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**Globalization and Integration
Processes in Tourism
in the Czech Republic**

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Globalization and Integration Processes in Tourism in the Czech Republic

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Summary:

Globalization is the world-wide process than can be seen in all the economics with different intensity. Globalization is supported by ingration processes that exceed the state borders. Continuous integration in tourism brings many positive inclucences and favourably affects the increase in the quality of provided services. At the same time it is also inevitable to follow negative influences connected with globalization and integration as they can become the break for the tourism development. A part of the presentation is the reflection on the positive influences and negative influences of the Czech Republic entry into the European Union on tourism and thinking about the education of employees for this field.

Keywords: tourism, globalization, integration, hotel industry, quality, threats

Globalizační a integrační procesy v cestovním ruchu v České republice

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Abstrakt:

Globalizace se jako celosvětový proces postupně projevuje ve všech zemích světa. Je zprostředkována rozvojem mezinárodního obchodu, výměnou informací, znalostí a dovedností, objevováním a propojováním rozdílných kultur. Průvodním jevem globalizace jsou integrační procesy, které v současné době přesahují hranice jedné země. Vývoj cestovního ruchu v České republice po roce 1989 je silně ovlivněn globalizačními procesy. Důležitým úkolem a cílem všech podnikatelských subjektů v této oblasti je využít pozitivních vlivů globalizace pro další rozvoj cestovního ruchu a zabránit negativním projevům, které by se mohly v budoucnu stát překážkou jeho rozvoje a zprostředkovaně způsobit zpomalení růstu ekonomiky.

Klíčová slova: cestovní ruch, globalizace, integrace, hotelnictví, kvalita, hrozby

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Introduction

Tourism plays an important role in the consumption of people. It contributes substantially to the development of national economy and to the improvement of employment in individual regions of the Czech Republic. Tourism development has proved a positive growth since 1989, but in the same time it has shown that its further development will depend on the ability of Czech economy to respond to the process connected with globalization in world's economy. The main objective of the research at the Tourism Department in 2006-2007 was to stipulate individual globalization features in tourism, to indicate its benefits and impacts and prepare recommendations for the future. Special attention was paid to education of tourism managers and to necessary changes in the educational process. The research was carried out within projects of internal grant agency of the University of Economics Prague, Fund for University Development of the MŠMT (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport) of the Czech Republic and now it goes on within a research project of the Faculty of International Relations called Governance in a globalized economy and society.

Examining features of globalization in tourism, the following hypotheses were set:

Globalization has both positive and negative effects on activities of tourism businesses and can be clearly seen in the Czech Republic already now;

Globalization brings changes into management of tourism businesses and work teams. These changes must be reflected in education of managers for this field.

1. Globalization and Integration Processes in Tourism

Globalization is a characteristic feature of development of current society. Effects of globalization in national economy were studied e.g. by Keller, P.-1996, Levitt, T.-1985 (Gůčik, Šípková 2004). One of the most precise definitions of globalization is that of the OECD, which states that globalization is a process increasing the dependence of markets and national economies, process initiated by high dynamics of trade in goods, capital, services and transfers of technologies and know-how. It is an irreversible process affecting all spheres of society's life. (Gůčik, Šípková 2004: 3) applied this definition to the conditions of tourism and states: "Globalization in tourism – development and deepening of international relations at world-wide level; megatrend accompanied by liberalization and growth in competitiveness in the market caused by progress in technology. In tourism it is a result of development of transport and telecommunication technologies, rise of new markets in post-communist countries and more experienced tourists. Growing globalization in

tourism brings offer of new products and areas, rise of new multinational companies, access to new remote destinations, offer of industrially prepared, standardized and unified brands and global products cutting costs and edging small and middle-sized enterprises out of the market, orientation of businesses at values preferred by customers, but it also brings care for local culture, cultural and nature heritage as a irreplaceable primary source of tourism development and competitive advantage in the market”(Gúčík, Šíprková 2004: 40).

At the beginning globalization means mainly concentration of tourism businesses into larger units. This process can be witnessed at a larger scale after the World War II, first in the USA, later also in other countries. Progress in science and technology and gradual rise of international organizations supporting cooperation of individual countries in many fields make integration processes easier. Historically the oldest international grouping is e.g. McDonald's in food service (1948) and companies Intercontinental (1946) or Holiday Inn (1952) in accommodation industry. The biggest concentration in transport services (particularly among airline companies) can be witnessed in the 70's of the 20th century. Integration and gradual interconnection of national economies bring a number of advantages but also threats which may influence future development in particular countries to a relatively high extend.

