

# Role of tourism in the development of peripheral countryside. Case studies of Eastern Moravia and Romanian Banat

Milada ŠTASTNÁ<sup>1</sup>, Antonín VAISHAR<sup>1,\*</sup>, Mária PÁKOZDIOVÁ<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Agronomy, Department of Applied and Landscape Ecology, Mendel University in Brno, Zemědělská 1, 61300 Brno, Czech Republic

\* Corresponding author, [antonin.vaishar@mendelu.cz](mailto:antonin.vaishar@mendelu.cz)

Received on <16-04-2015>, reviewed on <25-05-2015>, accepted on <30-06-2015>

## Abstract

As the local agriculture in the era of globalization is often no more competitive, it cannot serve as the main source of local population's income. A relatively intact nature of peripheral regions together with other attractions creates a suitable basis for tourism, which can partly substitute agriculture and bring some capital for local development in rural areas. However, in the Central and Eastern Europe the development of tourism meets serious limits, such as seasonality, insufficient infrastructure, lower quality of human capital, lack of investments etc. The situation is documented on the cases of Eastern Moravia (Bojkovice micro-region) and Czech villages in Romanian Banat. Conditions for tourism development in rural periphery are discussed.

**Keywords:** *tourism, periphery, rural development, Moravia, Banat*

## Rezumat. Rolul turismului în dezvoltarea spațiului rural periferic. Studiu de caz: Estul Moraviei și Banatul Românesc

Întrucât de cele mai multe ori agricultura locală în era globalizării nu mai este competitivă, această activitate nu mai poate fi principala sursă de venit pentru populația locală. Natura relativ intactă a regiunilor periferice, precum și alte atracții reprezintă premise favorabile pentru dezvoltarea turismului, care poate substitui parțial agricultura și aduce capital pentru dezvoltare locală în mediul rural. Totuși, în Europa Centrală și de Est, există bariere semnificative pentru dezvoltarea turismului, legate de sezonalitate, infrastructură deficitară, calitate redusă a capitalului uman, lipsa investițiilor etc. Această situație este dezbătută analizând cazul Moraviei de Est (micro-regiunea Bojkovice) și satele de cehi din Banatul Românesc. Sunt analizate condițiile pentru dezvoltarea turismului într-o zonă rurală periferică.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *turism, periferie, dezvoltare rurală, Moravia, Banat*

## Introduction

Peripheral countryside is usually situated in mountain, worse accessible positions with not advantageous conditions for intensive agriculture, often in the borderland. Small and very small villages prevail in the settlement structure. Socially, the periphery is characterized by population ageing, by lower education level (due to the emigration of young and qualified people) as a rule. Its economy suffers from the lack of investments. Despite of not suitable agricultural conditions, over average employment in this branch is often shown. Industrial branches do not belong to the innovative ones – if there are any. Social services (mostly public as education, health and social care and administration) form the main part of the tertiary sector. On the other side, the nature of peripheral regions is often relatively less affected by human activities.

What remains under such conditions? Various regional agencies and experts recommend a development of tourism using local natural potentials. Truly, it seems that there is hardly any other branch which could be prospective in peripheral regions. In fact, the possibilities of tourism development in peripheries are also limited.

Following obstacles can be named: seasonality, insufficient infrastructure, lower level of general services in individual destinations, lack of local money to be invested into tourism services, lower preparedness of local people to make business in tourism, insufficient collaboration of local actors in tourism.

Nevertheless, tourism is one of economic branches which should be developed in peripheral rural areas. It can bring some jobs and (small) economic benefits but it plays also an important social role: it keeps the respective rural territory in minds of public, protects from the isolation, ensures contacts between local people and tourists etc. The paper warns from too optimistic imaginations connected to the tourism development in peripheral areas. Two case study areas were chosen: South-eastern Moravia on the turn of Moravian Wallachia and Moravian Slovakia (micro-region of Bojkovice) in the Czech Republic and Romanian Banat (Czech villages among Romanian and Serbian settlements in the Danube Gorges - Clisura Dunării) in Romania.

## Tourism and periphery

Tourism is defined as activities of people travelling to and living in places out of their usual

milieu for a time shorter than one whole year with the aim of spending the free time and/or business trips (United Nations World Tourism Organization). The tourism is an important part of economy because it brings financial sources not only from domestic but also from foreign subjects. Some other branches are connected with the tourism: gastronomy, accommodation, retail, culture, sport, transport, information, guide and logistic services, advertising.

There are more definitions of periphery. In geography, the periphery is perceived as a result of the relation core – periphery. As such, the periphery is a result of objective economic and geographical processes. Peripheries (and cores) exist on all the levels of territorial organization. We speak about the micro-regional level because the rural periphery should not include regional centres. According to Liu & Wall (2006), tourism development in rural peripheral communities often starts with the recognition of its potential as an attractive environment (Banki and Ismail, 2015).

At the dawn of a new millennium, Europe's rural areas are confronted with the task of re-inventing themselves (Labrianidis, 2004). Originally dominant agriculture and forestry retreat in favour of non-productive services connected with rapid development of information and communication technologies among others. They become to be multifunctional. At the same time, rural areas increasingly differentiate within general widening the gap between rich and poor in the present period of capitalist development. Periphery in particular has to look for new activities. Should tourism be one of such activities?

Tourism is widely seen as being of considerable economic and social benefit to rural areas through the income and infrastructural developments it may bring to marginal and less economically developed regions (Hall, 2005). In so many Europe's rural areas, tourism is seen as the main source of "economic salvation" but the decision to put tourism center-stage in a local development program is often based more on hunch and a sense of what else can we do than upon firm analysis (Moseley, 2003).

Present and future development of tourism is connected to some of the main social trends in developed countries, namely with the general shift of the activities from productive to unproductive branches and with the consumerist oriented postmodern society. Peripheral areas are often characterized with relatively less touched nature as a consequence of insufficient economic development in the past. Seemingly, tourism could be the right branch for regional development in many peripheral micro-regions. But is it true also in reality?

