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Report from the 3rd Polish Conference of Institutes and Faculties of Tourism and Recreation at State Universities: "Contemporary Conditions for Tourism Development", Kraków, 27-28th September 2012

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REPORT

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REPORT FROM THE 3rd POLISH CONFERENCE OF INSTITUTES AND FACULTIES OF TOURISM AND RECREATION AT STATE UNIVERSITIES: “CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT”, KRAKÓW, 27-28TH SEPTEMBER 2012

Cooperation among institutes and faculties of tourism and recreation at state universities in Poland, initiated in 2008 by Prof. Grzegorz Gołembski, has resulted in a third conference held in Kraków, at the Jagiellonian University, on 27-28th September 2012. The first conference in this series took place in 2008, at the State Higher Vocational School in Sulechów, its outcome being a publication of conference materials edited by Prof. G. GOŁEMBSKI¹, while the second was organized in 2010 at the University of Łódź, and resulted in a publication edited by Dr S. TANAŚ (2010)².

The conference at the Jagiellonian University was organized by the Tourism and Spa Economy Department at the Institute of Geography and Spatial Economy. The head of the organizational committee was the head of the department, Prof. Włodzimierz Kurek; the conference secretary was Dr Robert Pawlusiński. The conference Academic Council was headed by Prof. Gołembski from the Economic University in Poznań. The contemporary conditions leading to tourism development was the topic of this meeting and its aims fell into two groups. The first included the aims set at all the earlier conferences, i.e. the meeting of all those involved in tourism research in Poland, the exchange of opinions and experience on the advanced training of tourism specialists, as well as a review of current research projects.

The main objective of the Kraków conference was the identification of the contemporary conditions for the development of tourism.

The large number of presentations forced the organizers to arrange (on top of plenary and poster sessions) three separate blocks (A, B and C) on both 27th (one session in each block) and 28th September (two sessions in each block). The conference was

officially opened on Thursday, 27th September, at 10 o'clock, by the Dean of the Biology and Earth Sciences Department, Jagiellonian University, and the Head of the Institute of Geography. Afterwards, the sessions began.

The first plenary session was led by Prof. Aleksander Szwichtenberg. It included seven presentations which in general referred to the overall aim of the conference, i.e. the presentation of differing conditions for tourism development, particularly in Poland. The session started with a presentation by Prof. Gołembski who analysed the effects of the political and economic transformation on the tourist market in Poland (political and economic conditions), and correlated that with the syllabus for educating tourism specialists at universities. The next paper was presented by Prof. Liszewski who discussed the geographical conditions for global tourism development (domination of mass tourism and global tourism), and then the influence of the geographical space on the development of various kinds of tourism activity and the formation of tourism space. Next, Prof. Dziędzic presented development stages in specific tourism sectors. Prof. Jackowski captivantly discussed the role played by the Tourism Studium, Jagiellonian University, established in 1936 by Prof. Leszczycki. The historical conditions for the development of tourism studies in Poland, though obvious, seem to be nearly unknown to Polish academia. The next presentation, by Prof. Kowalczyk, made the audience aware of the influence air transport has on the development of tourism. Referring to the UNWTO statistics, the speaker stated that in 2011, 51% of international tourists used air transport. Prof. Rapacz, Dr Jaremen & Dr Gryszela presented a paper

concerning current social problems in tourism, and whose aim is to reduce the number of people excluded from tourism. The authors analysed the tourism activity of the handicapped and the elderly in Poland and the Czech Republic. The first plenary session ended with a paper presented by Prof. Kurek, who, on the basis of an analysis of several academic periodicals from the last 30 years, presented the changing relationship between tourism and a natural environment which increasingly needs to be protected against tourist invasion by law.

The presentations were followed by a very interesting discussion conducted by several conference participants. The papers presented in this session showed the variety of factors which determine the contemporary development of tourism. The discussion concerned political, economic, geographical, trade-related, historical, technological, social and environmental factors. Although the range of tourism development factors is much wider, the presented papers showed the direction which should be followed in research into contemporary tourism, not only in order to diagnose the existing situation, but also to understand its complexity, the basis for predicting its development and consequences.

