finally by Bohemian-Moravian Highlands in the north-east:

- **South Bohemian Basins** offer a complex of natural activities connected with water areas and rivers together with protected fauna and flora. The observed region is in the centre of attention of home demand linked with summer rec-

recreation by water areas. The region is mainly used in the summer for family and children's recreation as well as cottaging which is also significant. Activities that are most common in this area are swimming, canoeing, cycling, fishing, hunting and picking berries and mushrooms. From the international point of view, it is necessary to point out Třeboň spa functioning throughout the year. The banks of the rivers situated in the region (Vltava, Otava, Lužnice etc.) together with some of the water areas (such as Lipno, Orlický, Bezdrev etc.) are overburdened with tourism. There is a perspective to spread the visitors' interest into not so much used areas such as Veselská and Soběslavská Marshlands etc.

- **South-Bohemian central part of Šumava** together with western-Bohemian, Bavarian and Upper-Austrian side form the most important complex of natural activities influencing significantly the number of visitors coming to the region and its activities. Visitors choose mainly summer and winter stays focused predominately on active forms of tourism (skiing, hiking, cycling, collecting berries and mushrooms, canoeing, fishing and hunting). The central part of Šumava Mountains is deeply engaged in the process of developing of tourism in the area, other parts (Novohradské Hory Mt., Blanský Les Mt., Šumava Foothills) have the same perspective.
- **Czech-Moravian Highlands and Central Bohemian Highlands** are parts of the South Bohemia region having not such an overburdened highlands complex with rather wooded characteristics and relatively unpolluted environment. Predominately, individual recreation together with recreation organized by companies are present in this region. Activities going with the recreation are mainly hiking, cycling, collecting berries and mushrooms and hunting. The high season starts in the spring and lasts up to the autumn. The region is the least developed and its perspective lies in the development of quality rather than quantity. Important role is played by historical towns, church buildings, castles representing the development of various perspective.

**Social attractions** are also significant components of the South-Bohemian potential architectural styles. If we classify historical influence of the church, nobility and partially also towns' citizens as a supraregional and multinational, then the specific potential of South-Bohemian destination lies in folkways, traditions, crafts, architecture and cuisine. Natural conditions and relative isolation of rural people in the past centuries formed specifics of particular regions such as Šumava, South Bohemian Basins and Czech-Moravian Highlands. Typical villages are situated mainly in Marshland near Soběslav and in Veselí nad Lužnicí (Borkovice, Vlastiboř, Zálší, Komárov), Holašovice near České Budějovice are on the UNESCO List. Traditional rustic architecture is closely connected with the traditional costumes, songs, customs, cuisine and crafts. South Bohemia is also famous for its tradition of fishermen's guild affined with fishing out of large ponds and with its going festivals in Třeboň and Vodňany.

Technical sights of interest are represented by many well-preserved buildings connected with the oldest horse railway in Europe, which started in České Budějovice and ended in Linz as well as with the oldest electric railway in Central Europe going from Tábor to Bechyně and the still functioning narrow gauge railway from Obrataň via Jindřichův Hradec to Nová Bystřice. It is also important to mention the ponds system on the Lužnice River.

Key social attractions influencing domestic and foreign visitors are the following towns: Český Krumlov, Třeboň, Tábor, Hluboká castle, Orlík and Zvíkov castles. The others are only complement to other programs. The most massive visits of the mentioned attractions are school trips that take usually place in May and June.

### **Secondary potential of offer – service, infrastructure, accommodation**

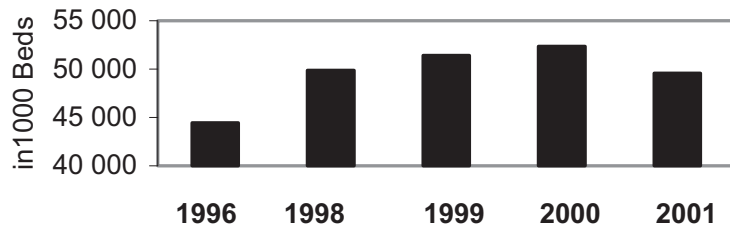
Infrastructure of services (accommodation, boarding and others) is dependent on the traditional demand for chosen natural and social attractions (Šumava, South-Bohemian ponds and lakes, Lipno reservoir, Orlík reservoir, Vltava, Otava and Lužnice Rivers, Hluboká, Orlík and Zvíkov Castles). In these parts of the region it is possible to consider quantitative and qualitative optimisation processes in the development of infrastructure.