The tourism development meets some serious obstacles in the periphery. Firstly, tourism is

sensitive both to objective and subjective influences. Weather conditions in relation to expressive seasonality belong among the first group of problems. Tourist destinations are also a subject to fashion impacted by media. Social unrest not only directly in the region but also in its vicinity could hamper the influx of tourists (see e.g. problems of successor states of Yugoslavia in the 1990s).

Insufficient tourist infrastructure is another problem of peripheral areas. It is not only direct infrastructure (accommodation and gastronomic facilities) but general infrastructure of the regions (quality of roads, retail facilities, information services, accompanying equipment's like sport facilities, cultural and sport institutions etc.). Regarding the weather conditionality, some substitution for the case of bad weather is necessary to be available. There is usually a lack of local investments to overcome such problem in a short time. If the financial sources come from the outside, also benefits are moving out.

Human potential belongs to the main problems in peripheral micro-regions. The following problems are seen in this field: lower level of formal education, prevailing skills for productive branches and employment psychology in some cases. The people often learn to possess individual activities but they are not familiar with supplementary activities like marketing or advertising. These shortages are sometimes substituted by an outstanding hospitality.

Who are usual consumers of commercial tourism in peripheral regions? The rich tourists (who could bring the highest profit) usually pass the periphery because of an insufficient infrastructure. Peripheral regions are preferred by people from (lower) middle classes, including seniors who are looking for natural beauties and quiet milieu. Tourists interested in exploring nature (both professionals and nature lovers) form the second group of tourists in the periphery. This group does not see the lack of infrastructure as disadvantage because it does not harm the nature so much.

What are then the main possibilities to bring money to peripheral regions? It has hardly any financial effect to bring tourist, who are accommodated in a regional centre outside of the respective peripheral area only to see natural or architectural beauties. On the contrary, to let tourists be accommodated in the area brings more money for the micro-region. Moreover, people who spend the night in the territory usually spend also some money in local shops or services. For this reason, it is recommended to have a possibility to accommodate at least 40 – 50 people (one bus capacity) which is many times a problem. Also other entrepreneurs in the territory should be interested and prepared for the potential visitors. It could be sometimes a problem due to the capacity of services

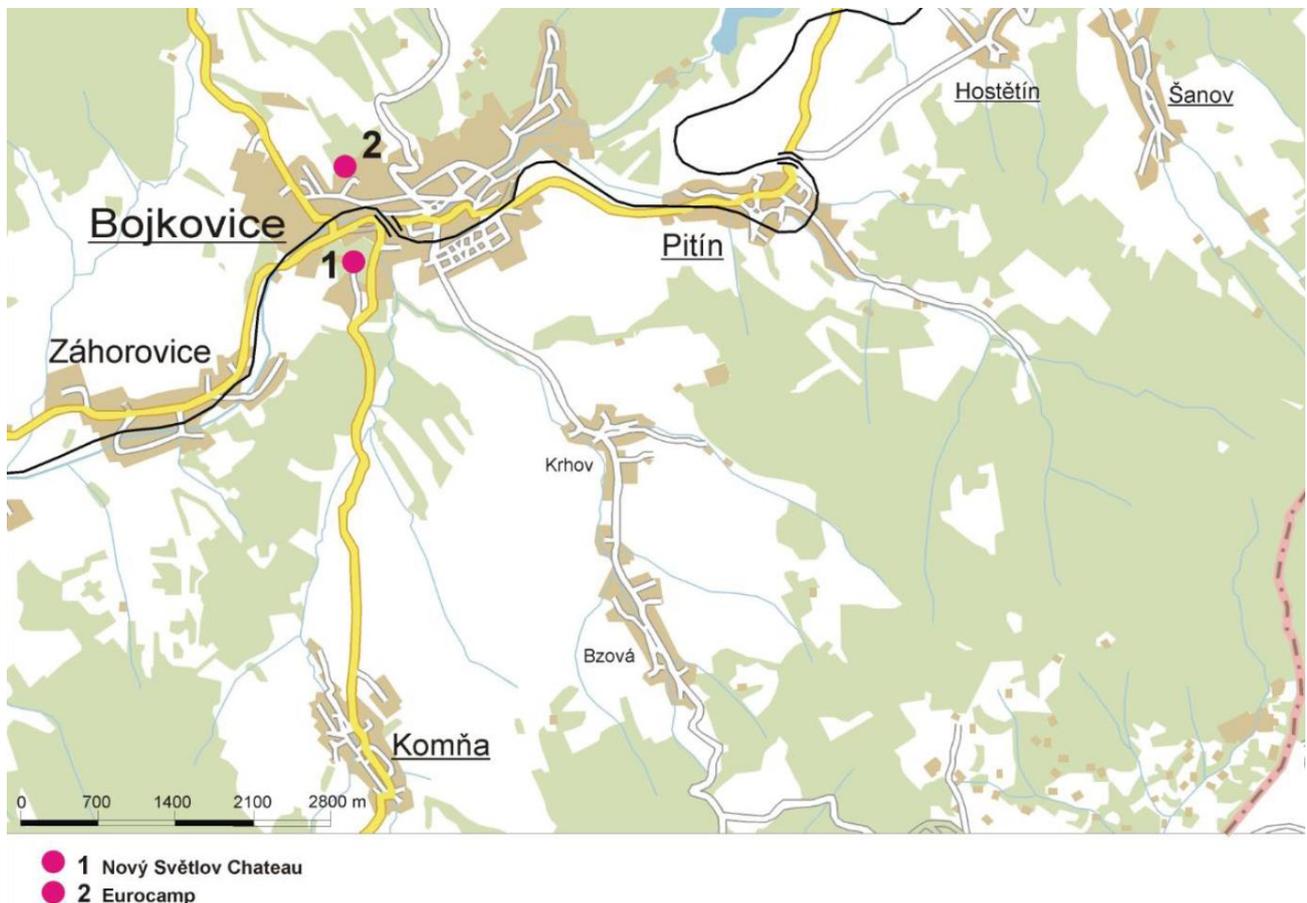
which usually reflects the demand of local population.