Further sessions on 27th September 2012 were divided into three, clearly thematic blocks (A, B and C), even though they had no names. Block A included seven papers prepared mostly by those from departments of economics, dealing with tourism. They were devoted to issues such as the influence of fashion on tourism development (Prof. Niezgoda), the tourism function of a *gmina* (Dr Seweryn), and the role of knowledge diffusion through the cooperation of organisations in a region (Dr Czernek). Block B contained six geographical papers, which included presentations concerning the possibilities of using tourism-recreational space in the Lubelszczyzna area (Prof. Świeca & Dr Brzezińska-Wójcik), the conditions for tourism development in formerly industrial urban areas (Dr Derek), or the significance of wars and terrorist attacks for cognitive tourism (Dr Tanaś). Block D contained seven papers which concerned educating students for tourism purposes. They included "E-learning in tourism education" (Dr Napierała & Dr Szkup), "Motivations to study and the educational and career expectations of tourism and recreation students at UWM in Olsztyn" (Dr Omelan), or "The influence of the tourism and recreation studies syllabus on the development of the students' own tourism behaviour" (Maro-Kulczycka MA).

On the second day of the conference (28th September 2012), sessions in blocks A, B and C were continued. Block A (economic) contained eight papers, including "Shaping the competitiveness of a tourism area" (Dr Gryszel), "Getting financial support in the

case of a tour operator's insolvency" (Żylak, MA), or "Trends in changes on the tourist market of the Lubuskie voivodeship" (Dr Świątkowski). Block B contained eight papers presenting varied topics. They included "Guiding practical experience for students" (Dr Potocki), "The tourist-recreational attractiveness of Konstancin-Jeziorna" (Dr Duda-Gromola), as well as "The social determinants of ski tourism demand in the Polish Carpathians" (Krzesiwo, MA). Block C also included eight papers (six of them were actually presented) focusing on cultural tourism, e.g. "Amusement parks in the world and in Poland" (Dr Kruczek), "Modern trends in religious tourism in Europe" (Dr Mróz & Mróz, MA), or "An outline of equestrian tourism in Poland: traditions and the present" (Dr Urban).

The blocked sessions were followed by a poster one consisting of eight papers presenting various topics. They were mostly research results or conclusions from the PhD theses the presenters were preparing. The poster session lasted 30 minutes and offered participants an opportunity to talk directly with the authors of the works presented.

The conference was rounded off with a participants' meeting, during which they exchanged their opinions about the sessions and discussed other topics.

As the conference organizers informed us about their intention to publish the presented papers in the near future (after editorial reviews), a detailed discussion was postponed until they have appeared in print. The conference participants approved of the idea of having such meetings; it was agreed that the fourth conference would be organized by the Faculty of Tourism, the Economic University in Poznań, headed by Prof. Gołembski. It is to be combined with the Faculty's jubilee.

The 3rd conference in Kraków had 92 participants, including 23 professors and associate professors. The authors of the papers were the employees or post-graduate students from 30 Polish universities, including representatives from 10 city universities – the Jagiellonian University (20 participants), the University of Łódź (eight), Warsaw (four), Silesia, Szczecin, the UMCS in Lublin, UMK in Toruń, and the University of Warmia and Mazury (two from each), as well as from UAM in Poznań and the University of Wrocław (one from each). Other conference participants came from the Pedagogical University in Kraków (four), four Economic Universities: in Kraków, Poznań (five from each) and Wrocław (three), as well as the Central School of Commerce (*Szkoła Główna Handlowa*) in Warsaw (two), the Academy of Physical Education in Poznań (seven) and Kraków (five). The conference was also attended by participants from the State Higher Vocational Schools from Wałbrzych,

Sulechów, Leszno, Konin and Jarosław, as well as other higher vocational schools in Warsaw, Gdynia and Koszalin. There was also one representative from SGGW in Warsaw.

The undeniable success of the 3rd Polish Conference of the Institutes and Faculties of Tourism and Recreation at State Universities, organized by the Tourism and Spa Economy Department at the IGiGP (Institute of Geography and Spatial Economy), Jagiellonian University, lay not only in the contents of the presentations, whose value can only be fully appreciated after they are published, but also the fact that the conference was attended by younger tourism researchers (post-graduate students). This augurs well for the future development of tourism studies. The participants represented different disciplines, thus confirming that tourism studies has an inter-

disciplinary character. It is also significant that the conference in Kraków was attended by those from different types of higher education institution from all over Poland.

The conference was very well organized; it was held in splendid conditions, in the lecture halls of the Institute of Geography and Spatial Economy at the new Jagiellonian University campus on Gronostajowa Street.

FOOTNOTES

¹ GOŁEMBSKI G. (ed.), 2008, *Nowe trendy rozwoju turystyki*, PWSZ Publishing House, Sulechów, pp. 518.

² TANAŚ S. (ed.) 2010, *Nauka i dydaktyka w turystyce i rekreacji*, Lodz Scientific Society, Lodz, pp. 362.
