

SPOLEČENSKÁ ODPOVĚDNOST ZA UDRŽITELNOST SVĚTOVÉHO DĚDICTVÍ

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF THE WORLD'S HERITAGE

Monografie vědeckých prací
Monograph of research papers

Michal Matějka
Roman Kořán
René Milfait (ed.)

Svazek II
Volume II



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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNESCO DESTINATION LEVOČA, SPIŠKÝ HRAD CASTLE AND SURROUNDING MONUMENTS

UDRŽITELNÝ ROZVOJ CESTOVNÍHO RUCHU V LOKALITĚ UNESCO LEVOČA, SPIŠKÝ HRAD A PAMÁTKY OKOLÍ

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Abstract: The basis of the sustainable development of human society are three pillars, namely social, economic and ecological. The aim of the papers is to characterize the possibilities of strategic development of tourism in the investigated UNESCO destination based on the analysis of supply and demand for tourism. The destination has an excellent offer of tourism, especially in the area of cultural heritage, which is represented by the unique monuments of the towns of Levoča and Spišská Podhradie, the location of Spišská Kapitula and Spišský hrad Castle. The tourism superstructure (number of accommodation facilities and their development in the period from 2001 to 2023), tourism infrastructure (museums, galleries, tourist and cycling trails, educational trails, etc.), tourism demand (number of accommodated guests and its development in the period 2001 – 2023, average length of stay, number of visitors to the SNM - Spisske Museum Levoča and its development in the period 1999 to 2023, etc.) are also examined in the papers. At the end of the paper, the appropriate forms of tourism that can be developed in this destination and the effects of the strategic development of tourism on the social, economic and ecological pillar of sustainable development are defined.

Keywords: Keywords: Levoča, Spišský hrad Castle and Monuments in Vicinity, sustainable tourism, cultural heritage, natural heritage, tourism supply and demand, World's heritage.

Introduction

The urgency of the sustainable development of human society is evidenced by the fact that global (e.g. UN, UNWTO) as well as pan-European (EU) organizations and institutions have been dealing with the issue of the environment and its sustainability for several decades. The basis of the sustainable development are three pillars, namely social, economic and ecological. For many years, the European Union has been using tools to promote the sustainability of these three pillars, which include, for example, the European Ecological Network (EECONET), NATURA 2000, Agenda 21, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The last two tools mentioned (EIA, SEA) are used

in the countries of the European Union to assess the impact of strategic investments on the environment. In Slovakia, the assessment of environmental impacts within the framework of EIA/SEA was established by Act No. 24/2006 Coll. The Act on Environmental Impact Assessment and Amendments to Certain Acts (<https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2006-24>), which was later amended several times.

The sustainability of the tourism development in destinations registered on the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List is gaining importance especially in recent years, because some of these destinations are currently facing big problems of mass tourism (e.g. Venice, Barcelona).

Levoča, Spišský hrad Castle and surrounding monuments are ones of Slovak destinations registered on the UNESCO list. In order to be able to develop tourism strategically in this locality in a sustainable way, the town of Levoča prepared the Strategy of Tourism in the Levoča District for the period of 2021 to 2027 prospectively until 2030 in accordance with the Act No. 24/2006 Coll. (EIA/SEA). They defined the possible effects of the strategic development of tourism on the three pillars of sustainability.

Based on the analysis of supply and demand for tourism in the investigated locality, the aim of the papers is to characterize the possibilities of strategic development of tourism in the territory of the destination in accordance with the principles of sustainable development with a focus on the balance of all three pillars, namely economic, ecological and social. We use the scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, as well as abstraction, while focusing on the Levoča district, on the territory of which most of the UNESCO monuments are located (the towns of Levoča, Spišské Podhradie, Spišská Kapitula and the Spišský hrad Castle).

Tourism supply

The destination of Levoča, Spišský hrad Castle and surrounding monuments was included in the UNESCO Cultural Heritage List twice. In 1993, only the Spišský hrad Castle and surrounding monuments were included in the list. Later this destination was expanded to include an urbanistic medieval jewel – the town of Levoča in 2009. This destination represents an extremely important set of cultural medieval monuments. The destination is located in the territory of the Spiš region.