The study focused on particular problems of tourism development in two peripheral micro-regions in two post-socialist countries that accessed European Union after the turn of their political regimes. The aim of the paper is to discuss the problems and propose suitable solutions for tourism development in the periphery.

The methodology of the paper consists in critical evaluation of the selected cases, the best practices and the most problematic activities. The evaluation is based on hard (statistical) data, sociological methods (mostly interviews) and literature research. Finally, an attempt to generalize the possibilities of tourism development in peripheral micro-regions is done.

## Case study Eastern Moravia

Eastern Moravia region in the Czech Republic is represented by Bojkovice micro-region. The territory is situated on the Czech-Slovak border. The border which had been a borderline between the Czech kingdom and Hungary for a thousand of years was an internal border within former Czechoslovakia in 1918 – 1938 and 1945 – 1993. Its turn into standard European border has changed the main orientation of the transport directions from the West – East to the North – South and the territory became substantially peripheral. The micro-region falls within the Uherské Hradiště district and Zlínský region. Uherský Brod town ensures some urban services which are not at disposal in Bojkovice. The largest Moravian spa - Luhačovice is the well-known place in the surroundings (fig. 1).



**Fig. 1: The Bojkovice micro-region (Drawn by J. Pokorná)**

The micro-region is distanced from the main transport junctions and high-speed communications. It is situated on the 2nd class road No. 495 with the traffic of about 2,000 vehicles per day and on the regional railway Brno – Vlára pass (since 1888) which lost much of its importance after the division of former Czechoslovakia in 1993. Brno city is distanced 110 km and aprox. 1.5 hour by car. Brno – Tuřany is the closest international airport;

however Vienna – Schwechat airport ensures the connection with the most important European destinations. Zlín city - the own regional centre is distanced 40 km or 46 minutes by car along the 2nd class road No. 493.

The micro-region consists of Bojkovice small town (population 4,396) and 10 villages, where three of them are forming an administrative parts of the town. Total population number (if not stated

otherwise, the population data for Czech Republic relate to the 2011 population census) of the micro-region is 8,788. The economy was originally based on the extensive agriculture, forestry, handicrafts. The men of the area were engaged in a special branch – castrating of animals. They commuted on the whole territory of the Austro-Hungarian empire and neighbouring countries with this profession every summer. Armament industry was found in Bojkovice in the period of the endangering of Czechoslovakia in 1936. ZEVETA Bojkovice Weapon factory is the largest factory in the area also at the present time. There is also an ecclesiastic secondary school in the town (fig. 2).



**Fig. 2: The main street in Bojkovice has a rural character (Photo author)**

The communes join with the Association of Communes Bojkovsko. The Association is a member of Local Action Group (LAG) Bojkovsko. The LAG is oriented to support agriculture and forestry sectors. It is a tool to help on economic stability and landscape maintenance, on the protection and use of the natural potential, on the tourism development and on the human development, especially increasing the education level of population. The territory also falls within the Bílé / Biele Karpaty Czech – Slovak euro region.

A part of the territory is protected by law as Bílé Karpaty Protected Landscape Area (White Carpathian Mts.) since 1980. The area was classified as the UNESCO biosphere reserves in 1996. The mountain range (dividing Moravia and Slovakia) reaches 970 m above the sea level (Mt. of Velká Javořina). Flowery Carpathian meadows (especially orchids), oak forests and small villages are typical for the landscape. Protected landscape area has its counterpart also at the Slovak territory.

The village and community of Hostětín (population 236) are known as a centre of ecological education in the facility of the Veronica Ecological Institute. The region is also known as a territory where the bishop of Unity of Brethren - Jan Ámos Komenský (1592 – 1670), world-known by his progressive opinions in the sphere of teaching, was born. Komňa (population 540) is one of his possible birthplaces.

The territory of the micro-region disposes a nice and valuable landscape. Also several destinations of a high historical significance connected mostly with the former defences of the Hungarian frontier are present in the territory. However, the infrastructure, tourist services and services in general are relatively poor there.

### **Nový Světlov Chateau Case**

The original castle built in 1480 situated above Bojkovice was completely reconstructed in the style of Tudor Gothic in 1856. It was owned by Rolný family - well known entrepreneur in the clothing industry till 1946. After 1989, the chateau was returned in the restitution to the family. The owner reconstructed the building into a relatively luxury hotel with related equipment (tennis courts, riding school etc.). Conference tourism was one of his aims. Unfortunately the project was not successful and the hotel ended in the bankruptcy. Later on it was purchased by another private firm from Prague. Finally, Public Service Company was found in 2007 as the joint venture of the private owner and the town of Bojkovice. This case of public – private – partnership functions as a hotel, restaurant (but also as a museum till 2008), cultural centre and the Ceremonial Hall for the town. At the present time, the double room costs CZK 1,500 (cca EUR 60). The capacity of the hotel performs 72 beds (fig. 3).



**Fig.3: Nový Světlov chateau (Photo author)**

The question is why the original idea of the luxury hotel was not successful. Not taking into account particular ways of economy of the owner, we can notice social and geographical reasons. The geographical position is the first problem. The place which is so distanced from international airports, motorways and high-speed railways cannot be a destination for the conference tourism, neither for rich holiday guests. General level of services and absence of complementary activities in the micro-region is the second reason. It is not enough to have the first-class hotel. Another question is what the guests would do in the micro-region, if there is no complementary attraction. They will not be motivated to come. Luhačovice Spa could be considered as the only attraction in this micro

region; however the spa has its own accommodation possibilities.

The particular conclusion is that the luxury hotel is an activity which is not appropriate for the conditions of the peripheral countryside. Holiday resorts for rich people form a world-wide network and it is very difficult to penetrate into it, especially in peripheral areas.

### ***Eurocamp Case***

Euro camping Bojkovice is another accommodation possibility in the micro-region. Its capacity is 97 beds in bungalows (besides of places for tents and trailers). The area also contains a swimming pool. The camping is sought by Dutch tourists (the webpage of the facility is in Czech, English, Dutch and Danish; the fact defines the range of visitors). Of course, the operation is limited from April to September. The camp management prepares open-air cultural and sport programs. The camping is a prosperous enterprise.