1.1 Positive effects of globalization in tourism

At present we can witness a number of positive effects of globalization in the Czech Republic. The following effects belong to the most important ones:

Increased pressure on quality of services offered

This pressure can be seen in all tourism businesses. At the beginning the quality is guaranteed by standards, which must be adhered to during construction and running of food and accommodation facilities. Hotel chains, which pay a big attention to the quality of services, can be a good example. Quality manuals are strictly controlled and adequate consequences for the management are driven in case failings are found. At present, however, there is a complement to the modern concept of quality – suitability and qualification for the given target. Quality is not only a technical issue any more, it is connected with the issues such as habits of guests and their financial situation. Quality is seen as a central issue in the management of businesses and gradually it is becoming their competitive advantage. We gradually move from mere quality control to quality management.

At present a number of tourism businesses in the Czech Republic are already certified. Certification in accommodation services follows the recommended categorization and classification. Certification of accommodation facilities is carried out by the following professional associations:

Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Czech Republic;

Campsites and Bungalow Communities of the Czech Republic – Trade Association;
Association of Rural Tourism;
Club of Czech Tourists.

After joining the EU tourism businesses started to be increasingly interested in certification, particularly hotels, travel agencies and spa facilities oriented at foreign clients.

Regarding transport services, quality plays an important role in the choice of the means of transport and choice of a transport company.

Rapid spread of modern technologies

Modern technologies are applied almost in all tourism businesses in the Czech Republic now. Their application improves the quality of offered services, property protection and guest safety and security, it changes the ways of communication and product promotion. Franchising helps to spread modern technologies very fast. This system started to be applied in food and accommodation service in the 60's of the last century. However, a vast increase in international franchising started in the 80's. Pioneers of franchising in food and accommodation services were McDonald's and Holiday Inn. The system of franchising enables the owner of a brand, design or logo to sell the right to use this brand, special technologies, know-how and good-will created by the owner of the brand to a business partner. The business relation between a mother company and a franchisee, an independent trader, is based on a franchising agreement which solves in detail the rights and duties between a franchisor and franchisee.

At present a number of tourism businesses in the Czech Republic use this model. It is still a question if all signed franchising agreements, particularly the agreements from the 90's of the last century, were always advantageous for traders, as the legal system of the Czech Republic did not know this concept then. The speed with which this form of trading is growing can be seen at e.g. McDonald's chain, which entered the Czech market in 1992 by opening 3 restaurants. In 2005 this chain ran 72 restaurants. During the years this system has spread also among Czech companies and has very good results. A good example is a hotel company called Orea Hotels.

The development of modern technologies in transport services substantially shortened the time needed to reach far destinations and completely changed the system of reservation and communication between a seller and a participant of tourism. Global reservation and information systems¹ gradually spread from

¹ GDS – Global Distribution System – originally CRS – Computer Distribution System, is connected with the rise of reservation systems of airline companies (Amadeus, Sabre,

airline companies even to road and water transport, they are newly used also by travel agencies, accommodation facilities and lately we can meet them even in providing cultural or sport and recreational services.

Transition to a new marketing oriented system of management of tourism businesses

Application of marketing by tourism businesses was slightly delayed compared to e.g. industrial businesses. Experts estimate that the delay represents approximately 10-20 years (Morrison 1995: 19). Almost up to 1990 sales and production orientation with all its negative impacts on the development and competitiveness is typical for Czech tourism businesses. Only after 1990 one can gradually witness transition to marketing orientation, based on systematic watching the situation in the market and learning customer's needs and wishes. Market research starts to be consistently utilized and its results enable a gradual improvement of long-term strategic planning and utilize guest segmentation for targeted creation of marketing mix for different segments of guests. Marketing is becoming an important part of tourism business management. It is applied in destination management and helps in strategic decision-making about future development of individual regions.

Gradual recognition of modern methods in management (Total Quality Management, Yield Management)

Total Quality Management (TQM) – a modern way of management based mainly on top quality of provided services dates back approximately to the 80's of the last century, when globalization of world's economy speeded up and national economies started to link. Introduction of new technologies resulting in internationalization of production and linking of companies in different fields of economy supported this trend. Competitiveness is improved to a substantial extend and companies seek new ways to strengthen their position in the market. Quality is becoming a part of marketing in leading companies in different branches and it penetrates even into their slogans². We can say that it is the most important driving force leading to success and prosperity in national and international markets.