In the history and development of the entire Spiš region, three different territorial administrative centres played an important role, namely the Spišský hrad Castle, the towns of Levoča and Spišská Kapitula. The Spišský hrad Castle represented the seat of royal power and the aristocratic administrative district. The town of Levoča represented the centre of urban social life and the Spišská Kapitula was a Roman Catholic religious centre with the seat of the Spiš bishop. (Husovská et al., 1995, p. 273)

Natural heritage: There are several protected natural areas in the destination. Three national nature reserves are the locations of Dreveník, Sivá Brada and Rajtopíky. Two nature reserves are located in Hájik and Na bani. Six natural monuments are represented by Jazerec, the Travertine mound Sobotisko, Zlatá brázda, Ostrá hora, Jazierko na Pažiti and Podhorské. The Spišský hrad Castle hill is a national natural monument. There are also four protected trees (1 forest pine in Spišský Štvrtok and 3 oaks in Bijacovce).

There are many caves in the Levočské vrchy Hills. In 2004, the longest pseudo-karst cave in Slovakia was discovered here – “Jaskyňa pod Spišskou”, which is completely unique

in Slovakia in terms of dimensions and morphological spaces. Particularly unique are the travertine mounds called Sivá Brada and Dreveník. The mounds were formed from springs of mineral water. There are many different tower-like formations, caves and abysses, various fossil and archaeological finds, etc.

In the Levoča district, there are seven areas of the European importance. They belong to the NATURA 2000 system of protected areas. They include the Dravčianska stráň slope, the Levočské dubiny oak forests, the Spišskopodhradské stráne slopes, the Spišskopodhradské travertines, etc. Their total area is 1452.9 ha. There is also the Levočské vrchy Hills protected bird area with an area of 45,597.6 ha. (City of Levoča, 2021, pp. 32–43)

Cultural – historical heritage: The town of Levoča became a city heritage reserve in 1950. This town represents the main centre of the German colonization in the Spiš region from the 13th century. In 1271, the town became the capital of the Community of Saxons living in the Spiš region. It was a free royal city from 1323. International trade was developing in the town. It was located on the Magna Via trade route. There are almost 60 Renaissance houses around the central square. It was included in the UNESCO list for its preserved medieval town planning, the medieval wall system together with the moats, preserved typological layout of a medieval house with its subsequent stages of development up to the present day. (City of Levoča, 2021, pp. 67–68) The most important cultural and historical monuments include the Gothic Basilica of St. James (1st half of the 14th century). There are 11 Gothic altars in the basilica; the main altar has a height of 18.62 metres, and is the highest wooden Gothic altar in the world and represents the masterpiece of Master Pavel of Levoča. Other important tourist attractions are the originally Renaissance historic town hall (around the middle of the 15th century); the house of Master Pavol of Levoča, which has preserved its appearance from the 15th-16th centuries; the Roman Catholic Gothic church of the Virgin Mary with an old Minorite monastery; the Evangelical Classicist church; the Roman Catholic late Baroque Church of the Holy Spirit with a Minorite monastery (the mid-18th century); a wall system and city gates (the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries). Nearby the town of Levoča on the Mariánska hora Hill there is the neo-Gothic Basilica of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary, which is one of the oldest pilgrimage sites in eastern Slovakia. (Město Levoča, 2021, pp. 69–78)

The city of Spišské Podhradie – the first mention of it dates from 1249. Since 1321, it became a town. Economic development of the city resulted in construction activity that affected the appearance of this town – houses were built around the square, a hospital complex was built in a street near the square, there was founded the Latin School, etc. In 1456, the city obtained the right to organize markets every week. In the second half of the 15th century, the Hussites destroyed the parish church, then it was reconstructed and fortified between 1462 and 1497.

After the city was destroyed by fire in 1583, the originally Gothic houses were restored in the Renaissance style. The Baroque reconstruction affected both the town houses as well as the church and the monastery of the Merciful Brothers. In the years 1799-1808 an evangelical church was built. (Husovská et al., 1995, pp. 273–276) The most important monuments of the city include the originally Gothic Roman Catholic Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary; a classicist evangelical church, the monastery of the Merciful Brothers with a hospital; neo-gothic synagogue with elements of oriental architecture; the baroque column of Virgin Mary, originally a Renaissance town hall built in 1546; the city mill, which represents the oldest economic and technical building in the city, etc.

