

# Use of cultural heritage in tourism for development of the Czech rural areas

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*Abstract*—Sight-seeing, museum, gallery, festival visits, and other cultural and ethnographic travelling are more and more popular activities. That results in an increased number of tourists in given destinations. The aim of this paper is to delimit cultural tourism, define problems related to its development in the Czech Republic, and to devise measures for its effective use. Since cultural heritage has huge impact on local as well as regional identity, it is an important factor for the development and resolving contemporary problems of Czech rural areas.

The paper characterizes cultural tourism from the perspective of supply and demand and also deals with cultural tourism's historical development and the segmentation of its market. It provides a detailed analysis of problems related to an effective use of the Czech Republic's cultural potential. In the conclusion, the author devises measures that should activate economic potential as a tool for intercepting a long-term process of devastation of culture in the Czech Republic.

The effort to preserve cultural traditions in national, regional and local scale (authenticity of cultural values, as opposed to consumption of mass culture) should be the crucial element of a state's culture politics. The state's other task should be to cultivate citizens and lead them to create a positive attitude toward cultural values. Through cultural tourism, the cultural assets can become a part of the nation's value preferences.

*Keywords*—Cultural heritage, cultural tourism, development, rural areas.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A healthy and quality environment represents a fundamental condition for the development of tourism, one of the most important socioeconomic and cultural phenomena of our age. Tourism can facilitate such development as stabilizes the character and functions of a landscape, reinforces cultural identity and social bonds of a local community and positively influences local economy.

On the other hand, tourism can also be the cause of spatial, qualitative and social degradation of an area or amplify such degradation. That often results in the decrease of biological, socio-cultural or economic diversity. It is therefore important to develop such forms of tourism as respect the principles of sustainability, socioeconomically (i.e., employment, income, preservation of traditions) and ecologically (protection of nature, landscape). Cultural tourism, which can constitute a

significant element of development of economically underdeveloped areas, including rural regions, is one of such forms.

## II. OBJECTIVE AND METHODS

The paper treats the role of cultural heritage and its use in tourism, which constitutes an important tool for the development of rural regions. On the basis of an analysis of available sources of information it makes a survey of attitudes and solutions to the development of rural regions on the principles of sustainability. The aim of this contribution is to delimit cultural tourism, define problems related to its development in the Czech Republic, and devise measures for its effective use.

A search of specialized literature, focused on the issue of rural regions' development, on sustainable tourism, and cultural tourism, has provided the background for the delimitation of conceptual frame and fundamental starting points. Contributions in conference proceedings and prestigious periodicals have constituted the most important part of literature searched. Printed books, internet contributions and experts' opinions, presented in scientific conferences and seminars, have also been important sources of information.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Rural Areas and Problems of their Development

In many countries rural regions represent underdeveloped areas facing numerous hardships. In the Czech Republic, rural regions also used to be neglected areas, characterized by a difficult situation of Czech agrarians, rapidly increasing unemployment, lack of finance, and insufficient legislature that could provide the possibility to invest in the development of business and job creation [1]. Upon entering the European Union the situation has changed. All member states of the EU aim to increase the living standards of rural areas' inhabitants, to eliminate or at least attenuate regional disparities, to preserve the viability of rural space, population, and landscape [2].

The approaches to the development of rural areas and their definition represent a widely discussed matter in social sciences, and their origins can be dated back into the 19th century, to the concept of rural-urban dichotomy and

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continuum, elaborated on in 1929 by Sorokin and Zimmermann in "Principles of Rural Urban Sociology". The authors present more than 200 indicators and describe the differences between rural regions and cities [3]. Their work has been elaborated on by Pahl who shows that the attempts to clearly and strictly delimit rural space prove rather problematic [4]. McDonagh, who presents Halfacree's two conventional approaches to delimitation of rural areas – approach based on descriptive (i.e., observable and measurable) variables, and observation of various socio-cultural characteristics in relation to people's environment – may also be cited [5].

