

## CONGRESSIONAL AND FAIR TOURISM IN NITRA

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**Abstract:** Congressional and fair tourism belongs to important innovating factors of the region development. For the city of Nitra, it is an alternative enabling a compensation of lack of architectural sights in the city, which are most frequently the base for performing city tourism. From many aspects, Nitra meets the requirements of a congressional and fair centre. In case of building a tradition of congressional centre it is necessary to reach the balance between supply and demand of accommodation capacity.

**Key words:** urban tourism, congressional and fair tourism, Baretje-Defert index,

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Urban tourism is based on local conditions, which are genetically connected with human activities. There are especially architectural sights or cultural and social activities. Their meaning for tourism can be supported by fair and congressional tourism.

Studies by Dubcová and Kramáreková (1994) and Krogmann (in print) deal with the questions of tourism in Nitra. Drgoňa et al. study (in print) stresses the importance of fair tourism for development of not only the city of Nitra, but the whole district.

## **2. THE TERM AND IMPORTANCE OF CONGRESSIONAL AND FAIR TOURISM**

According to Hofmeister (1974) congressional tourism is a set of relations and events, which are created in connection with travel and stay of persons whose concentration in one locality is motivated by exchange of expert information but this locality is generally neither domicile nor workplace. This definition can be also applied in case of fair tourism but it is necessary to emphasise an admittance of not experts only but the general public as well.

Kaspar (1995) puts congressional and fair tourism among the economically orientated forms of tourism.

These forms belong to the important stimuli for region development because they bring new information and they are an important financial source as well. Their realisation is extremely significant especially for countries with transforming economics.

## **3. ANALYSIS OF CONGRESSIONAL AND FAIR TOURISM IN NITRA**

Nitra is situated in the south-west part of Slovakia. It lies in the join of two important central European scenery types - Danubian and Carpathian (Drgoňa et al, 1998). This morphologically diverse territory enabled development of settlements already in Palaeolithic.

The exposed location of the city (the centre of boundary region of Hungary, the vicinity of the Turkey after the Mohacs battle in the year 1526) and related war events were the reason of liquidation of then architecture. Therefore, only the Nitra Castle and the Upper City complex with the status of national cultural monument or municipal memorial reservation are in terms of architectural sights attractive for tourists. However, their accessibility for the public is restricted. Most of buildings have become a property of the Church after the restitution process, and they serve to their original purposes. Accordingly these assumptions only supplement the main forms of tourism in Nitra, i.e. fair, congressional and transit tourism.

Fair tourism combined with congressional tourism, they are at the forefront of visitors' interest in Nitra. Since 1974, the city has become the centre of annually held agricultural exhibition called Agrokomplex, which was related to the location of the Slovak Agricultural University in Nitra.

Economic transformation initiated after 1989 has increased the importance of exhibitions in Nitra and the significant role just played the convenient location of the city. At present Agrokomplex - exhibition area with size of 148,5 ha is the largest exhibition site and after Incheba exhibition site in Bratislava, it is the second most important in Slovakia (Drgoňa and others, 1998). There are held 15 - 20 international

exhibitions and a lot of exhibitions of national or regional importance every year. In addition, the exhibition areas are rented for other activities, which are not held by main organiser - Agrokomplex - exhibitions.

The schedule of exhibitions in 1999 includes the following exhibitions:

- III. Furniture and housing - international exhibition of furniture,
- IV. - Alimenta, Gastra - international food exhibition and equipment for hotels and gastronomy,
- IV.-V. - Enviro - international exhibition of environment protection and technologies,
- IV.-V. - Gardenia - international marketable exhibition of gardening,
- IV.-V. - Holiday - contracting and selling exhibition of tourism,
- IV.-V. - Aqua - Therm - international exhibition of heating,
- V. - International engineering fair connected with subexhibitions EUROWELDING, CAST-EX, SYMPOMECH - international technical fair of machines, accessories and technologies,
- VIII. - Agrokomplex - international agricultural exhibition connected with subexhibitions COOPEXPO and Slovak productive markets,
- IX. - Motor car exhibition - international exhibition of cars, lorries and utilitarian cars,
- X. - Lignumexpo - international wood exhibition connected with FORST subexhibition,
- X. - Conex - international exhibition of plastics and chemical products,
- X. - HIGH - TECH - international exhibition of consumer electronics,
- XII. - Christmas markets - international buyers market with Christmas goods.

The most important and most visited exhibitions are the International exhibition of furniture, International engineering fair, Agrokomplex and Motor car exhibition.

The next analysis of chosen exhibitions and fairs (according to the schedule of exhibitions in 1998) that are divided into three mercantile groups is giving in the sense of internal materials available but not always comparable information.

The first exhibition in the calendar year 1998 was **the International exhibition of furniture**. During six days 11,100 visitors came to see this greatest exhibition of furniture in Slovakia. Dominant number of visitors came from the Nitra region (36%), from the Trenčín and Banská Bystrica regions came 14% of visitors, and from the Bratislava region it was 12% (Internal materials of Agrokomplex - exhibitions).

The International food exhibition - **Alimenta**, together with the exhibition of equipment for hotels and gastronomy called **Gastra** visited during four days 35,827 visitors. These exhibitions were intended for experts in the field and 81% of all the visitors were experts. (Internal material of Agrokomplex - exhibitions). Predominate number of visitors were from western Slovakia - 56%, visitors from central Slovakia - 21% and visitors from eastern Slovakia - 18%. The rest, i.e. 5% belongs to foreign visitors.