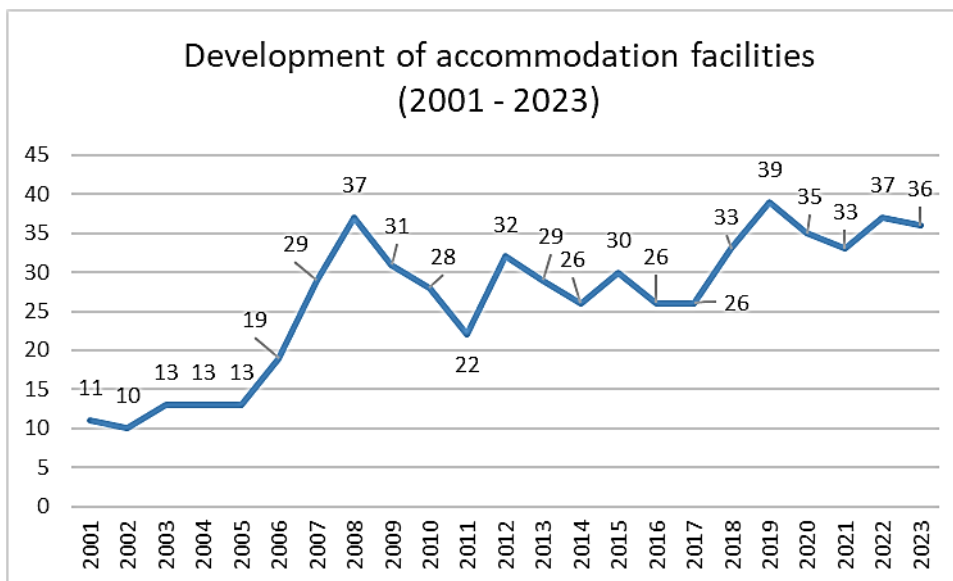
Spišská Kapitula – represents a Roman-Catholic locality where religious buildings and institutions are concentrated. The centre of Spišská Kapitula is the Romanesque cathedral of St. Martin, built as a three-nave basilica between 1245 and 1275. A statue of St. John of Nepomuk from 1732 represents the patron of the seminary located here. Originally the provost's palace,

now the bishop's palace, was built together with the cathedral. The buildings of the church canons and the priest's seminary are located within the fortified part. Spišská Kapitula is nicknamed the "Slovak Vatican". In the Spišská Kapitula and the locality of Pažica, there used to be the "Spišský Jerusalelem", which in its territorial concept resembled ancient Jerusalem and served believers as a substitute for the pilgrimage to the Holy Land during the wars with the Ottoman Empire. (City of Levoča, 2021, p. 89–90)

The Spišský hrad Castle represents a unique urban-landscape ensemble that grows out of a travertine cliff. Its construction dates back to the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century. To this day, the castle has preserved its appearance from the end of the 13th century. The castle belonged to the royal dynasties of Árpád and Anjou, later it was the property of the noble families of the Zápoľský, Thurzo and Csáky. The Spiš hrad Castle is one of the top most visited castles in Slovakia. It is one of the largest medieval castles in the Central Europe. (City of Levoča, 2021, p. 90)

Tourism suprastructure: In the investigated destination there are several dozen accommodation facilities of various categories, e.g. Boutique hotel Pracháreň ****, Hotel u leva***, Hotel Barbakan***, Pension Kiska Levoča, Ubytovanie u Janusa**. (www.booking.com) Development of the number of accommodation facilities from 2001 to 2023 is shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1 Development of accommodation facilities in the Levoča district in the period 2001–2023



Source: Own processing based on data from the Statistical Yearbook of the Slovak Republic (datacube.statistics.sk, 2024)