To delimit rural space we can use various criteria, from the elementary through some more complicated economic marks to complexes of more factors, which Perlín used to delimit various types of rural areas in the Czech Republic. On the basis of historical, social, economic and physical-geographical criteria the author identifies six basic types of rural population: a suburban zone, rural regions in rich agricultural areas, north (rich) Sudetenland, south (poor) Sudetenland, inland peripheries and Moravian-Slovakian borderland. These types are characteristic by their historical development, and also because of their socio-economical position and position in the system of population [6].

Perlín et al. further elaborated on this classification and in his next research he, along with a team of authors, distinguished individual types of rural space in the Czech Republic according to the potential of development. The authors analyzed basic socio-cultural characteristics (ratio of fellow countrymen, education index, age index), tourist and recreational function, level of the inhabitants' social activity (participation in local authority elections), engineering infrastructure, rate of unemployment, etc. On the basis of these indicators, eight main types of Czech rural space were identified. 1. Developing rural regions. 2. Non-developing neighbourly rural regions. 3. Moravian peripheries. 4. Developed Moravian rural regions. 5. Problematic recreational rural regions. 6. Intensive recreational areas. 7. Structurally afflicted industrial rural regions. Non-profiled rural regions. [7].

The indicators used for delimitation of rural space have both advantages and disadvantages; mostly they reduce their practical applicability, however. In the Czech Republic, the criterion of number of inhabitants is most frequently used. According to this criterion, a municipality is considered rural if there are less than 2 000 residents inhabiting it. According to this criterion, rural municipalities represent 89.8% of all municipalities and administer 73.6 % of the state's territory. Only a quarter of the total sum of citizens (26.3%) live therein, however [2].

Similarly to delimitation of rural areas, the notions of rural development have also been discussed for a long time in specialized literature. Primarily they are connected with the ever-changing and still unclear notion of how the recent rural regions should look like and what functions they have. Rural areas used to be perceived almost exclusively as important

sources of national culture, an integral part of national symbols and important element for urban-rural relationships. Today, they are viewed from a considerably wider perspective. Today, a rural area is not only a place of residence, recreational area, an economic unit, a place of social contacts, cultural and natural space. It constitutes a unique part of the landscape. It represents the background of cities and has many economic, ecological and social functions. On the other hand, rural areas are also perceived as a problematic result of the processes of modernization, Europeanization, and agriculture transformation. The differentiation between rural regions and cities is reflected in the deepening disparities in income and employment opportunities [8].

From what we have stated it follows that in accordance with the current modern approaches to the development of regions, which emphasize the provision of social welfare (security, health, education, income, housing etc.), and as a result of excessive consumption of natural resources (use of water, land etc.), it is necessary to approach rural development from a multidisciplinary perspective [9]. According to the European Commission, rural development should be based on these crucial concepts [10]:

- Rural development should be based on *integrated use of local sources* (primarily agriculture, tourism, hand-made manufacture, country traditions and habits).
- Rural development is a *bottom-up* development, based on local communities' active participation and institutional cooperation of economic and social forces.
- Rural development is *endogenous*, as it is based on evaluation and use of local sources and on local actors' participation.
- Rural development is *territorial* – it emphasizes the individual area as the fundamental factor of development and of competitive strength.

#### B. Multifunctional Countryside and the Role of Tourism

The conclusion therefore is that maximum use of local potential is one of the main conditions for rural development. The authorities' approach changes accordingly. As opposed to the former sector approach, viewing rural regions as areas with dominant agricultural production, the spatial approach, which perceives them as space for life and a place for recreational and relaxing activities, has been winning more recognition since the beginning of the millennium. For instance, Van der Ploeg et al., who understand rural development as a "multi-level, multi-actor, multi-faceted process", emphasize the importance of local participants, local institutions, and local tools and products [11]. This change in the perception of rural regions has also been described in the work of the OECD [12].

Multidisciplinary view at rural development, or also according to Potter and Burney - multifunctional countryside, is "conceived as producing not only food but also sustaining rural landscapes, protecting biodiversity, generating employment and contributing to the viability of rural areas" [13, p. 35].