In professional literature one can find a number of different definitions underpinning different aspects of this modern concept of management. Some authors emphasize that this is a concept of management supposing a continual development and innovation. The others stress that it is a method of developing abilities of employees so that they were able to meet the needs of their clients. Summarizing basic ideas of individual authors, we can state that: Total Quality Management is a strategy oriented managerial system for ensuring quality, a

Galileo, etc.) LDS – Local Distribution System – e.g. a system owned by tour operators for distribution of their products in their countries or regions.

² E.g. Principles of McDonald's: high quality, perfect service, cleanliness, reasonable prices.

system with clearly documented tasks, competences and responsibilities, focused on continuous improvement of ways leading to meeting client's needs and wishes with the lowest costs possible.

Basic features of TQM are as follows:

- orientation at a client;
- work in teams;
- management through information;
- continuous improvement;
- managing work teams.

After 1989 introduction of TQM into tourism businesses together with their certification under standards ISO 9000 was something new which was discussed much and considered for the future. At present there are a number of tourism businesses certified under TQM and a certificate of quality is becoming their competitive advantage.

Yield Management is a modern method for yield optimizing. It can be used in many branches of service industry where prices are set with the help of client segmentation and statistic analyses of the development of demand in a certain period (month, week, individual days). The aim is to enhance the market of the given service and increase the revenue per capacity unit. We can say that Yield Management tries to increase the achieved turnover by adjusting prices and changing the structure of the offered prices with regard to changing market conditions. Yield Management can improve economic results of tourism businesses:

- by increasing occupancy of seats in planes, trains or buses, rooms in hotels;
- by reducing the number of guests deciding for other accommodation facility;
- and at the same time by maximizing achieved turnover from each seat or room sold in relation to elasticity of demand and supply.

If in the 90's of the last century Czech tourism businesses started to be familiar with this modern method of yield optimizing. We can say that at present many big accommodation facilities commonly use some features, this method is based on. E.g. they systematically monitor demand during a week, month, and year and regularly evaluate its curve. Data about development of demand during a week are used for decision-making about occupancy level in successive years, regarding different segments of clients and to setting the rate of overbooking. Price strategy for individual parts of a year and different segments of clients also depends on the development of demand. A barrier to wider spread and utilization of Yield Management are high costs of software which must be created specifically for particular tourism businesses. This is why in 2007 the

Tourism Department of the University of Economics Prague started to cooperate with a Czech software company on the development of a reservation system based on the principles of yield management for small and middle-sized enterprises. Another participant in this project funded from a grant of the Ministry of Industry of the Czech Republic was ČVUT – Faculty of Electrotechnique. Now this specialized software is almost ready and is tested within a special seminar by tourism students of master study programmes at the Faculty of International Relations of the University of Economics Prague.

Pressure on cooperation of tourism businesses while catering for the needs of tourism participants

Tourism businesses in the Czech Republic still have substantial reserves in this area. A number of entrepreneurs don't realize that systematic cooperation between tourism businesses (transport companies, travel agencies, accommodation facilities, food service and catering facilities, information centres, sport and cultural facilities, etc.) and coordination of their activities within regional administrative units are needed to meet the needs of tourism participants. Development of destination management is slow and there is often a lack of qualified workers to introduce it systematically. Even despite considerable effort of professional associations cooperation of tourism businesses in the Czech Republic seems to belong to its weaknesses³.

Pressure on environmentally-friendly behaviour of tourism businesses

Environmentally-friendly behaviour of tourism businesses belongs to prerequisite of sustainable tourism development and forms its important part. Sustainable development as a global issue has been discussed since the 70's of the last century. This issue has gradually become a topic of many international conferences and seminars. In the Czech Republic attention to sustainable development has been paid since the 90's of the last century, particularly in connection with our access to the EU. New legislation regulating the development in many industries, branches and regions was created. Tourism businesses slowly realize that sustainable tourism development means meeting the needs of tourism participants in the way that would support the development of the region and lead to long-term prosperity of the given region without threatening that the needs of future generations might not be satisfied. Tasks in ecology are becoming marketing objectives of dominant tourism businesses and meeting them represent their competitive advantage.