As it can be seen from the chart, the Levoča district had the smallest number of accommodation facilities in 2002 (10), the highest number was in 2019 (39). In the period from 2002 to 2008, it is possible to observe a gradual increase in the number of accommodation facilities. What is interesting is the sharp increase in the number of accommodation facilities over the course of three years, from 2005 to 2008, when the number of accommodation facilities increased by up to 28.5 %. An explanation is offered that such a sharp increase in accommodation facilities in this destination is related to the preparation of the inscription of the city of Levoča in the UNESCO list, which happened in 2009, and the expectation of businesses

that greater interest of visitors will be awakened. The decrease of accommodation facilities in the next 3 years by approx. 41 % may be indicative of the sobering of business expectations and adaptation of accommodation supply to demand. The development of the number of accommodation facilities is also interesting in the fact that in the period after 2019, at the end of which the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, there was no significant decrease. We came to a similar conclusion in the past when we examined the UNESCO destination Banská Štiavnica. Probably also in the case of Levoča, the owners of accommodation facilities had no choice but to wait for the end of the pandemic, which luckily caused only a temporary decline in tourism. In the last years of the examined period, the number of accommodation facilities has relatively stabilized.

Tourism Infrastructure: The tourism infrastructure in this destination is represented by the Slovak National Museum – Spišské Museum Levoča (hereafter SNM – Spišské Museum Levoča), Levoča City Gallery, Museum of Special Education, tour operators and travel agencies, tourist information centres, congress centres, sports facilities, educational trails, hiking and cycling trails, lookouts, etc.

The SNM – Spiš Museum in Levoča has 5 departments, namely the Historic Town Hall, the House of Master Paul, the Building of Museum Headquarters, the Old Minorite Monastery and the Spišský hrad Castle. Since 1994, there has been a permanent exhibition in the Historical Town Hall, which illustrates the history of the city of Levoča from its beginnings, through its development, its heyday to the present day. In 2001, the long-term ethnographic exhibition called the Beauty woven from threads was opened here. It represents the field of folk textiles and blueprints in the Spiš region. The Historic Town Hall is one of the most visited objects.

The House of Master Paul is the place where the exhibition dedicated to the life and work of one of the most important late Gothic carvers is located. It was opened in 1987. There are exhibition halls in the Building of Museum Headquarters. The exhibition of the Art Culture of the Spiš region is located here. The old monastery of the Minorites and the exhibition in it is among the newest attractions (from 2021). The Spišský hrad Castle has had a permanent exhibition since 1983. In 2022, new exterior exhibitions were set up in former residential buildings, namely the Castle Torture House in the lower courtyard and the History of the Castle in the central courtyard.

The City Gallery of Levoča was opened in 2014. Its halls are used for the presentation of contemporary fine art. It is managed by the Municipal Cultural Centre.

The Museum of Special Education, which has a nationwide scope is focused on the field of special pedagogy for pupils with medical disabilities (visual, hearing, physical, mental).

There are four travel agencies operating in Levoča (OÁZA, TOUR, INVIA, Britannia Connection and Gotik). The agencies mostly offer products for the urban population, they sell tours outside the city (to other Slovak regions and abroad). Only the Gotik Travel Agency offers sightseeing stays and excursions along the Gothic Way, in the Levočské vrchy Hills, and nearby national parks (the Tatranský National Park, the Pieninský National Park and the Slovak Paradise National Park). Only one travel agency (SPIŠBUS) operates in the town of Spišské Podhradie.

There are three information centres operating in the destination, namely the Levoča City Information Office (since 1994), the Spišská Podhradie Tourist Information Centre and the Spišská Kapitula Information Centre. All these information centres perform the usual services of tourist information offices, e.g. provide information about the destination, offer products, collect statistical information.

Congress facilities are available in the towns of Levoča and Spišské Podhradie. In Levoča, there are suitable spaces for organizing congress events in the building of the Municipal Theatre and the Cinema Smile. The capacities of these institutions are as follows – Congress hall (up to 200 people), Theatre hall (up to 170 people), Blue Lounge (up to 40 people), Green Lounge (25-30 people), Balcony Lounge (up to 40 people), Atrium of the Municipal Theatre (up to 400 people), the Cinema Smile (up to 350 people). The Congress and Concert Hall is located in Spišské Podhradie.