In accordance with this view, the rural areas' offer of opportunities to spend free time doing various forms of tourism gains importance [14]. Using evidence from an analysis carried out in the proposed National Park in Northern Ireland, the authors try to answer a question: "What is the potential for sustainable rural tourism to contribute to rural development?" [14, p. 175]. On the basis of the analysis, the authors reveal four themes that have implications for the new rural development programme: institutional (in)capacity, legitimacy of local groups, navigating between stakeholder interests and sustainable tourism in practice.

From what we have stated it ensues that tourism plays a significant part in rural development. It is an important source of income and new working opportunities, it revitalizes traditional hand-made manufacture, folklore, and other cultural traditions, represents rural life, protects the original landscape character, contributes to the use of rural areas' natural, cultural and historical potential, and revitalizes gastronomic traditions.

When complying with the principles of sustainable development and social economy, tourism in rural regions should participate in improving the quality of life in given locations [15] - [17], both of local citizens and tourists, without radically changing the lifestyle and attitudes of residents. Does cultural tourism meet such requirements? How can we define it? What are the particular features that are discussed in many publications? (e.g. [18], [19]). The following chapters will try to provide answers to these questions.

### C. History and Characteristics of Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is not an entirely new phenomenon, as it might seem – its historical predecessor is the "Grand Tour" phenomenon of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. In this age, the British, German and Russian aristocracy travelled to Italy and France, with the aim of perfecting their education and forming their ideals and noble behaviour. At first, Grand Tour was therefore not perceived as a traditional holiday, although that did not entail an absolute lack of entertainment. Its aim was primarily didactic and initiative, with the traveler seeking to achieve a certain social status [20].

In today's modern, frantic age, when substantial amounts of information can be obtained via the Internet, we cannot expect a primarily didactic character from cultural tourism. Nevertheless, its main focus – i. e., to obtain new information from the fields of history and architecture and to explore traditions and a different lifestyle – remains.

Cultural tourism may be perceived as conscious travelling, allowing the traveler to gather knowledge from the fields of history, cultural heritage and other people's lifestyle. At the same time, cultural tourism contributes to a preservation and restoration of local cultural sources and to the economic well-being of a community. It focuses on history, architecture, archaeology, art, science, and traditions. Through cultural tourism, one can gain plenty of experience from a cultural environment which offers *visual art and performances, festivals, music, theatre, rural lifestyle and atmosphere,*

*gastronomy, historical and religious sights, fairs, ruins, archaeological excavations, historical sceneries, etc.* [21].

We can also distinguish between a "superior" or "high" culture (works of art – paintings, sculptures, architecture, and music) and "popular" culture (traditions, lifestyle). "High" culture is manifested in cities in cultural institutions like museums, galleries, theatres, libraries and buildings of artistic importance. "Popular" culture is concentrated in rural areas, in outdoor museums and events (musical, theatrical and folk festivals, fairs, village fêtes, etc.).

In relation with the tendencies toward globalization and internationalization, the globalized "pop culture" keeps emerging ever more frequently. This kind of culture endangers cultural tourism with commoditization (transforming everything into a commodity) and standardization (authenticity and uniqueness disappear) [22].

*Note: Besides the abovementioned undesirable impact of tourism, acculturation (reception of visitors' culture with a significantly higher technical level, the elements of the original culture are abandoned gradually), inscenisation (commercially motivated performance of traditions and habits in accordance with the visitors' notions about the given ethnic group's culture), folklorization (a specific form of inscenisation with an inadequate emphasis on and a forced animation of folklore elements), culture stereotypization (local culture grows to resemble global culture) and physical harm to cultural values – "tourist vandalism" – can occur.*

Cultural and natural heritage is usually common, and it is therefore in public interest to protect it. One of the valid reasons for protecting it is also because authentic cultural and environmental heritage cannot be produced in a short time, and at the same time, harm done to environmental and cultural heritage is hard to measure, and often irreversible. It is also difficult to allocate the sources to the protection. National Trust for Historic Preservation has formulated the basic principles of cultural tourism, whose observation should prevent trouble wherever tourism, culture and cultural heritage meet and interact (becoming "partners") [23]:

1. Search for balance between the needs of visitors and residents.

Local conditions and circumstances determine what activities can be run for the development of tourism and how a location can be distinguished, as cultural tourism's clients prefer diversity of experiences, not their homogenization. On the basis of this principle, the following circumstances need to be determined:

- If the residents want to participate in cultural tourism, and if so, for what reason;
- If there are some periods or places that they do not wish to share with visitors;
- What level of income from tourism can improve life in the region?