These areas will probably, in a long perspective, head for measurements concerning quantity. One of the possibilities is to increase the quality and the spectrum of services with higher prices instead of increasing the number of visitors of the given area. Conversely peripheral areas have an adequate perspective of new capacities quantitative development

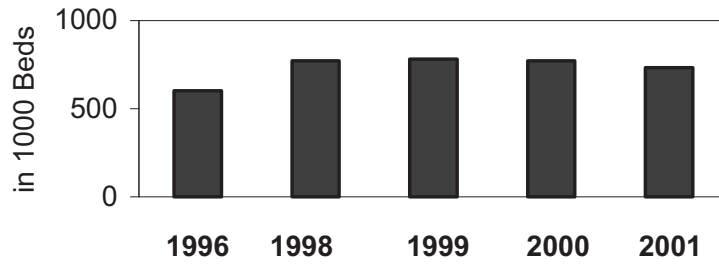
### **Quantitative process of optimisation of bed capacity**

The total bed capacity in the region of South Bohemia came to 49,557 beds in 1,1963 registered facilities on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2001. 22.6% can provide a restaurant, 6.4% a pool, 4.4% a solarium with a sauna. In the period of 1996–2001 there was an increase of 7,098 beds.

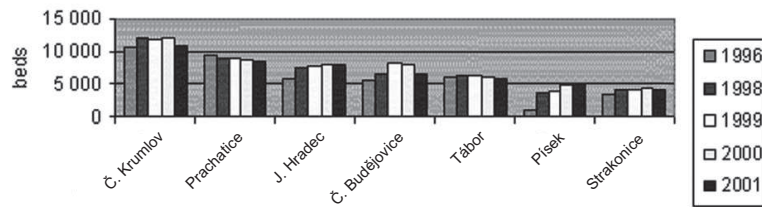
Graphs 1 and 2 compare quantitative optimisation of bed capacity regarding the whole area of the Czech Republic and the area of South Bohemia. There is a rapid increase in years 1995–1996 and after that there is an evident process of optimisation with a slight decrease of the bed capacity in 2001. As the graphs show, the development in South Bohemia does not differ so much from the nation-wide development. Graphs 3 and 4 and table 1 show the process of bed capacity differentiation at the level of regions and districts within the region of South Bohemia. Developmental phases of the curve representing capacities in particular districts are almost identical, nevertheless the absolute number of beds and dynamics of the increase differ.



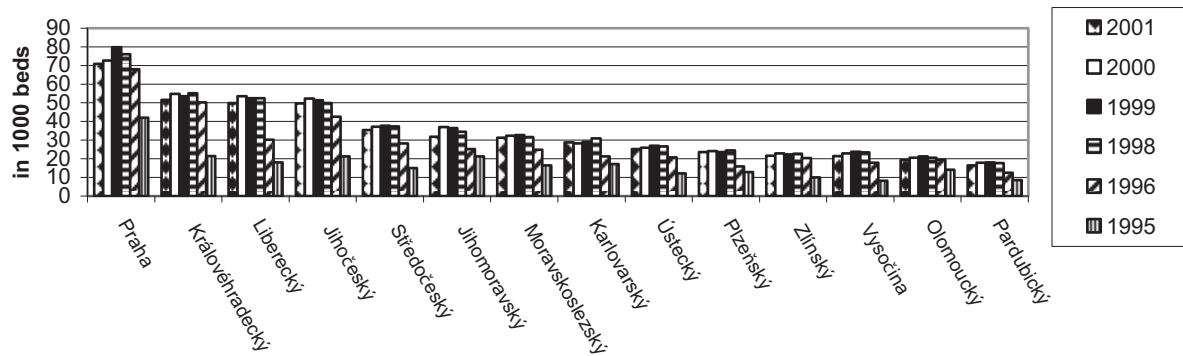
Graph 1 The development of the bed capacity in the Czech Republic.