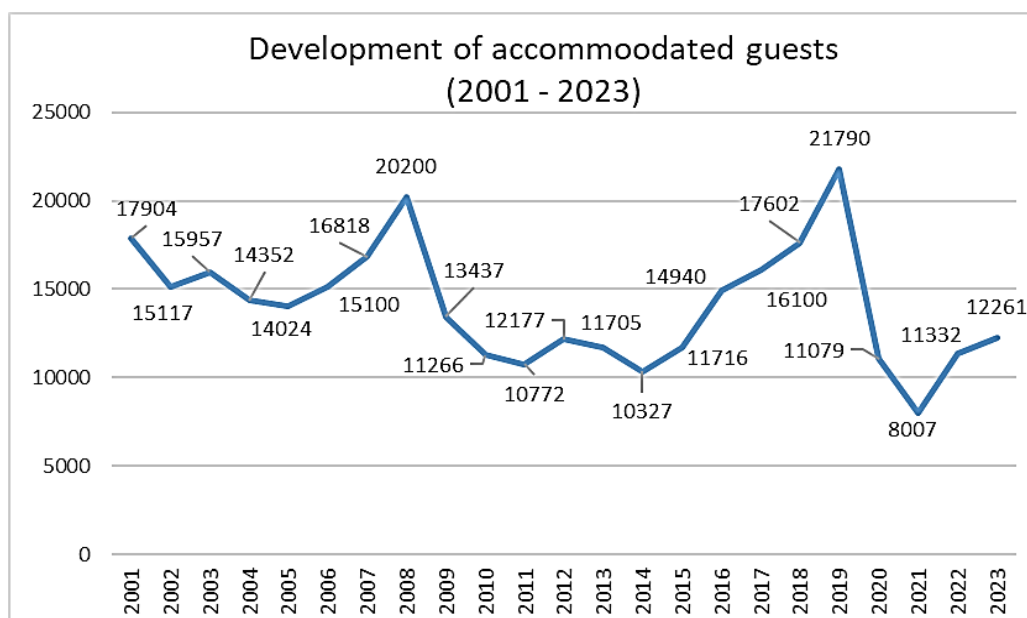
The Sivá Brada – Dreveník educational trail is located in the destination, which is 14 km long and has an elevation gain of 150 m. It is a year-round, pedestrian, two-way trail of medium difficulty and follows the route Spišské Podhradie – Sivá Brada – Pažica – Spišská Kapitula – Spišské Podhradie – Dreveník – Žehra – Hodkovce. There are over 200 km of hiking trails and over 380 km of bike trails. (City of Levoča, 2021. p. 37–133).

Tourism Demand

The demand for tourism in the destination can be examined by the realized demand for accommodation in accommodation facilities and the demand for the services of cultural and social facilities.

Chart 2 shows the development of the number of guests staying in accommodation facilities in the Levoča district in the period 2001 to 2023.

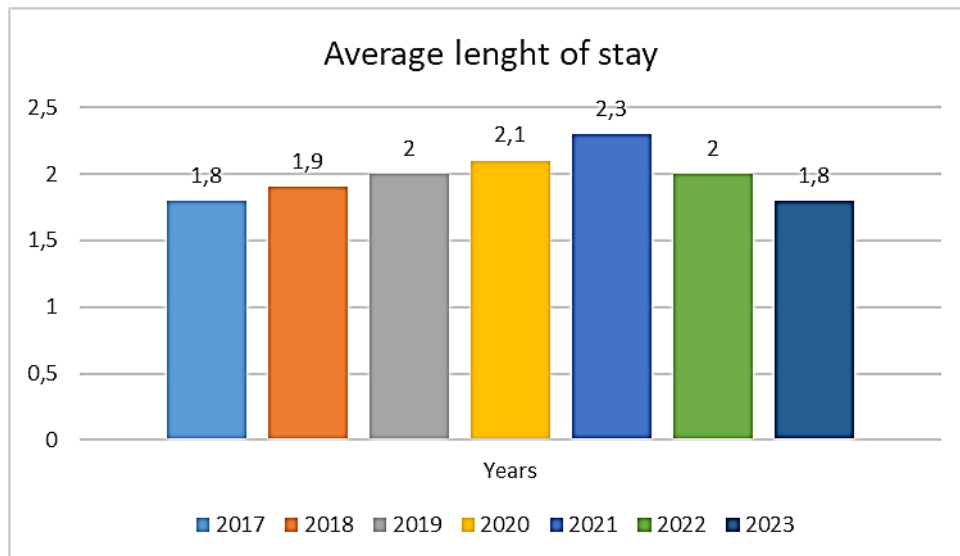
Chart 2. Development of accommodated guests in accommodation facilities in the Levoča district in the period 2001–2023



Source: Own processing based on data from the Statistical Yearbook of the Slovak Republic (datacube.statistics.sk, 2024)

The average length of stay is also an important indicator of the development of tourism in a destination. The development of the average length of stay in the period from 2017 to 2023 is presented in Chart 3.