2. Locations should be revitalized so that they are worth visiting.

Visitors do not want to be given mere data and names. They wish to know human dramas in historical context – it is therefore desirable to look for ways of making a location attractive and engaging all the senses of a region’s visitors.

3. Focus on quality of experiences, location’s authenticity.

4. Preserve and protect historical, natural and cultural assets (cultural and natural sources, local traditions and habits, etc.).

From these principles we can derive the specific characteristics of cultural tourism:

1. It originates in local culture and distinctive *spirit of a place* (so called “*genius loci*” [e.g. 24]).

2. It emphasizes the *quality of experience* and satisfies the visitor’s desire for knowledge.

3. Personal contact and a certain level of *knowledge* are required (connection to market segmentation – see further).

4. It strives to *minimize the devastation* of environment and cultural *exploitation* of a place.

#### D. Demand and Supply Factors of Cultural Tourism

The increasing popularity of cultural tourism results from a number of factors, on the side of both demand and supply [25]:  
Demand factors

- an increased *interest* in culture and cultural events
- search for *authenticity* (tiredness of globalization) and *identity* of a place, art, traditions and history
- post-modern *consumption style* (fragmentation of holiday with a preference for short-term stays to long-term ones – long weekend with cultural events)
- an increased *mobility* of cultural tourism clients etc.

Supply factors

- an increased offer of cultural events
- cultural tourism is viewed as a *suitable form* of tourism
- increasing *problems* in culture financing
- an increased *role of non-material culture* – atmosphere, experiences, feelings etc.

The supply of cultural tourism represents the relations between a place’s suitable characteristics and a community’s desire to share the cultural heritage of the place. As concerns the characteristics of a location, the factors mainly observed are:

- *a location’s authenticity* (social capabilities of a location, such as hospitality etc.)
- *the appeal or attraction of a place* (social appeal – architecture, folklore, crafts, historical and cultural events, environmental appeal – landscape, flora, fauna)
- *level of acceptable changes connected to tourism* (these are related primarily to the carrying capacity of environment – predominantly the number of visitors, as long-term impact of cultural tourism can have a devastating effect on landscape; a location’s infrastructure capacity is also important – conflicts between residents and visitors related to sources – primarily water and waste – may occur).

*Note: As regards the supply of tourism, it is always necessary to resolve traditional conflicts between private aims (rate of profit) and aims of the public sector (relation between economic efficiency and culture and monument protection).*

As we have mentioned in the introduction, the character of rural locations is a result of centuries-old interaction between people and the original environment. Some interactions have had a positive impact (creation of cultural landscape), while others have been reflected in malign changes to a landscape’s structure. That causes a loss of ecological and aesthetic richness, which results in a landscape’s uniformity and the loss of a location’s identity, which is in contradiction with cultural tourism’s demands for a place’s attractiveness.

We can see that cultural tourism is closely bound to a location – to living culture and landscape. Landscape can be described either through natural features only, such as climate, land relief, soil type, water system, flora and fauna – then we are speaking of natural landscape. Or, it can be characterized as a result of the impact and influence of human actions on natural landscape through activities like, for instance, agriculture, industrial activities, traffic, cultural influences, urbanization and colonization – in this case we are speaking of cultural landscape. The EnRISK Project [26] gives detailed description of cultural landscape. According to the author landscapes are spatially defined by the complex and region-specific interaction between natural processes and human activities resulting in landscape character; and they are functionally defined by the compatibility of social and economic demands with environmental thresholds, forming the basis for sustainability. The effects of socio-economic and environmental driving forces on landscape functions are strongly determined by landscape character.