Graph 2 The development of the bed capacity in the South Bohemia.



Graph 3 The development of the bed capacity in the South Bohemian districts.

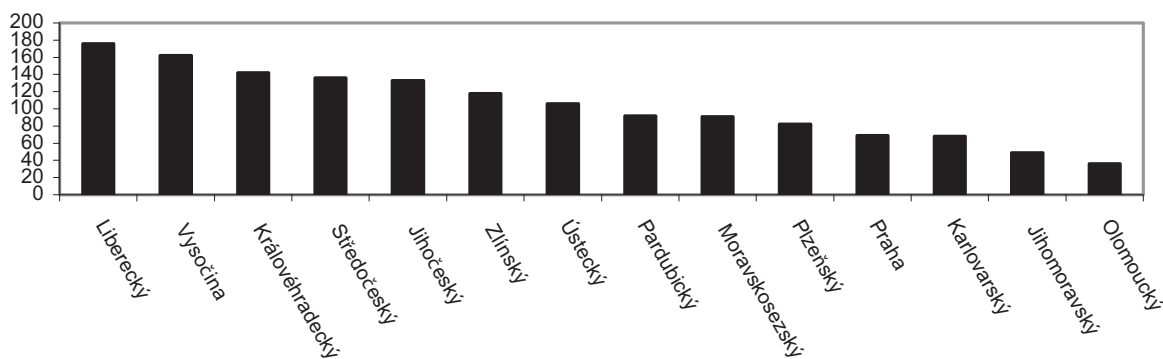


Graph 4 The bed capacity optimization in the Czech regions.

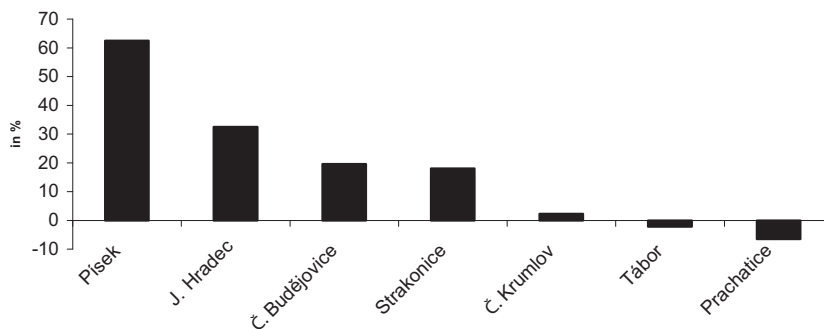
Tab. 1

Region	Total number of beds 2001	95/96 beds increase	index in %	2001/2000 beds increase	index in %
Praha	70952	26009	62.6	-1719	-2
Královéhradecký	51610	28849	135	-3274	-6
Liberecký	49883	12044	66.9	-3711	-7
Jihočeský	49577	21208	99.8	-2761	-5
Středočeský	35357	13153	87.6	-1703	-4
Jihomoravský	31814	3854	18	-5192	-14
Moravskoslezský	31311	8456	51.8	-1080	-3
Karlovarský	28807	4100	23.9	652	2
Ústecký	25202	8530	69	-740	-3
Plzeňský	23545	2897	22.3	-541	-2
Zlínský	21667	10373	104.3	-1209	-5
Vysočina	21457	9591	117.2	-1429	-6
Olomoucký	19297	5274	37.3	-1227	-6
Pardubický	16517	3795	44	-1358	-8

A progressive development of quantitative increase of bed capacity is possible to see in regions such as Liberec, Vysočina, Hradec Králové together in South-Bohemian districts of Písek and Jindřichův Hradec where there is a regional management, which is able, in this phase of the development, to activate another local potential.