The question is what is the competitive advantage of the camping compared to the luxury hotel? It is the price of the stay: indeed but not only. The camping is suitably directed to the visitors from European countries with very flat and monotonous landscape (the Netherlands and Denmark). The landscape of White Carpathian Mountains offers undulating relief with many opportunities of biking, hiking, cognition of different landscapes to compare it with their home countries. The visitors are mobile using their own transport sources. They are able to visit also more distanced destination on both sides of the state border. The peripherality of the region could be then an advantage because it means a relaxation from the dense populated cities in Western Europe. The phenomenon of Dutch tourists in the Czech milieu was emphasized by Horáková (2013) who described the creation of Dutch recreational villages in the Czech Republic.

### ***Hostětín ecological village***

The micro-region contains also a very special attraction. Veronica Ecological Institute has chosen for its location the small village of Hostětín. It built an education centre there with the capacity of 25 beds, 50 seats for meetings/educational activities or 100 places for social events. The Centre offers a tour through ecological projects like a passive house, biomass heating, reed-bed sewage, apple juice plant, fruit drying kiln etc. The food is mostly based on local bio-products and fair-trade products.

The Centre became a destination for a very special kind of tourism. It is visited by ecologists, both professionals and amateurs and also school excursions and similar events. Charles, prince of Wales was the most prominent visitor of the place

during his stay in the Czech Republic in 2010. The Centre is used for workshops, seminars and conferences but also as a base for ecological research in the territory of the White Carpathian Mts. Participants in such activities do not expect any special services in the micro-region as they accept the protected landscape and nature as an unrepeatable attraction for themselves.

Of course, this example is unique in the region. As a matter of fact, its prosperity is based on this uniqueness which is the result of landscape beauties, suitable idea and ability to realize it. However, such an activity could arise also in other regions with special quality of landscape.

It is necessary to ask whether it would be also possible to use the memory of famous J. A. Komenský to create a special kind of tourism development in the micro-region. The Unity of Brethren has been transformed into Moravian Church settled in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The church has more than 800,000 members world-wide and operates Moravian College (founded in Bethlehem 1742). About 1,500 students of the bachelor level study in the college. Biology and environmental sciences are among the most popular subjects there. Both the church and the college report to the legacy of J. A. Komenský. Could it be possible to connect Moravian College, the Komenský memory and the Ecological Centre Veronica? This might be a challenge for local organizers.

### ***General evaluation***

Špirit (2008) carried out a questionnaire in the Bojkovice area few years ago. 345 respondents were Czech, 40 Slovak and 39 Dutch. He found that Bojkovice area is the main destination for 60% of tourists, the rest of people visit the town however, staying in other places (mostly Luhačovice spa and Brumov castle). More than 60% of the visitors are not accommodated in the micro-region; on the contrary, 25% of them spend more than three nights here. The Eurocamping is the most frequent accommodation service for the tourists, followed by the Nový Světlov hotel and Luhačovice spa. It is a good result as it shows that Bojkovice has its group of regular customers who are accommodated here.

The case of Bojkovice micro-region illustrates the example where, despite the less developed infrastructure, it is possible to find some options and motivations for the tourism development. It usually covers connection of suitable local attractions which can be either general (like relatively less intact and protected nature) or quite unique (like special architectural, historical or cultural monuments or traditions) with creative people and their ideas. It is hardly possible to provide any general instruction how to develop the tourism in the periphery,

however the best practices introduced above might inspire people also in other/similar regions.

### Case study: Romanian Banat

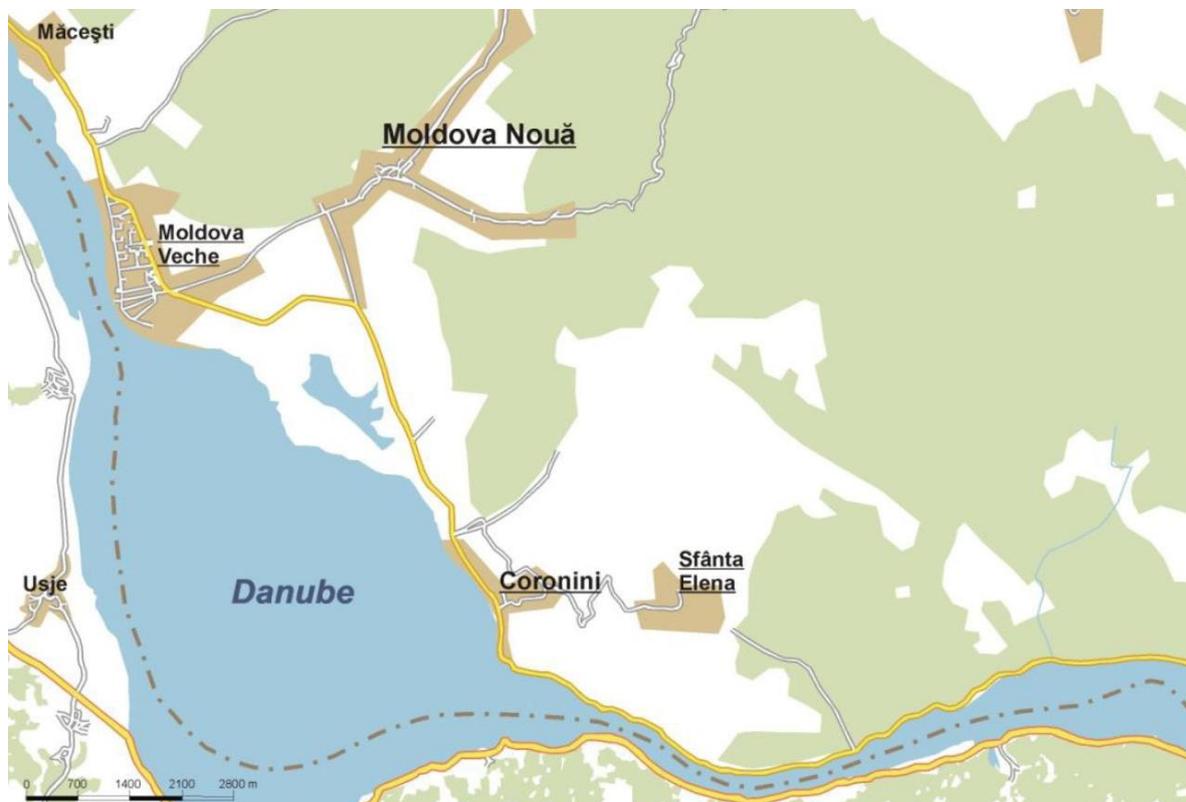
Czech villages in the Danube Clisura territory of the Romanian micro-region are the second subject of our study. The centre of the micro-region is represented by a small town Moldova Nouă, an important river port in the past. The territory is situated on the Romanian-Serbian border by a deep canyon of the Danube (Fig. 4). A part of the micro-region is situated in Valea Mare natural reserve and Iron Gates natural park (Klvač et al., 2011).