In modern society, tourism (including cultural tourism) counterbalances the drabness of everyday life, which is why it focuses on all that is special, valuable, unique and beautiful. That, however, cannot be accomplished in a devastated and contaminated landscape which is a result of the current society’s “unhealthy and unfriendly” communication with environment. Tourism therefore requires the society’s communication with environment to be healthy and friendly. The result of such friendly communication is landscape that is characterized by sustainable features (see Fig. 1).

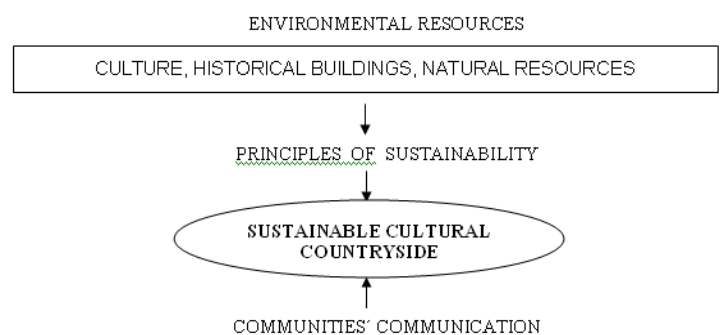


Fig. 1 Factors influencing sustainable cultural countryside

What should a “healthy and friendly” communication look like to ensure a landscape’s sustainability? Primarily it should be such communication as to deal not only with economic benefits (emphasis on profitability, rate of profit, etc.), but also take into account social and environmental aspects<sup>1</sup>.

Communication in general is a fundamental element of human interaction; it is a process of intercommunication among people. Social communication is one of the most important socio-psychological processes. It is a social activity which establishes some form of community and encourages healthy interpersonal relationships. Environmental communication, as an important part of environmental management, is communication about environment informing the interested parties of the environment’s environmental aspects. Cultural tourism – if conducted by responsible principles – may represent an example of activities that are characterized by a “friendly” attitude and “healthy” communication with the landscape [27].

#### *E. Segmentation of Cultural Tourism’s Market*

Generally, supply is caused by the interest of duly motivated clients. Some of the motives for participation in cultural tourism are: educational reasons, personal relationships to local historical heritage, interest in emotional experiences, desire for unique experiences and search for experience. From the point of view of marketing, the motivation factors of cultural tourism can be divided into the following categories: physical (sensory perception), cultural (curiosity, learning), social (contacts), spiritual (contact with nature, religious motives) [28].

The popularity of tourism aiming at visits of sights, museums, festivals, fetes and ethnographical peculiarities keeps increasing. It is therefore proper to ask who the clients of cultural tourism are. There are several approaches to the segmentation of cultural tourism’s market:

##### 1. General approach:

According to this approach, there are clients with high motivation (they consider culture very important), having knowledge and looking for deeper experience (they are willing to get to know other communities and their culture thoroughly). The primary aim of these clients is to see a historical monument, a historical scenery, visit a museum, a cultural event, or spend some time with native inhabitants (in the case of visits to exotic destinations). A different group of clients visit the cultural monuments, but they also wish to spend some time on non-cultural trips (shopping, for example). Another group comprises accidental clients, who only visit various cultural locations and events occasionally.

##### 2. Segmentation according to Richards:

Richards describes culturally profiled and culturally non-profiled clients of cultural tourism. For a culturally profiled

client, visiting cultural locations and monuments is the main aim of holiday, although he does not forego other sorts of entertainment. Culturally profiled clients are primarily educated people with high income, and according to Richards, they represent 10 % of all cultural tourism’s clients. They are important for determining future orientation of cultural tourism, and by principles of marketing they can be understood as pioneers and innovators. For a culturally non-profiled client, a visit to a cultural location is but one part of holiday, where entertainment, shopping, sightseeing tours and other interests dominate [29].