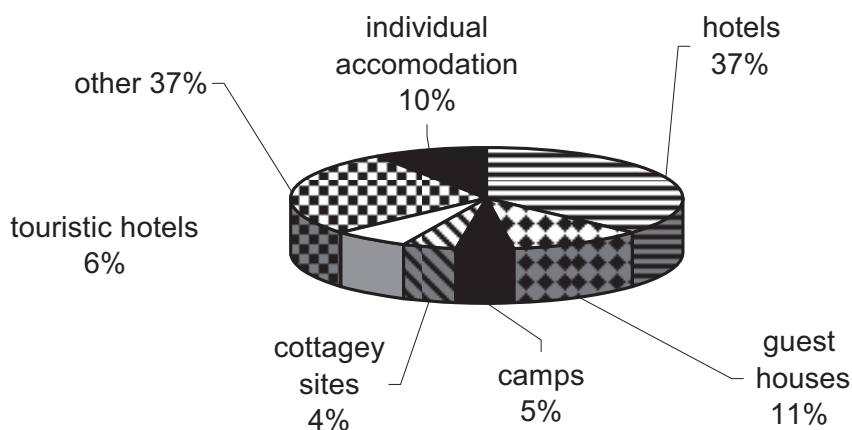
Graph 5 The dynamics of the bed capacity growth 2001/1995 % in the Czech regions.



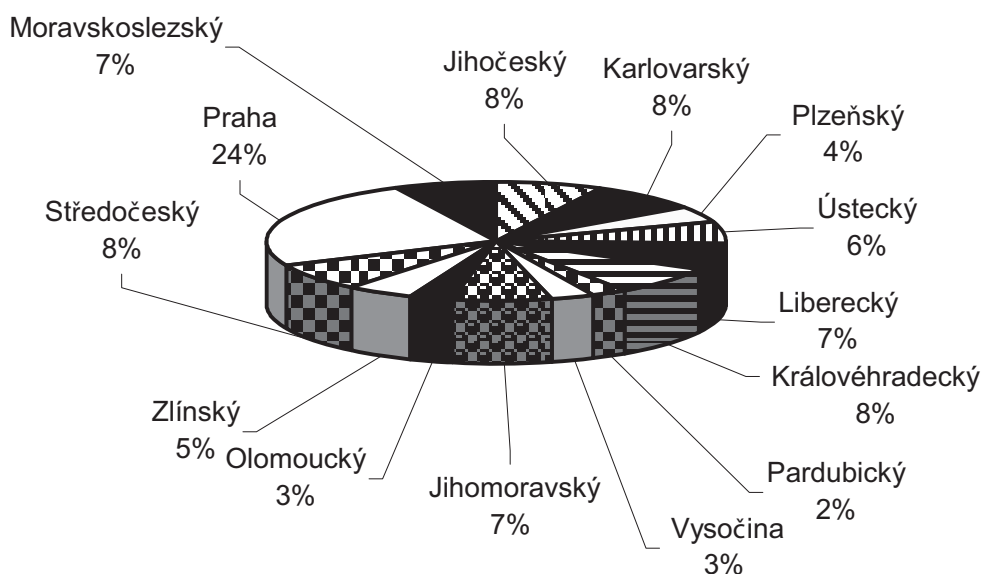
Graph 6 Dynamics of the bed capacity growth 1996/2001 % in the South Bohemia.

### Qualitative optimisation of bed capacity offer

Qualitative processes of the bed capacity offer shape its orientation coming from the basic disposals of primary potentials (natural as well as social) and demonstrate an adequate respond of the demand in the market of tourism. Those qualitative processes are possible to detect in the example of the bed capacity structured according to various kinds (graphs 7, 8, 9) and according to various categories (graphs 10, 11).