The micro-region belongs to the Caraș-Severin county. The county belonged economically to the national average in 2000; its value of the composite index of disparities was 0.92 in 2000. However, the county has descended during the time as the same indicator shows 0.82 in 2005 due to the high unemployment evoked by the economic shakeout (Goschin et al., 2008).

Czech villages were established in 1820s, when the area was colonized by inhabitants from Bohemia. By that time, the area was a military border of the Habsburg monarchy. The local communities had constituted themselves till the half of the 19th century. They have consequently evolved in a relative isolation from their Romanian

surrounding given both a physical (big distances) and cultural barrier. Six of them remain till nowadays, namely Sfanta Elena, Gârnic, Ravensca, Bigăr, Eibenthal and Șumița.

This area went through very dynamic changes during the last 20 years, which brought a re-evaluation of life attitudes and a local communities comparing to schemes which have been formed over more than 200 years. Agriculture was the most important activity of inhabitants except profitable copper mining has been totally stopped years ago, leading to a dramatic unemployment of the whole area. After the collapse of the mining industry, agriculture has become the main activity of the local population. It is still being performed in a traditional, self-supplying, hard-working way, which is equal to the level of agriculture performed one hundred years ago, without hard machinery and mostly with manual work. Modernization broke into the life of local population in a very significant way and rather a fascination by the technical conveniences and possibilities of modern life without being aware of the risks linked to it as it can be observed. The self-sufficient and neighbouring landscape closely connected community has become increasingly dependent on its surrounding (urban) environment. Here is a potential to establish the traditional relations.



**Fig. 4: Romanian Banat – the area under study (Drawn by J. Pokorná)**

The life as such is hard in this area, however due to the lack of modern technologies it is environmentally friendly place recently. Nevertheless, the modernization dramatically stroke into Banat region after the end of the Ceausescu communist regime in 1989. Within the context of political changes and travel possibilities, people from the Czech Republic have rediscovered their countrymen in Romania and a rather busy movement has been developed there as a manifestation of nostalgic tourism. Nostalgic tourism is a segment of tourist market within which the consumers are looking for their own ancestral roots (Russell, 2008). In this special case, we can speak about a both-sided nostalgic tourism. Czechs from Banat visit the homeland of their families (mainly western and central Bohemia), whereas Czechs from the Czech Republic visit Banat to find out and experience the original lifestyle. It is also necessary to take into account that nostalgic tourism relates to the identity of place (Chan, 2010). It seems that both aspects (looking for roots and maintenance of the identity) can be partly kept also under rather modern way of life in the future. It is the question of keeping traditions, establishment of museums of various types etc. Some natives from the Czech villages in Banat make efforts in this sense, but unfortunately the young population mostly turns to seemingly more favourable globalized world.

At the same time, a wave of strong migration from Banat villages to the Czech Republic started. Mostly young people re-emigrated to former Czechoslovakia in 1991 and 1992 and depopulation of these villages has continued. The main reason for leaving the place was the lack of job opportunities in the surrounding area. The depopulation has had a significant impact not only on the local society, but on the local landscape as well. The landscape character is continuously, but dramatically changing. Moreover, the entrance into EU in 2007 helped with an additional opening of Romania to the world.

The tourism in that area is mainly focused on visits of villages in Banat region by Czech tourists who live in families and sometimes help relatives in house and with field work (agritourism). Individual villages are connected with tourist trails marked in the Czech style.

Approximately 6,000 Czech tourists per year come to the Banat region. An important fact is that the area has got a big potential for tourism development, which is seen in the combination of natural, balneological, religious and cultural attractive features and which is not sufficiently used yet (Bako and Varvari, 2010). Sfânta Elena and Gârnic Villages were chosen and analyzed in detail. These villages are located in hilly landscape (600 – 800 m above the sea level) in karst relief near the

Danube River.

### **Sfânta Elena case**

Sfânta Elena (Fig. 5) has been chosen because of its best accessibility, the biggest openness to its surrounding and development tendencies, which have always been significantly reflected there. Together with Gârnic, both are the most visited Czech villages in the Romanian Banat region.



**Fig. 5: Sfânta Elena (Photo author)**

The landscape in Sfânta Elena surroundings is a great example of a cultural one, created by humans, with a high share of scattered vegetation, but typical fields creating a colourful mosaic, which belongs to the tourist attractions. The mosaic was developed as a result of the hard work of local people, who once had to deforest large areas and carried on a small-scale farming on the deforested soil.

Sfânta Elena is not an independent administrative unit. It is under the administration of neighbouring Romanian municipality called Coronini. The number of permanent inhabitants of Sfanta Elena is 540. The village is suffering from re-emigration, mostly by young people moving to the Czech Republic and this is seen as a threat leading to the abolishment in case all of them would decide to leave.

Arriving Czech tourists bring information about a way of life in the Czech Republic into Sfanta Elena and they clearly demonstrate a life style that is in the most cases in conflict with the traditional world of the local community. The developing tourism in the Czech villages is closely associated with the question of money which is the most important and sometimes the only income of the local people. According to the statements of the local community members, the cash flow, especially from the tourism, does not bring only the income for them, but also social isolation. People envy each other bigger property and social stratification as well (Pákozdióvá et.al, 2012).