Chart 3. Development of the average length of stay in the period 2017–2023



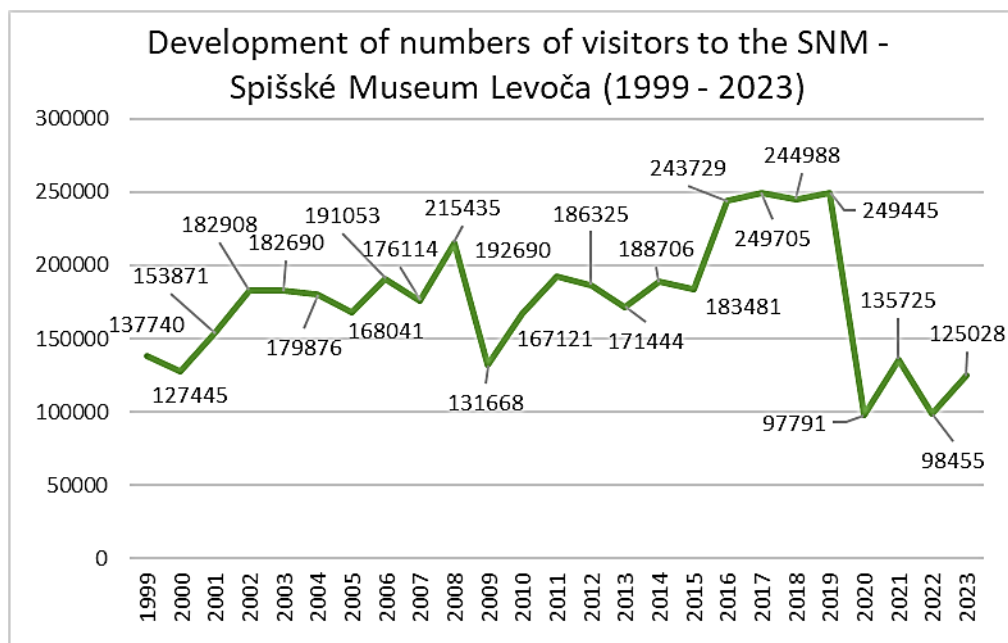
Source: Own processing based on data from the Statistical Yearbook of the Slovak Republic (datacube.statistics.sk, 2024)

The average length of stay in the examined destination ranges from 1.8 to 2.3 days of stay. This fact indicates that visitors do not stay in the destination for more than about 2 days. This average length of stay corresponds to the fact that more or less city tourism is developing in this destination. In Slovakia, the average length of stay in cities is about 2-3 days. Products that, in combination with the cultural-historical heritage, would also offer activities in the surrounding nature could serve as a suitable way to extend the length of stay in the destination.

Another important indicator of tourism demand is the attendance of cultural and social facilities (e.g. museums, galleries). In this case, we also use the method of abstraction and focus only on the selected most visited facilities, namely the SNM – Spišské Museum of Levoča and the Basilica of St. Jacob. Chart 4 shows the development of the number of visitors to the SNM – Spišské Museum Levoča between 1999 and 2023.

As can be seen from the Chart 4 (below), hundreds of thousands of visitors come to SNM – Spišské Museum Levoča every year. The largest number of visitors was in 2019, namely 249,445. This number was followed by a sharp drop caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2020, the museum had the fewest number of visitors in the entire long examined period of 25 years; there were only 97,791. In the last examined year, 2023, number of visitors was still almost half as many as in the most visited year, 2019.