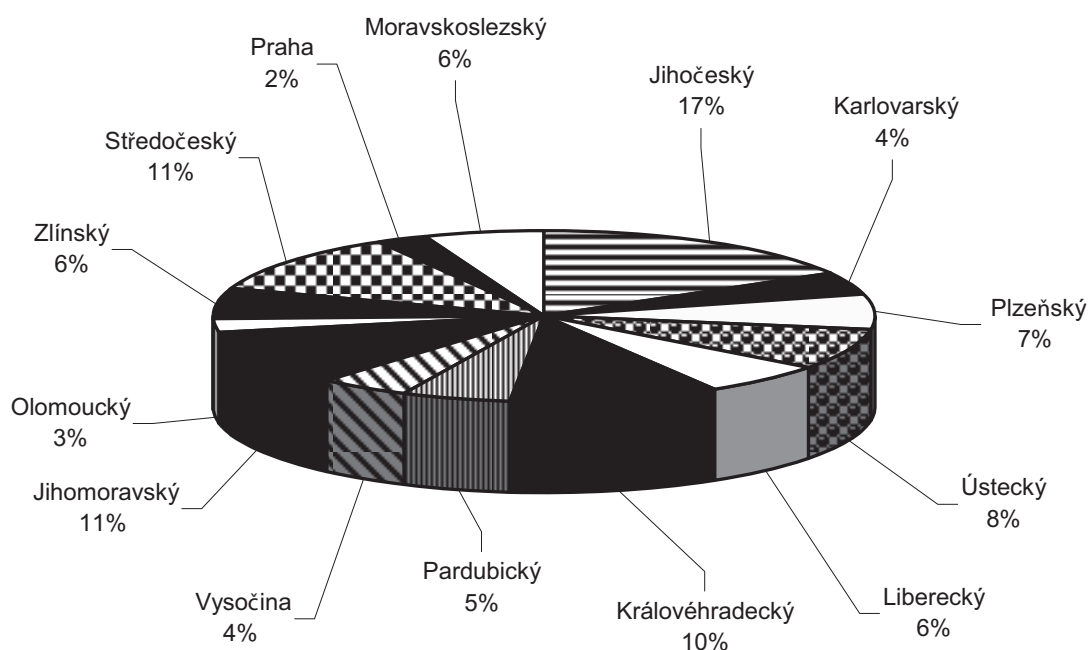
Graph 7 The typ proportion of the bed capacity in the Czech Republic 2001.



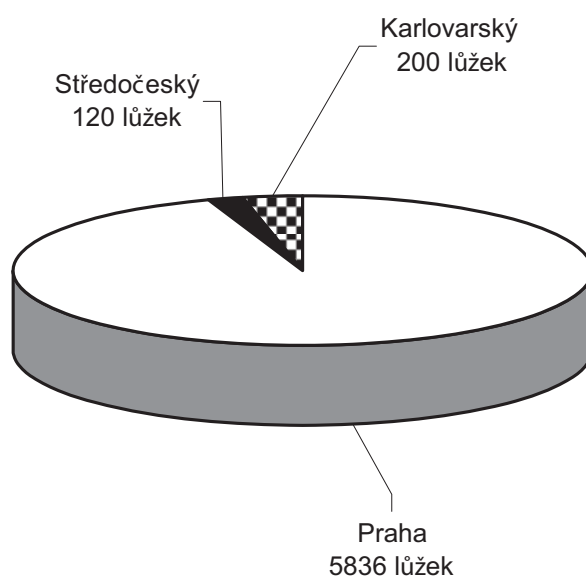
Graph 8 The regions share of the hotel bed capacity 2001.

While Prague is dominant together with the Středočeský and the Karlovarský Regions in the category of hotels, South Bohemia and partially also Středočeský Region have a high number of cheap seasonal bed capacities in camping sides and cottagay areas. These examples illustrate different trigger impulses of the bed capacity development. The Karlovarský region developed its hotel infrastructure of a high quality on the natural potential of mineral and thermal springs limited by

a relatively small space. Prague, situated also on a relatively small area, has an enormous cultural-historical and socio-economic potential activated by the demand for high quality standard of kinds and categories of bed capacities. The Středočeský Region activates its physical and social potentials of its larger territory on the basis of the geographical location near Prague. Demands for lower quality and higher quantity meet here (Prague inhabitants and citizens of other cities within the Czech Republic) a demand for bed capacities of higher standard in all aspects (foreign visitors of Prague). The dominant natural potential in South Bohemia on its large territory is activated mainly on the basis of demand (domestic visitors) orientated rather to quantity than quality.