The **International Engineering Fair** connected with subexhibitions **EUROWELDING** - specialised in welding technique, **CAST-EX** - specialised in metallurgy and casting technologies and **SYMPOMECH** - exhibition of construction and operating mechanisation are orientated towards technical public. Almost 41,000 people (89% experts) visited this fair during three days and they could see the presentations of exhibitors from 21 countries in Europe, Japan and the USA. As a part of this action, four scientific congresses specialised to technical software, operating reliability of machines and structural technologies were held.

The most of visitors came from the Nitra region (20%), Trenčín region (20%) and Bratislava region (16%). This ratio, except Nitra region, responds to the distribution of engineering industry in Slovakia. The others regions were represented as following - Žilina and Banská Bystrica regions - 9%, Trnava region - 8.2%, Prešov region - 4.5% and Košice region 3.2%.

The agricultural exhibition **Agrokomplex** has been held in Nitra since 1974 and it is the exhibition, which initiated creation of the image of Nitra as a fair city. During its jubilee 25th anniversary in 1998, it attracted 164,276 visitors.

Nevertheless, the most popular exhibition in Nitra is the **Motor Car Exhibition**. This project is ranged among 17 motor car exhibitions in the calendar of international organisation of OICA car manufacturers. Thereby it has become an exhibition of the same rank as the Motor car exhibition in Geneva or Frankfurt on Mohan. In 1998, 167,000 visitors came to see the exhibition and the lay public predominated with 68%.

#### 4. CONDITIONS FOR REALISATION OF FAIR AND CONGRESSIONAL TOURISM IN NITRA

Several conditions must be fulfilled for realisation of the mentioned forms of tourism (e.g. convenient traffic position, possibilities for short-term rest and accommodation facilities).

According to Liszewski (1991) and Janczaková (1994), I analyse accommodation capacities by means of Baretje-Defert index, which expresses the ratio of number of beds to number of city's inhabitants.

$$T = \frac{L}{P} \times 100$$

where T - Baretje - Defert index

L - number of beds

P - number of inhabitants in the city or region

The comparison of Nitra with other fair cities in Slovakia is documented in the Table 1. This table is supplemented with data concerning exhibition areas of particular cities.

Table 1 Comparison of fair cities in Slovakia on the basis of Baretje - Defert index (T)

No.	City	Number of inhabitants (31.12.1997)	Number of beds (31.12.1997)	T	Exhibition area (ha)
1	Bratislava	451395	6295	1,39	8,36
2	B. Bystrica	84816	534	0,62	0,84
3	Košice	242170	2418	0,99	0,5
4	Nitra	87555	853	0,97	148
5	Trenčín	58873	893	1,51	1,5
6	Žilina	86923	1188	1,37	1,2
	Slovak Republic	5387646	65539	1,21	-

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Slovak Republic, 1998, calculated by A. Krogmann

According to Table 1, it is possible to divide the fair cities into two groups:

1. cities for which T is more than T assigned to the SR, i.e. T 1.21. Three cities from the table belong to this group - Bratislava (T=1.39), Trenčín (T=1.51) and Žilina (T=1.37).
2. cities for which T is less than T assigned to the SR, i.e. T 1.21. Nitra (T=0.97) belongs to this group of fair cities. On basis of the table, we can say that although Nitra is the fourth biggest city in Slovakia, its accommodation capacities are insufficient.

The results of this classification point out to the different quality of conditions for tourism. From Table 1, it is evident that two of the four biggest cities in Slovakia (Košice, Nitra) are classified in the second group. It is due to the low potential of localisation factors in case of Nitra and relatively eccentric position of Košice referring to the capital of the Slovak Republic.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Realisation of fair and congressional tourism is conditioned by several factors and we have analysed one of them - the accommodation (bed) capacity in Nitra. If city of Nitra would like to continue in building its fair centre image it is necessary to expand the present accommodation capacity. In periods when exhibitions are performed, all accommodation facilities are occupied to almost 100% and potential interest is even much greater.

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## **Resume**

### **Kongresový a veľtržný cestovný ruch v Nitre**

Turizmus v meste Nitra je orientovaný najmä na kongresový a veľtržný cestovný ruch. Sú to formy, schopné kompenzovať nedostatok pre turistov prístupných architektonických pamiatok.

Tradičia budovania uvedených foriem cestovného ruchu v Nitre začala v roku 1974, otvorením prvého ročníka poľnohospodárskej výstavy AGRO-KOMPLEX. Jej realizovanie súviselo s lokalizáciou Slovenskej poľnohospodárskej univerzity v Nitre. V súčasnosti sa v meste uskutočňujú ročne 15-20 medzinárodných výstav, spojených s kongresmi, ako aj ďalšie výstavy štátneho a regionálneho významu.

Relevantnými predpokladmi pre realizovanie kongresového a veľtržného turizmu je geografická poloha mesta - Nitra sa nachádza v blízkosti troch hlavných miest - Bratislavy, Viedne a Budapešti, pričom spojenie Nitry s prvými dvoma mestami je realizované až na malé úseky diaľnicami.

Problematická je však kapacita ubytovacích možností. Potvrdzuje to aj analýza Baretje-Defertovho indexu, podľa ktorého Nitra zaujíma medzi veľtržnými mestami Slovenska predposledné miesto a hodnota Baretje-Defertovho indexu je aj pod priemerom Slovenska.

Z uvedeného dôvodu je pre Nitru dôležité vyriešiť problém vyššieho dopytu po ubytovaní v čase konania výstav, ako je ponuka lôžkového fondu.

Z ekonomických dôvodov je však vybudovanie ďalších ubytovacích zariadení paralelne závislé na zvyšovaní atraktivity mesta napríklad rôznymi organizovanými podujatiami.