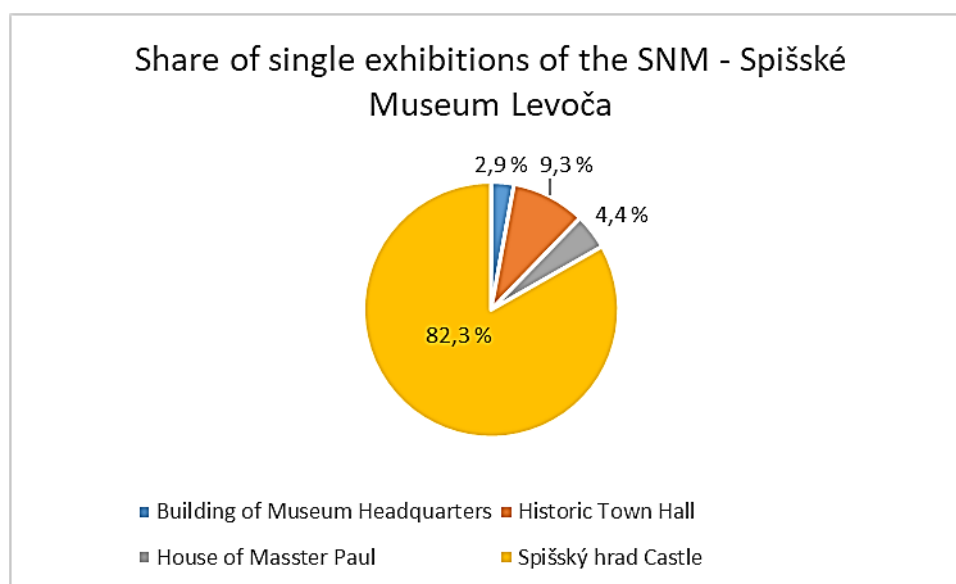
Chart 4. Development of the number of visitors to the SNM – Spišské Museum Levoča in the period 1999 – 2023



Source: Own processing according to the Annual Reports of the Slovak National Museum in the years 1999–2023

One very important fact should be mentioned, namely that the largest share of museum visitors goes to the Spišský hrad Castle (82.3 %). The share of single exhibitions from the point of view of attendance of SNM – Spišské Museum Levoča is presented in Chart 5.

Chart 5. Share of single exhibitions of the SNM – Spišské Museum Levoča



Source: Own processing according to the Annual Reports of the Slovak National Museum in the years 1999–2023

The second most visited cultural-historical object in Levoča is the Basilica of St. Jacob, which is visited by tens of thousands of visitors every year. The number of visitors to this Gothic gem of sacral architecture is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of visitors to the Basilica of St. Jacob in Levoča

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of visitors	67 770	65 976	69 023	36 956

Source: City of Levoča, Tourism Strategy in the Levoča District (2021-2027) with a view to 2030. Appendix 1 Analytical part, p. 70

Sustainable tourism development in the destination

In the destination, both basic components of the primary offer are important for the development of tourism, namely the cultural-historical and natural potential. This destination is a part of the Spiš region of tourism. This region has a high potential in the medium and long term for such forms of tourism as staying in a mountain/forest environment, hiking, exploring cultural and historical monuments; good potential for country stays/countryside tourism, cycling, downhill skiing and snowboarding, ski tourism (ski trips and ski mountaineering); increased potential for visiting caves, etc. (Weiss, 2005, p. 37–40). The main types of tourism that can be developed in the area are domestic and arrival tourism, short-stay tourism, one-day and transit visits. The most important locations for tourism development are the towns of Levoča and Spišské Podhradie (urban, cultural and pilgrimage tourism), Baldovce (spa and medical tourism), the SKI centre Levoča – Levočská Dolina Valley, Dravce, the Závada resort, Krúžok (winter tourism and winter sports), Levoča water reservoir – Levočská Dolina Valley, Dravce (summer tourism and staying by the water), Levočské vrchy Hills area – Vyšné and Nižné Repaše, Torysky, Olšavica (rural tourism and agrotourism). (City of Levoča, 2021, pp. 13-14). These forms and types of tourism do not represent a threat to the UNESCO destination due to excessive development of tourism.