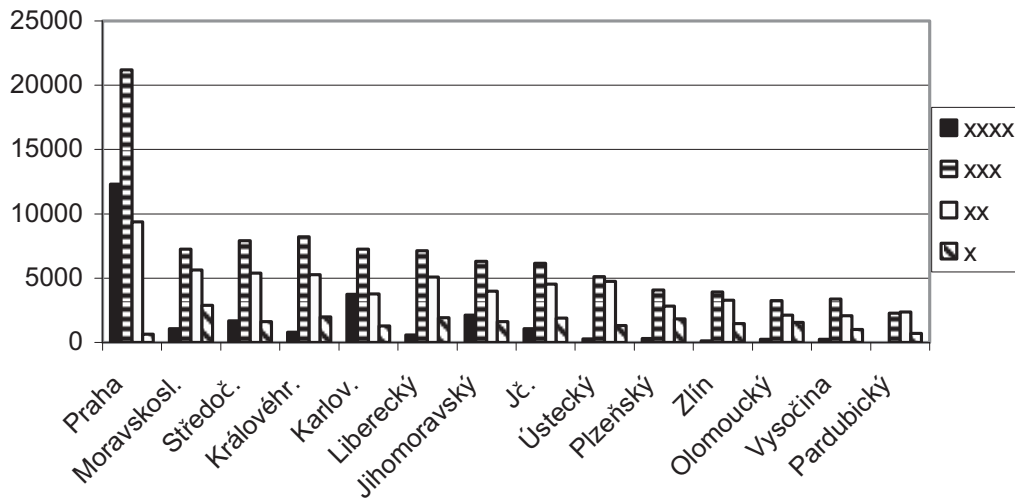


Graph 9 The regions share of the total camps bed capacity 2001.



Graph 10 The regions share of the bad capacity in the highest category hotels 2001.

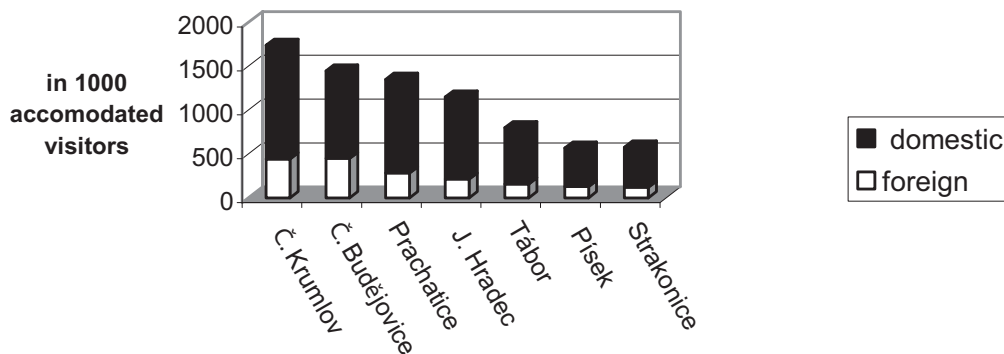




Graph 11 The regional distribution of hotel capacities by categories 2001.

### Demand

Contemporary performances are shown by the present situation and character of the demand. In South Bohemia (by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2000) 1,005,968 visitors were accommodated, 323,339 of them were foreigners. The visitors spent in the region 4,384,955 days (1,134,503 pertain to foreigners). Next year, in 2001, the number of visitors decreased to 871,994 accommodated visitors 270,469 of them were foreigners.



Graph 12 The districts' attendance 1996-2001.

In the period between the years 1996 and 2001 there were 682,220 Germans; 178,514 Dutch; 124,691 Austrians; 108,897 Polish; 82,643 Slovaks; 74,652 Italians; 56,274 British; 57,466 French; 53,799 Americans and 46,511 Russians visiting the region. The most dynamic increase in the observed period concerned Polish 434%, Russians 321%, British 203% and Italians 181%. On the contrary regarding Austrians, their interest decreased by 33,4%. Graphs 3, 4, 5 show the development of number of visitors since 1996.