Regarding the development, the Enel Green Power Romania Company started its activities with the entrance of Romania into EU. Twenty-one wind power plants were build-up at the turn of the years 2011/2012 which can be described as one of the

distinct manifestations of globalization tendencies in the village (Št'astná et al. 2011). The construction is not only a huge intervention in the landscape (with its impacts both on landscape character and nature), but in the lives of local people as well. Wind power plants represent a clear source of energy, but on the other hand, the company acts from a strong position and takes advantage of the simplicity of local people, who did not know what the building up of wind turbines in their close surroundings will bring. In addition, there is a big risk that these wind power plants, which stand around the village and can be seen almost from every corner of the village, will negatively influence the developing potential of tourism and intact landscape of the Iron Gate Nature Park and the protected areas of NATURA 2000 scheme (Pákozdiová et al., 2012). Concerning the fact that wind power plants are currently on a trial run, it is not clear yet, what this massive change will bring next and if it will cost the decline of the tourism potential or directly the quality of life of the local population. Their attitude towards the wind power plants is ambivalent, they perceive them through the perspective of the Czech tourists and they consider the loss of their income from the tourism as the biggest risk (Pákozdiová, 2012) (fig. 6).



**Fig. 6: Wind turbines over Sf. Elena (Photo author)**

### **Gârnic case**

Gârnic is the only Czech village which has got its own municipal office that other Czech villages do not have. The municipality is situated in Locva Mountains having 380 inhabitants in 2007. Iordache (2007) states the following main tourist attractions: Dolinas and Dolina valleys on the Calcareous plateau, Karst valleys, Gorges of Tisa, caves, Valea Mare botanical reserve, mill system on the Gramenska river, national costumes, traditional customs and way of life, enduro tourism (a form of off-road motorcycle sport), visited by Czech and German tourists 6 to 8,000 per year, agritourism. The case shows that not only the traditional way of life, customs and costumes, but also other sorts of tourism are developed in the area of Gârnic, which in fact brings some hope in the diversification of tourism motivations and thus not such big dependence on nostalgic tourism.

Gârnic and Sfânta Elena have much in common. Most of the demographic, natural, cultural and other characteristics of Gârnic are almost the same as in Sfânta Elena case. The commune is also suffering from re-emigration of mostly young people to the Czech Republic. Even the problem of wind power plants is similar with a small difference. In Gârnic only the preparations for building-up a wind park consisting of 33 wind turbines proceed these days. This brings the same threat for local population and natural qualities of the area as in the Sfânta Elena case.

### **General evaluation**

The example of Czech villages in Romanian Banat shows a vicious circle. Original nostalgic tourists were attracted by romantic life of local people, their hospitality and the landscape mosaic reflecting the conditions in the Czech Republic approx. 200 years ago. The tourist development brought many impulses for change into the Czech villages. Money from the tourists enables improvement of the houses and the household equipment; however renovated houses are then less attractive for nostalgic tourists. Money brought also deterioration of relations among people. Moreover, the Czechs from Bohemia and Moravia provided know-how of modern life style and/or moving of young inhabitants to the Czech Republic. The rural idyll starts to disappear; the villages embark on depopulation process. Neither the wind turbines support the nostalgia.

The question is whether the villages are able to reorient themselves from the nostalgic tourism to general rural tourism? Possibilities can be seen mainly in a landscape of a high quality and protected natural areas. Agritourism is the main suitable and advisable form of tourism in the territory because it is the only one that could provide preservation of natural qualities, maintenance of traditions in combination with a slight growth of the quality of life. On the other side, the infrastructure in the Romanian Banat is insufficiently developed. It is possible to say that the villages under study are half-way between nostalgic general rural tourism and between traditional way of life and modern tourist facilities. There is a potential that not only the territory but also the tourist demand will change. Originally nostalgic tourists could use their experiences and knowledge of the territory to attract also other visitors to the area with new challenges: relatively quiet milieu, pleasant landscape and reasonable quality of accommodation and services. The importance of tourism product quality and tourist satisfaction is clearly pointed out and well discussed in Johann and Anastassova (2014).

Regarding the Moravian case study area, who should be the tourist visiting the Czech villages in Romania Banat in the next future? Similarly as in the

Moravian case, rich tourists are not expected. Nostalgic tourists will apparently reduce the intensity of their visits in connection with the changing character of individual localities (if they will not find new friends there). Soft tourism will keep developing but not too quickly (especially due to missing infrastructure).

On the other side, soft tourist representatives like students or nature lovers could find the area still a very interesting one. Such tourists do not expect high-standard infrastructure. The wind-turbines will not disturb them; they even could consider the turbines as a technical attraction. In our opinion, there is a chance to take the idea from Moravian Hostětín and to establish an ecological centre together with research and conference base there with necessary collaboration of Romanian scientists and ecological NGOs.

Classical farm tourism (Potočník-Slavič and Schmitz, 2013) could substitute an existing nostalgic tourism in the Romanian case unlike the Czech case where family farms are very rare.

The character of the landscape and peripheral position provides also other tourist possibilities like horse-riding, care farming, cycling development etc. Nevertheless, adequate infrastructure for tourists is necessary as well as a connection with the past (e.g. museums). Such activities could be hardly done by local individuals. This is a space to create a kind of micro-regional developing agency which would organize the collaboration among individual entrepreneurs.

## **Discussion**

To discuss problems and suitable management for tourism development in the rural periphery, we result from the information obtained in the case study areas. It shows that tourism can significantly contribute to the rural development. On the other side, the periphery can hardly survive from tourism only. Also productive branches (agriculture, forestry, manufacturing), and non-tourist services are playing important role, so the optimum solution is to connect the mentioned activities with tourism.