##### 3. Segmentation according to Bywater:

Bywater discerns between clients motivated by culture (this regards the so-called “high” culture, where a visit to a cultural location is the primary interest), clients inspired by culture (they visit mainly one cultural place – St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City, for instance, or a specific cultural event) and clients attracted by culture (who visit museums or exhibitions during their holiday). According to Bywater, the first group comprises approximately 5 % of clients, the second group 30 % of clients, and the third group 60 % of clients [30].

##### 4. Segmentation according to McKercher and Du Cros:

According to McKercher and Du Cros, there are two basic types of clients. A purposeful client, looking for deep cultural experience or experiences is led by cultural factors primarily. On the other hand, an incidental client is not influenced by cultural factors only, but includes “consumption” of culture (he or she visits museums and exhibitions during his holiday because it is “in”) in his consumer behaviour. Between these two poles there is a “sightseeing” client, who is led by cultural factors, but does not have deeper knowledge and experience, and a casual client [31].

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *A. Problems of the Usage of the Czech Cultural Potential*

The character of some regions (e.g. rural locations) is a result of centuries-old interactions between people and the original environment. Some of these interactions have had a positive effect (creation of cultural landscape), while others have resulted in “malign” changes to the structure of landscape. This primarily involves a loss of ecological and aesthetic richness, which leads to the uniformity of landscape and a loss of location’s identity.

This problem is typical of the Czech Republic, too, which is why the characteristics of the main factors of regional development in the Czech Republic, including the use of cultural potential and cultural tourism, are included in the “Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic for the period of 2007 – 2013”. Besides defining the notion of “culture” the document also handles culture infrastructure and cultural service, including the definition of the state’s role in determining the methods and forms of care of historical monuments [2].

The Czech Republic is rich in culturally-historical monuments. From the perspective of cultural tourism

<sup>1</sup> Initiatives encouraging sustainable development have support in an ethical approach promoted by the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, which recommends the top executives to always keep in view “people, planet, profit”, not only moneymaking.

attractions, the World Heritage Sites listed by the UNESCO are the most important. In our country, twelve historical monuments are inscribed on the UNESCO Heritage List – namely: historic centers of 1. Prague, 2. Český Krumlov, 3. Telč and 4. Kutná Hora; 5. the pilgrimage church of St. John of Nepomuk on Zelená Hora in Žďár nad Sázavou, 6. South Moravia's Lednice-Valtice Chateau and landscape area, 7. the Archbishop Chateau in Kroměříž with the Květná and Podzámecká Gardens, 8. South Bohemian village of Holašovice, 9. Litomyšl Castle, 10. the Baroque Holy Trinity Column in Olomouc, 11. Villa Tugendhat in Brno, 12. the Jewish Quarter and cemetery and St. Prokop Basilica in Třebíč (since 2003).

The Czech Republic is also rich in natural beauty. Within the boundaries of the Czech Republic, there are four national parks (Šumava, Krkonoše, Podyjí, České Švýcarsko), over 1200 protected areas, and a number of ponds, lakes and reservoirs. Landscape rich in forests and fields, with the possibility of running agricultural tourism, represents a third of the territory [32].

As the strategic document claims [2], the Czech Republic's wide and structured – as compared to the other countries – network of cultural facilities is a positive factor for the development of cultural tourism. On the other hand, both moral and technological obsolescence of a considerable part of cultural and leisure-time infrastructure represents a major problem. One-sided model of cultural infrastructure financing with a strong dependency on the state budget and unclear relations to individual regions' and municipalities' budgets is also a significant deficiency.

Along with the cultural infrastructure's obsolescence and unclear relations in its financing, the lack of appreciation for non-material culture (traditions, habits, traditional technologies, popular and regional gastronomy) represents another problem. These elements of non-material culture are, with several exceptions, insufficiently identified and animated. The continuity of identification with both material and spiritual cultural and natural environment is preserved thanks to numerous voluntary activities. In the Czech Republic, the activities of associations and voluntary activities in the fields of culture and art have a long tradition. The tradition of amateur theatres can be mentioned as an example. The focus of voluntary cultural activities is rather diverse. Mostly it derives from the region's traditions, from demographic structure, structure of employment, and other criteria. These traditional cultural activities significantly influence social solidarity and quality of life in individual regions. That is why they are financially supported from public budgets and openly promoted in the form of festivals, fairs, competitions, nature trails and tracks and so on.