Based on the research, which was carried out by the authors at the Department of Tourism of the Faculty of Agriculture, the University of South Bohemia in Tábor in years 1999–2001, it is possible to sketch a characteristic of an average visitor of South Bohemia. Such a visitor is by 73% a citizen of the Czech Republic who visits the region repeatedly (75%), who comes there in summer (59%) and spends there more than a week of holiday. Visitors coming to visit the region for more days in summer (on average 9 days), while in winter it is 5 days (19% of all visitors come in winter). The majority of the visitors (25%) find the accommodation in camping sites, 19% at their relatives, 17% in boarding houses and 15% in hotels. In summer, there are about 160,000 visitors in South Bohemia every day and more than 60,000 cars (concerning just visitors' cars). In winter, the number is three times lower.

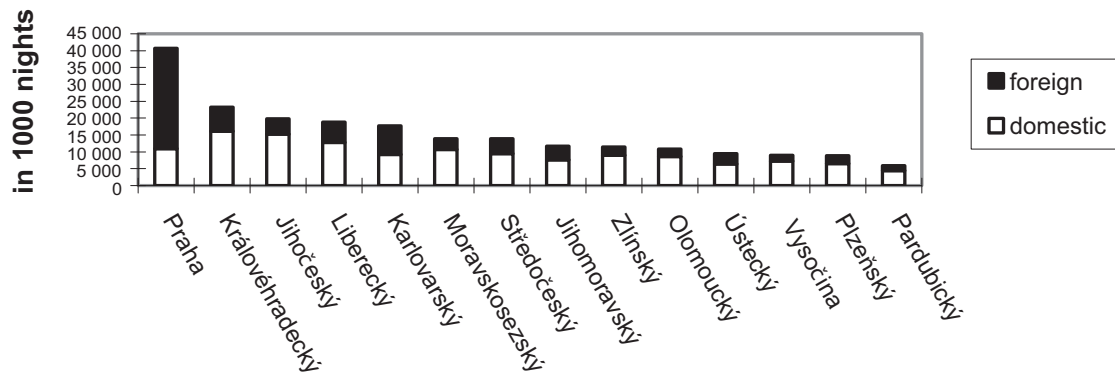
Visitors going through the region spend there 6 hours on average, accommodated visitor 9 days and 78% come again. The main reason to visit South Bohemia is above all nature and suitable conditions for spending holidays there. Another reason are monuments, but the interest in them decreases in winter.

The most frequent activities are visits of cultural and historic sights (29,6%), swimming, water sports, fishing (23%), hiking (13.3%), cycling (9.5%). As little activated potentials, the visitors regard the offer of products concerning free time, number of shops, their insufficient open hours, traffic accessibility and quality of roads, services not corresponding to their price and attitude of the personnel towards clients. The stay in the region is individually planned by a visitor through a travel agency only 11.2% of all visitors (37% are families). Accommodated visitors spend CZK 880 per day on average, 45% of that are accommodation costs, 25% boarding costs and 30% is pocket money.

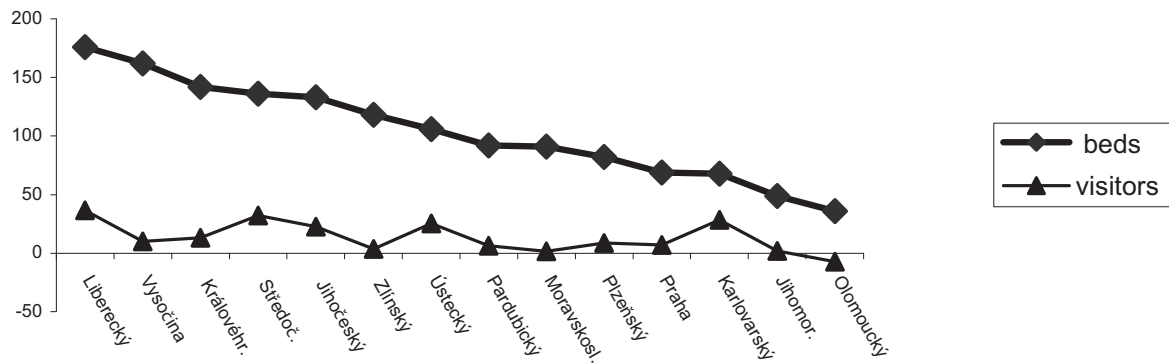
#### **Influence of demand on stability of bed capacities**