Peripheral areas have some common attractions for tourists as less affected nature, not so much commercially oriented inhabitants, space etc. The role of the environment as an attractiveness for tourist destination has been analysed e.g. by Mihelič (2013) on the case of Slovenia. There are also common disadvantages like distance from regional centres, bad quality roads, insufficient infrastructure, and lack of financial sources to invest. However, almost each of peripheral micro-regions has some individual attraction or beauty to be used for its visibility. In other cases, the original idea could be very interesting. (In such cases the development is

based on the fact that the specific territory is the only one in a wide area which implements the specific idea). Of course, the rurality itself can be an attraction – often connected with the green lifestyle (Crouch, 2006). According to the above mentioned statements, tourism certainly belongs to prospective branches in the periphery; however, it is necessary to systematically develop such a latent potential. To do so, Hernández-Maestro and González-Benito (2014) emphasize three factors: product, knowledge and promotional tools.

The decision is the first phase. It should come out of the knowledge from the territory together with an idea or vision. It is also necessary to take into account all the factors which should impact on the activity chosen in near and distant future. Professional service should be available. Based on these two factors, it is necessary to decide which form of tourism and for which tourists it should be developed. Proper strategy for suitable tourism development should be selected taking into consideration natural, geographical and human conditions of the area. According to the basic decision, specific establishment of tourist services should be planned.

To increase financial sources leading to the tourism development is the next step. Local micro-regions and their inhabitants suffer from the lack of free financial sources. One option might be to ask for a subsidy from national or European programs, which usually is not a big problem and applicants mainly obtain the subsidy. Real difficulties will arise with operational money. The investment has to be sustainable after the completion of the project, which is not always easy. To attract foreign investors is the second option. The problem here is the fact that the owner is living mainly in a city or abroad and is not very interested in the development of the relevant territory. Moreover, the biggest part of the benefit from his/her activities in such cases leaves the micro-region, in spite of the micro-regions obligation to establish the conditions for the operation of such business e.g. maintaining roads or remove garbage.

The best way in such area is public – private partnership. It will provide certainty that the tourist facilities will serve also for local needs, if it is set up properly. Private investor should rely on trustworthy partner in the area. It is possible to combine public and private funds within various micro-regional association or local action groups. Such associations are also suitable to provide advertisement of the local products of the territory.

To enforce and implement the investment is the main task after gaining money. It means to convince the residents to contribute to the development idea. More obstacles start rising here: At first, many people in peripheral micro-regions often live from social benefits, including old age pension. Some of them moved to the periphery within naturbanization

(naturanization is a not economically motivated process within which people move to some territories because of the closeness of nature and the life style) looking for tranquillity. This group of people is usually not interested in any economic development of the territory. Other reason can be environmentalists concern of negative impacts to the nature. Here it is important to establish active communication and community planning to reach the success.

On the other side, people ready to assist in the realization of the local initiative have to be found. It might be a problem due to the level of human capital in peripheral micro-regions, which is low. It concerns formal education (including language knowledge) but also motivation of people accustomed to work in productive spheres eight-working hours only are not prepared to serve to the tourists independently on day and time.

Finally, the product ready for tourists has to be marketable. The basic problem of the market economy is not to have the best product but to be able to sell it. Within the post-productive society and time of globalization, the countryside is consumed by tourists (Woods, 2010) like other sorts of goods. This phase is connected with thoughtful marketing strategy. Linking tourist services in one destination is the recommended strategy.

The investment into tourism should be sustainable (Hall et al., 2005). The sustainability is seen in three main factors. Financial sustainability means that the activity has to be serviceable also after finishing of eventual subsidies until the loan is paid off. Secondly, the activity has to keep its own sustainability. It means that the tourism development should not destroy the original motivations but instead it should create new motivations. Thirdly, environmental and ecological sustainability (especially in protected areas) also has to be kept (Wearing and Neil, 2009). Ecotourism can be a positive model for communication and environmental education (Orams, 1995, Salazar, 2012). It is known that intensive and unbalanced tourism could lead to nature disturbances (Bramwell and Lane, 1993, Holden, 2009). The tourism can be either beneficial or unprofitable for rural areas (Tapiador, 2008). The last factor can have also an indirect effect: regional development evoked by tourism can bring financial sources which may be used for the development of industries and by that to possible negative environmental impacts.

It is also necessary to take into account competitions. There are many peripheral micro-regions often not too far away from each other betting on tourism development. Such micro-regions have to face the question, why tourists should spend their holidays in their territory and not in the neighbouring one. Traditional competitive advantages consisted of price policy; however it is

not possible to keep underestimated prices for a long time. It could be better to compete by the quality of the tourist product (attractiveness of the territory, spectrum of experiences, hospitality etc.) and (very substantially) by marketing.

Tourism has a specific character in relation to the territory. The satisfaction of customers is connected not only with the specific facility (like hotel, restaurant, beach etc.) but also with the destination (Tittelbachová, 2008). It shows and confirms that individual providers are competitors and collaborators at the same time. It is necessary to realize that the success of one provider in the micro-region can also attract people to other providers there. On the contrary, low quality tourist services in one facility can discourage people to visit that area at all. Some communes, who privatized their communal equipment within the first post-revolutionary enthusiasm because they believed that private ownership means better economy, regret this step today. They are not able to affect the bad quality of services in private firms which spoils the reputation of the whole micro-region.

## Conclusions

Tourism development can be one of the most prospective branches in peripheral micro-regions but hardly the only activity ensuring the regional development. Its implementation brings serious obstacles for the micro-regions to cope with. On the other side, shift of jobs from productive branches to services, increasing amount and importance of a leisure time, consumerist orientation and a desire for experiences and adventures speak in favour of tourism development. Tourism became a part of the life style for broadest population segments which is a key message for peripheral micro-regions as such areas are suitable for undemanding modest tourist. Eco-tourism, agritourism, scenic tourism and similar kind of tourism activities are possible and desirable in peripheries. Tourism in peripheral areas can create jobs not only in tourist facilities but also in general services and infrastructure.

Moreover, tourism provides a wide range of possibilities for research, planning, negotiations and similar supporting activities. In an optimum case, tourism can associate the community whereas in other cases it can split it as well. Monitoring the development can be a very interesting research task in the future.