Czech national cultural monuments are administered by the National Heritage Institute, some further central organs like Prague Castle Administration, for example, by municipalities and cities, universities, non-profit organizations, churches, entrepreneurs, and other subjects. The Czech historical

objects, along with the events held therein, have considerable importance for the development of tourism. However, out of the 40 000 cultural monuments in the Czech Republic, only 200 actively participate in tourism. The significant cultural potential is therefore wasted, as opposed to the advanced tourist destinations of Europe, or if used, the potential is in many cases insufficiently profitable [2].

#### *B. Tourism Products of Cultural Heritage as an Important Factor for the Regional Development in the Czech Republic*

A tourist product run in the Czech Republic as "Heritage Trails" since 1994 represents an exception in this regard. The "Trails" are an international marketing product, facilitating the promotion and development of tourism and Czech cultural heritage in selected regions. They are a network of selected locations, significant due to their natural, cultural and technical riches, folklore elements, and the quality of service and tourism facilities.

The running of "Trails" must fulfill criteria of sustainability, and the income from this product helps the local communities. Only thus it is possible to classify the "Trails" among the products that present the best of the Czech Republic's natural and cultural heritage, as programs for independent and responsible travelers, travelling on their own, but with a detailed itinerary. The "Trails of Heritage" as a long-term program (run by ECEAT, the European Centre for Ecology and Tourism, and independent Czech non-profit organization) "promote and develop a unique cultural heritage, including regional gastronomy, for the purposes of tourism" [33]. On ECEAT websites, a guide of good restaurants with an offer of Czech and Moravian regional gastronomy can be found. The best restaurants offering regional specialties made from quality local ingredients are recommended. One can choose the restaurants by region, or the place where the visitor is at the moment or is heading for, or by price. "Heritage Trails – the best between Vienna and Prague" are connected to the Czech program of Heritage Trails (more at [34]).

Along with the Heritage Trails as the most well-known cultural product, some further tourist products develop in the Czech Republic, such as wine trails, beer trails or horse trails, which also influence (directly or indirectly) the regional cultural identity and contribute to the location's development.

#### **Wine trails**

Winemaking has a long tradition in the Czech Republic. To support and develop "considerate" tourism, a project called Moravian Wine Trails has been created Trails (more at [35]). Unique in spread and mission, Moravian Wine Trails is a network of regional bicycle trails connected by rural landscape, folk tradition, and Moravian wine. Moravian Wine Trails project is a long-term programme of cultural and natural heritage protection and wine tourism development in South Moravia.

Thanks to the realization of this project, over one thousand kilometres of marked bicycle trails, leading primarily through vineyards, orchards and forests, have been created (see Fig. 2).

On wine trails, the cyclists can plan one-day, two-day or even fourteen-day stays full of active movement, pleasant experiences and learning about folklore, wine, and local monuments. The visitors are presented with a unique opportunity of finding out about the mysteries of grape procession and winemaking. They can discover a region where winemaking and wine have inspired folk songs, habits and traditions and where the work in vineyards still determines the local inhabitants' rhythm of life.

The Moravian Wine Trails project is supported by printed guides, which make travelling easier, guide the tourists to the most interesting wine locations, and offer visits to renowned wine cellars and wine events, along with other local attractions. Along with Prague-Vienna Greenways and Cracow-Moravia-Vienna Greenways, the Moravian Wine Trails are some of the most well-known Greenways Trails in Central Europe. They have been awarded a special prize from the European Greenways Association for Europe's best projects.