In its tourism strategy, the city of Levoča defined likely significant environmental impacts on selected areas using a matrix of causes and effects. It defined strategic areas of development and the effects of tourism on them. It focused on the three pillars of sustainability, namely social, economic and environmental, and within them defined the likely impacts of the tourism strategy. The development of tourism will have a significantly positive effect on the following areas:

▪ The social pillar of sustainability

- development of infrastructure and services will have a positive effect on solving social problems (local employment, stopping the outflow of young people from the destination, etc.),
- the improvement of transportation infrastructure will positively affect the use of natural and cultural heritage and the offer of infrastructure and services

- applying the principles of cultural landscape protection will improve the state of the entire natural and cultural heritage and will have a positive impact on the infrastructure and services as well
 - protection of the heritage fund will have a significantly positive effect on natural and cultural heritage
 - culture and its development will significantly affect cultural heritage and the field of infrastructure and services
 - a change in the awareness of the population (education, enlightenment, education) will positively affect the natural and cultural-historical heritage as well as the field of infrastructure and services
- **Economic pillar of sustainability**
- the development of tourism in the destination will have a significant positive impact on all investigated areas (management, marketing and communication, partnership, knowledge, natural and cultural-historical heritage, infrastructure and services)
 - construction activities will positively affect field of cultural heritage and infrastructure and services
- **Ecological pillar of sustainability**
- atmospheric and hydrological conditions and protection of environment will have a positive effect on the use of natural and cultural-historical heritage
 - World's Heritage protection and the territorial system of ecological stability will have a significant positive effect on natural and cultural-historical heritage. (City of Levoča, 2021)

Conclusion

Tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of visitors come to the city of Levoča and its surroundings every year with the motive of getting to know the cultural-historical and natural heritage of this destination, which has been on the UNESCO World Cultural and Natural Heritage List since 1993 and 2009. This destination is rightfully a part of the world's heritage, as it contains a number of unique medieval monuments of all architectural styles, which create a unified urban unit documenting the development of society in this area. The natural potential is also significant, offering opportunities for the implementation of sustainable tourism activities in nature (tourism, cycling, rural tourism, etc.). The monuments of this destination are mainly concentrated in the towns of Levoča and Spišské Podhradie Spišská Kapitula and Spišský hrad Castle. Tourism in the town of Levoča and its surroundings shows signs of short-term tourism (city tourism, visits to the Spišský hrad Castle, etc.). The City Hall in Levoča has prepared the Tourism Strategy in the Levoča district for the period from 2021 to 2027 with a view to 2030. When developing the strategy, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) were respected. By analysing the potential of tourism and its strategic development possibilities, the town of Levoča came to know the effects of tourism on the environment. Applying the principles formulated in this strategy and their effect on the social, economic and ecological pillar of sustainability is a guarantee that this UNESCO destination will be developed in a sustainable way in the future.

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SPOLEČENSKÁ ODPOVĚDNOST ZA UDRŽITELSNOST SVĚTOVÉHO DĚDICTVÍ

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF THE WORLD'S HERITAGE

MONOGRAFIE VĚDECKÝCH PRACÍ MONOGRAPH OF RESEARCH PAPERS

Tato vědecká monografie "Společenská odpovědnost za udržitelnost světového dědictví" představuje komplexní pohled na aktuální výzvy v oblasti ochrany a udržitelnosti kulturního dědictví. Publikace zahrnuje široké spektrum témat, od ekonomické demokracie a udržitelného rozvoje až po specifické případové studie významných kulturních památek. Autoři se zabývají rolí hmotných památek UNESCO v cestovním ruchu České republiky a analyzují jejich potenciál pro udržitelný rozvoj regionů. Monografie se věnuje také důležitým otázkám bezpečnosti kulturního dědictví a prevence kriminality v této oblasti. Významnou částí publikace jsou studie zaměřené na vztah mladé generace ke kulturnímu dědictví a inovativní přístupy k jeho ochraně a propagaci. Autoři zkoumají vliv pokročilých technologií na pracovní trh v kontextu kulturního dědictví a nabízejí pohled na nové formy podnikání, jako jsou družstva, v rámci udržitelného rozvoje. Publikace poskytuje cenné poznatky o právních aspektech provozování památek a managementu v oblasti kulturního turismu. Zahrnuje také analýzy společenské odpovědnosti a krizového managementu v kontextu ochrany světového dědictví. Monografie je doplněna o kvantitativní studie a grafické znázornění aktuálních hrozeb pro udržitelnost kulturního dědictví. Tato interdisciplinární práce je neocenitelným zdrojem informací pro akademiky, odborníky v oblasti kulturního dědictví, tvůrce politik i studenty zajímající se o udržitelný rozvoj a ochranu světového kulturního bohatství. Poskytuje komplexní pohled na problematiku a nabízí inovativní řešení pro budoucí generace.

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