³ The following big professional associations active in tourism in the Czech Republic can be listed: Association of Hotels and Restaurants of the Czech Republic, Association of Travel Agencies of the Czech Republic, Campsites and Bungalow Communities of the Czech Republic – Trade Association, Association of Rural Tourism, Association of Historical Settlements in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, Club of Czech Tourists, Folk Association of the Czech Republic and others.

Tourism Department of the University of Economics Prague pays considerable attention to the issues of sustainable tourism development in its educational programmes. This situation is caused by the fact that its graduates – tourism managers - can, to considerable extent, influence development in regions and participate in conservation of nature and cultural heritage of the given country. In 2006 the Department received a grant “Sustainable tourism development in the Czech republic” from the Czech Grant Agency. The main objective of the project was to analyse a current situation in application of sustainable tourism development principles by tourism businesses as well as their application within regional units. In the future it would be interesting to include also selected EU countries in the research.

Globalization is connected also with a number of threats which might, provided that we don't anticipate them in time, become a barrier to further development.

1.2 Threats connected with globalization

Increased competition

At the beginning increased competition creates pressure on the quality of services provided. However, in case of wrong implementation of state policy supporting tourism in the given country, increased competition may gradually cause bankruptcy of domestic companies and domestic management. This concerns particularly state policy on creating conditions for entrepreneurial activities in tourism, which means fiscal policy, credit policy or employment policy. We can see already today that top positions in hotels which joined international hotel chains are occupied mostly by foreign managers. Mutual linking of economies brings also inflow of cheap labour force, which may, in future lead to stagnation of pays of sales and operational workers and result in pressure on excessive increase in labour productivity.

Uncontrolled tourism development

Faulty policy of administrative bodies on allowing investment activities may lead to devastation of the environment and to irreplaceable damages on nature and cultural heritage of the given country. This can be seen e.g. in the islands such as e.g. Corfu, Madeira, Mallorca, etc.

Little support of domestic companies and offer of differentiated products according to different segments of visitors

may lead to decline in the development in the given field and to gradual loss of national identity. Tourism should care for preservation of cultural traditions, habits, customs, typical gastronomy, etc, which present the given country to foreign visitors as a specific culture. In this field Folk Association of the Czech Republic or Association of Historical Settlements in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia play an important role.

Threat of international terrorism

A basic precondition of international tourism development is ample time and peace. Gradual opening of borders of individual countries, dismantling visa duties and other formalities may, however, open the given country also to subversive elements which may cause increased criminality. Liberalization of entrepreneurship and inflow of foreign capital is unfortunately often connected with the possibility to invest money originating in unfair activities.

On 1st May 2005 the EU grew by new countries and the Czech Republic was among them. Let me outline the changes realized in tourism, even though we know that it is too soon for a deep analysis.

1.3 Effects of the access of the Czech Republic to the EU on tourism

On 1st May 2005 the EU grew by new countries and the Czech Republic was among them. Let me outline the changes realized in tourism, even though we know that it is too soon for a deep analysis (Czech Tourism).

Free movement of persons within the EU (they don't have to register anywhere for a stay up to 90 days);

A EU citizen needs only an identification card, or passport to travel within the EU;

Within the EU tourists don't have to give reasons for their stay in other country, they don't have to prove the cash necessary to cover the costs during their stay;

Allowance to take any amount of money – free movement of capital;

There are no customs controls of tourists within the EU;

National driving licences are valid on the whole territory of the EU;

Growth in the quality of accommodation and food services;

Health insurance paid by a citizen of one EU member country in his country is valid on the whole territory of the EU;

Increase in the number of overseas students, study stays – it is not allowed to ask tuition fee unless it is paid by domestic students;

Increase in business trips;

Growing importance of business tourism;

Increase in arrivals from EU countries, growing interest from neighbour EU member countries in one-day excursions to the Czech Republic – shopping, visiting restaurants, trips of young generation for entertainment, etc.;

Growing interest in less known regions;

Growing number of holidays including stays both in home country and neighbour EU member country – Poland, Austria, Germany;

Increase in outbound tourism into EU countries – our citizens demand also more remote territories which used to be less affordable for them;

Increase in the demand of Czech students for study stays in EU countries;

Increase in the number of business trips;

Growing demand for one-day excursions to neighbour countries;

Growing demand for touring holiday in more neighbour countries;

In connection with the access of the Czech Republic into the EU it is necessary to see also certain risks. It is mainly a bigger competition within providing tourism services. However, it will be possible to evaluate particular impacts only after a longer time period.