Fig. 2 Moravian vine trails<sup>2</sup>

### Beer trails

Besides wine, the Czech Republic is famous for its excellent beer. Flavoured, non-filtered and krausen beer produced by small local breweries has been gaining popularity of late. Various festivals are popular – the Festival of Beer Tastes, with a tasting of unconventional special beers, is well-known, for instance (more at [36]). Beer-tasting evenings have also been successful (more at [37]).

Along with the beer festivals, beer trails have also been developing. They are thematic trails, interconnecting individual breweries and their products with the aim of making tourists acquainted with regional breweries and promoting regional brands of beer. The tourists have an opportunity to visit traditional regional breweries, inherently bound to given regions, and at the same time the new small family breweries.

The first marked beer trails in the Czech Republic were created in 1995. Beer bicycle trails also started to emerge, intending to combine cycling with the possibility of refreshing

oneself with beer from a local brewery (more at [38]). However, an amendment to Road Act, enacted in 2000, which bans riding a bicycle under the influence of alcohol, caused the popular beer bicycle trails to lose much of their popularity. Some breweries have reacted by offering non-alcoholic beer, or accommodation, on the beer trails.

### Horse trails

At the same time, a growing interest in horse tourism and use of horse trails – the so-called hippo tourism – can be observed in the Czech Republic. A network of marked horse trails has been quickly spreading (more at [39]). Picketing lines, fences, restaurants, stabling, and accommodation at farmhouses, ranches, or boarding houses are available to horse riders. Along with horse trails, the “Horseshoes” projects are developing, supposed to support a hobby – collecting tourist marks with horseshoes on them. At the same time, “Horseshoes” are intended to support entrepreneurs who are involved in horse business, running ranches, stables, rider clubs, western cities and other businesses suitable for hippo tourism.

## V. CONCLUSION

The cultural heritage is an important factor influencing the local and regional identity. At the same time, it represents one of a set of important tools for a sustainable development of Czech regions [40]. Despite this importance, the activation of cultural values and their involvement in economic life of underdeveloped country regions still represents a neglected area of economic growth in the Czech Republic, especially so when it comes to the use of cultural potential in the area of a dynamically developing economic segment like cultural tourism. Besides the above mentioned problems with obsolescence of cultural infrastructure and its unclear financing, the unfavorable state of affairs is also due to the fact that effective use of cultural heritage is not only dependent on the development of transport and on the state of technical and informational infrastructure, but also on the correspondent level of human resources including the ability to animate cultural elements.

In this respect it is also important to realize that the perception of cultural and natural values is, besides activating the economic potential, at the same time a tool for intercepting a long-term process of devastation of culture as such. The effort to preserve cultural traditions in national, regional and local scale (authenticity of cultural values, as opposed to consumption of mass culture) should therefore be the crucial element of a state's culture politics. The state's other task is to cultivate citizens and lead them to create a positive attitude toward cultural values. Through cultural tourism, the cultural assets can become a part of the nation's value preferences.

From what we have reasoned so far one could come to the conclusion that cultural tourism only brings positive consequences both for the development of the region, and for the visitors and residents. If one examines this more thoroughly, risks and negative impact of cultural tourism can

<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.stezky.cz/Uvod.aspx>

be found. Socio-cultural impact of tourism on host communities and their natural and social environment does not manifest so clearly and immediately, though, and it is more difficult to identify and measure. Publicity in the media is also not as considerable as with the impact on natural environment. In the spirit of sustainability, a cultural monument, natural scenery, folklore event or religious celebration should keep their original distinctive atmosphere. On the other hand, it would be a shame to create some sort of a secret and hidden "conserve" of the past from them.

To make cultural objects available, to use them appropriately and promote them should not only be a task for curators, owners, or entrepreneurs in tourism. However, the field of culture goes beyond the frame of competences and responsibility of ministries or other authorities. In the Czech Republic, the service of local and regional culture is existentially dependent on finance from public budgets. What with the current deficit budget, it is rather difficult to finance the cultural service and make cultural values available to the general public. It is therefore a task for the authorities to effectively decide about the allocation of public finances and make culture and art available to all who are interested in them, and see how this is subsequently positively reflected in the development of the given area.

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