In the previous chapters we characterised quantitative and qualitative aspects of spatial shaping of the offer. It is evident that the bed capacities are created on the basis of either the spontaneous or intentional analysis evaluating potentials in the region (it not possible to quantify their values exactly) and in the same way, there is an effort to estimate a reflection of demand. The real stability of infrastructure of the bed capacities is determined by the rate of reflection of the real demand expressed by the bed capacity utilization throughout the whole year and its cost-effectiveness (graphs 12, 13, 14 and 15). Inaccurately set prognoses, natural disasters, change of political and economic climate, hard forms of tourism, change of life style and change of travelling trends can lead to unprofitable tourism. That all could evoke an optimisation process leading to a qualitative and quantitative change. In the observed region before the accession we can see two main streams of bed capacity optimisation in case of a threat:

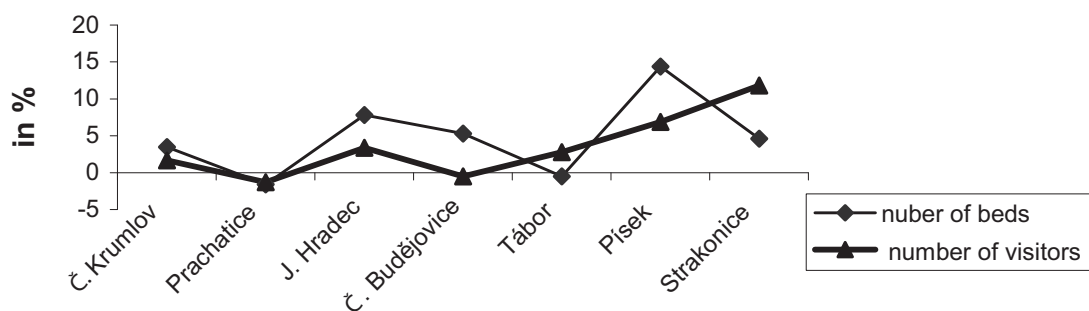
1. Termination of accommodation facilities as a consequence of abundance.
2. Integration into national and international chains enabling to perspective subjects to overcome unfavourable conditions.



Graph 13 The number of stays over night 1996–2001.



Graph 14 The average annual growth of the number of beds and the number visitors – comparison 1996–2001 in %.



Graph 15 The average annual growth of the number of beds and the number visitors – comparison 1996–2001 in %.

Gradual comings of renowned world chains into the chosen locations valorised on the basis of hotel categories is possible to regard as a strategy, which was formed by detailed analyses and syntheses of a supranational management.

## Conclusion

This work is an attempt reflecting on the primary set up of simple process framework connected with a sustainable regional development of tourism. The authors do not intend to clarify exactly defined conclusions of interregional relations in the tourism market, but its aim is to create basic thesis and formulations for a long-term observation of complex socio-economic processes connected with tourism. This work shows that there is a confrontation between the present and assumed value of the potentials regarding the offer side as well as the present and assumed potentials value regarding the demand. This confrontation constantly valorises the geographic environment of regions based on optimisation of quantity and differentiation of quality. A significant indicator of the described processes is the spatial distribution of bed capacities and their appending services. The region of South Bohemia is a traditional destination with a dominance of homeland tourism. A product oriented to summer outdoor stays is slightly dominant. The infrastructure development is relatively stable with no significant changes. In the following stage after the accession to the EU, a marked qualitative optimisation is expected.

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## Résumé

### Cestovní ruch Jižních Čech před vstupem do EU

Cílem příspěvku je vytvořit základní teze a formulace dlouhodobého sledování komplexních časoprostorových a socioekonomických procesů spojených s cestovním ruchem v Jižních Čechách. Jako důsledek nového administrativního uspořádání lze chápat mj. nové plány rozvoje, které jdou ruku v ruce se strategickými plány cestovního ruchu. Současná úroveň vztahů v rámci systému cestovního ruchu odráží dlouhodobý vývoj umístění a selektivních podmínek v rámci geografického prostředí a trhu cestovního ruchu. Jednotlivé okruhy implementace a rozvoje cestovního ruchu vznikají nezávisle na novém administrativním členění.