2. Current situation of integration processes in tourism in the Czech Republic

Despite the fact that after 1989 we can witness an adverse process in the Czech Republic than in other advanced countries (split-up of the enterprise Interhotel and Restaurants and Other Food Service Facilities, gradual hive off individual hotels and catering facilities, little cooperation between tourism businesses), nowadays the process of concentration and joining international hotel companies and catering chains is very important. Many foreign companies penetrated in the Czech Republic creating competitive environment and encouraging growth in the quality of services provided⁴. This reality is reflected also in the behaviour of tourism businesses.

2.1 Effect of integration processes on the behaviour of tourism businesses in the Czech Republic

Changes in supply and demand can be seen. Before 1989 there was not a problem to have accommodation or catering facilities fully occupied. Currently supply exceeds demand and it is necessary to go to the guest, to feel into his needs and offer him something more than it is common somewhere else. Application of marketing has become a must and that requires highly qualified professionals.

Team work is supported with the aim to meet the needs of our guests at the highest level (introduction of TQM system).

⁴ We can list e.g. InterContinental Hotels Corp., Holiday Inn, Marriott International Inc., Best Western International, Hilton Hotels Corp., Four Seasons, Choice Hotels, Days Hotels, Mövenpick, Vienna International, Ibis Hotels, Minotel, Corinthia Hotels, SAS Radison, Danubius Hotels, Golden Tulip, Crown Plaza and others.

At present many hotel guests prefer informal, but top quality equipped interiors, perfect functioning and interesting cuisine. Guests often require alternative forms of nutrition or seek experience gastronomy.

Hotel design lead by marketing needs has been winning recognition. This brings efficiency (space is multifunctional, equipment must contribute to savings and support ecology, etc.). In the same time equipment adapts to the requirements of segments which accommodation facilities try to attract.

Necessity to be competitive encourages optimization of the economic result and yield management is applied.

The Czech Republic has a big potential in tourism. Middle European region will be – maybe even on contrary to other destinations – a demanded and attractive destination. If we want to succeed in a highly competitive environment, we must use modern methods of team management and gradually optimize results while meeting the needs of tourism participants at the best even in the field of accommodation, catering and transport services. This makes us consider which changes should be reflected in education of future tourism managers.

2.2 New approaches to the education of workers in tourism from the view of gradual globalization

Mutual linking of national economies increases requirements on knowledge and skills of workers in tourism. In a competitive environment only a worker who can push through new ideas, who can communicate in several languages, who will master modern technologies and who will become a useful member of a team, will find a job. Moreover, a top manager is expected to be stress resistant and will be able to encourage the team to top performance. Educational institutions must adapt to this reality so that their graduates could find jobs in tourism not only in their home country, but also abroad, and so that they would not gradually be edged out from their positions by foreign management. International certification of schools will gradually become competitive advantage of individual schools and will contribute to quality improvement of services in tourism. Therefore many universities and colleges in the Czech Republic have already introduced ECTS credits, which contribute to internationalization and permeability of the study. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of work ahead of us and we expect an important deal of support also from the industry. Quality graduates will not appear without cooperation of educational institutions and the industry, as there is a lack of feedback to particular requirements of the industry. On the contrary results of research carried out by universities and colleges should immediately be applied to practice.

Conclusion

The submitted essay investigates current issues of tourism development in the Czech Republic from the view of growing globalization, which supports integration processes and mutual linking of national economies. The aim of the research carried out by the Tourism Department of the University of Economics Prague in 2000-2007 was to study the effects of globalization on tourism and to outline positive effects and negative impacts in this field. Researches carried out within specialized seminars, PhD and graduation theses and own research activity of the author in tourism businesses, companies and organizations have shown that globalization influences the activity of tourism businesses both positively and negatively and that it can be clearly seen in the Czech Republic already now. Globalization brings changes into management of tourism businesses and work teams. These changes must be reflected in education of managers for this field.

Based on the output of research activity, changes in the structure and content of tourism study programmes, both bachelor's and master's levels, at the Faculty of International Relations of the University of Economics Prague were proposed. Newly designed study programmes in ECTS credits have been applied since academic year 2005-2006.

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