## Acknowledgement

The paper was elaborated within the Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme of the European Union number CZ.1.07/2.3.00/20.0004 „LANDTEAM“, financed by the European Union and

the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic.

## Author contribution

Milada Šťastná – theory

Antonín Vaishar – field research in Moravia

Mária Pákozdióvá – field research in Banat

## References

- Bako, D. and Varvari, S. (2010). Regional attractiveness in Romanian development regions. *Revista Economica*, 50(3): 59-66.
- Banki M. B. and Ismail, H. N. (2015) Understanding the characteristics of family owned tourism micro businesses in mountain destinations in developing countries: evidence from Nigeria. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 13: 18–32.
- Bramwell, B. and Lane, B. (1993). Interpretation and sustainable tourism: The potential and the pitfalls. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1(2), 71-80.
- Chan, S.C. (2010). Imagining and consuming cultures: Nostalgia and domestic tourism development in Taiwan. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, 31(3-4): 367-380. doi: 10.1080/02255189.2010.3673725.
- Crouch, D. (2006). Tourism, consumption and rurality. In P. Cloke, T. Marsden and P.H. Money (Eds.), *Handbook of rural studies* (pp. 355-364). Sage. London.
- Goschin, Z., Constantin, D., Roman, M. and Ileanu, B. (2008). The current state and dynamics of regional disparities in Romania. *Romanian Journal of Regional Science* 2(2): 80-105.
- Hall, D. (2005). Sustainable rural tourism and rural change. In D. Schmied (Ed.), *Winning and losing: The changing geography of Europe's rural areas* (pp. 72-90). Ashgate, Aldershot.
- Hall, D., Kirkpatrick, I. and Mitchell, M. (Eds.). (2005). *Rural tourism and sustainable business*. Channel View, Clevedon
- Hernández-Maestro and Gonzáles-Benito (2014). Rural lodging establishments as drivers of rural development. *Journal of Travel Research* 53(1): 83-95. doi: 10.1177/0047287513481273.
- Holden, A. (2009). An introduction to tourism – environment relationships. In: J. Hill and T. Gale (Eds.), *Ecotourism and environmental sustainability* (pp. 17-30). Ashgate, Farnham.
- Horáková, H. (2013). Whose countryside? Contested development in the new rural recreational localities in Czechia from the perspective of the countryside capital. *European Countryside* 5(1): 23-37. doi: 10.2478/euco-2013-0002.
- Iordache, C. (2007). Gârnici – the specificity of a Czech community in Romania. *Analele Universităţii din Craiova – Seria Geografie* 10: 206-216.
- Johann, M., L. Anastassova (2014). The perception of tourism product quality and tourist satisfaction: the case of polish tourists visiting Bulgaria. *European Journal of Tourism Research* 8, pp. 99-114
- Klvač, P., Buček, A. and Lacina, J. (Eds.). (2011). *Příroda a krajina v okolí Svaté Heleny* [Nature and landscape in the surroundings of St. Helena]. Občanské sdružení Drnka, Drnovice.
- Labrianidis, L., ed. (2004). *The future of Europe's rural peripheries*. Ashgate, Aldershot.
- Liu, A., & Wall, G. (2006). Planning tourism employment: A developing country perspective. *Tourism Management*, 27(1), 159–170.
- Mihelič, T. (2013). Performance of environmental resources of a tourist destination: concept and application. *Journal of Travel Research* 52(5): 614-630. doi: 10.1177/0047287513478505.
- Moseley, M. J. (2003). *Rural development: Principles and practice*. Sage, London.
- Orams, M. B. (1995). Towards a more desirable form of ecotourism. *Tourism Management*, 16(1), 3–8.
- Pákozdióvá, M. and Vaishar, A. (2012). Social-geographical comparison of peripheral regions in Eastern Moravia (CZ) and Banat (RO). In: M. Boltžiar (Ed.), *Forum Carpathicum 2012: From Data to Knowledge – from Knowledge to Action* (pp. 27-30). Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Landscape Ecology, Bratislava.
- Pákozdióvá, M., Šantrůčková, M. and Hamanová, M. (2012). Local community versus globalisation tendencies - Case study of Czech villages in Romanian Banat region. In: C.-H. Daub, P. Burger, Y.M. Scherrer and J.T. Frecé (Eds.), *Strategies for Sustainability: Institutional and Organisational Challenges* (pp. 53-54). University of Applied Sciences and Arts North-Western Switzerland, Basel.
- Pákozdióvá, M. (2012). *Zachovávání tradic: Srovnávací analýza Svaté Heleny a Hostětína* [Keeping the traditions: A comparative analysis of St. Helena and Hostětín]. (MSc thesis) Masarykova univerzita, Brno.
- Potočník-Slavič, I. and Schmitz, S. (2013). Farm tourism across Europe. *European Countryside*. 5(4): 265-274. doi: 10.2478/euco-2013-0017.
- Russell, D.W. (2008). Nostalgic tourism. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* 25(2): 103-116. doi: 10.1080/10548400802402271.
- Salazar, N.B. (2012). Community-based cultural tourism: Issues, threats and opportunities. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(1). DOI: 10.1080/09669582.2011.596279.
- Špirit, M. (2008). *Bojkovice – centrum turistického ruchu* [Bojkovice – the centre of tourism]. BSc thesis. Masaryk University, Brno.
- Šťastná, M., Kniezková, T. and Náplavová, M. (2011). Embedding of rural businesses in the South Moravian region, *European Countryside* 3(3), doi: 10.2478/v10091-011-0012-1.
- Tapiador, F.J. (2008). *Rural analysis and management*. Springer, Berlin.
- Tittelbachová, Š. (2008). *Politika cestovního ruchu* [The politics of tourism]. In: R. Wokoun, J. Malinovský, M. Tamborský, and J. Blažek (Eds.), *Regionální rozvoj* (pp. 205-214). Linde, Praha.
- Wearing, S. and Neil, J. (2009). *Ecotourism: Impacts, potentials and possibilities*. (2nd ed.). Elsevier. Amsterdam.
- Woods, M. (2010). *Rural*. Routledge, Abingdon