

# Limiting factors in the field of business activities in rural tourism

## *Faktory omezující podnikatelské aktivity ve venkovském cestovním ruchu*

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**Abstract:** This paper deals with problems of rural tourism development. The work is focused on researching the situation in the area of rural tourism in the Czech Republic, on understanding the attitudes of entrepreneurial sphere and rural population to this entrepreneurship and mainly on the determination of limiting factors that prevent this form of tourism from a more distinctive development. Rural tourism in the Czech Republic is still in the initiating stage of its development and it is not as developed as in some countries in West Europe. This goal has been reached with the help of primary questionnaire inquiry among business and agricultural subjects in rural areas in the individual regions and the detail results of this questionnaire inquiry are enclosed to the following paper. These identified factors were mainly insufficient financial means and at the same time insufficient state assistance connected with this. Insufficient awareness of this support as well as its inaccessibility for small business appears to be a difficulty, too. From the other obstacles, we can mention the current legislation system, bureaucracy, the state of communication and tourist infrastructure, fears of neighbours' intolerance and losing privacy and also unfamiliarity and little experience.

**Key words:** rural tourism, agrotourism, entrepreneurship, limiting factors

**Abstrakt:** Příspěvek se zabývá problematikou rozvoje venkovského cestovního ruchu. Práce je zaměřena na zjištění situace v oblasti venkovského cestovního ruchu v České republice, na pochopení postojů podnikatelské sféry a venkovských obyvatel k tomuto podnikání a zejména na určení limitujících faktorů, které brání výraznějšímu rozvoji této formy turistiky. Venkovská turistika je v České republice stále v počáteční fázi svého rozvoje a není rozvinuta tak, jako v některých zemích západní Evropy. Tohoto cíle bylo dosaženo pomocí primárního dotazníkového šetření mezi podnikatelskými a zemědělskými subjekty ve venkovských oblastech v jednotlivých krajích, jehož detailní výsledky jsou také součástí následujícího příspěvku. Identifikovanými faktory byly zejména nedostatečné peněžní prostředky a s nimi spojená nedostatečná státní podpora. Problémem je také nedostatečná informovanost o této podpoře a její nedosažitelnost pro drobné podnikatele. Dalšími překážkami je současná legislativa, byrokracie, stav komunikací a turistické infrastruktury, obavy z netolerance sousedů a ze ztráty soukromí a také neznalost a málo zkušeností.

**Klíčová slova:** venkovský cestovní ruch, agroturistika, podnikání, omezující faktory

### INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE

Tourism in our country as well as in the world is a segment of economy that is developing in a very dynamic way. With its volume of sales, it takes the third position in the world after petrochemical and

car industries and at the same time, thanks to its scope of employment and creation of quality job opportunities, it falls into the group of the most important economic branches.

The Czech Republic has significant preconditions for the development of tourism not only owing to

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its position in the centre of Europe but also thanks to its attractiveness in the form of nature beauties and cultural and historical amenities. Besides traditional products of tourism, there is also a new space which is opening for the development of tourism in the country. Structural changes, transformation and restitution of property legal proceedings after the year 1989 had a great impact on agriculture and the country area and they complicated the situation in employment, transportation and infrastructure. One of the possibilities that can at least partially contribute to the improvement of this oppressive situation is coming forward directly to country inhabitants themselves, and it is to provide what they dispose and what distinguishes them from cities – countryside, calm, relaxation, traditions and customs, clean air and others. Rural tourism offers the solutions of utilizing all the treasures of the country in all its forms, such as agrotourism, ecoagrotourism, ecotourism etc.

These alternative entrepreneurial activities are searched for directly by agricultural subjects themselves as another or additional financial source for obtaining and maintaining their main business activities, which is agricultural primary production, and also as the realization of a part of their own agricultural production directly on the farm. Rural tourism is not only a potential source of income for agricultural subjects and rural tourism facilities providers, but it also helps with creating new job opportunities and so it can also be beneficial for other rural inhabitants. They can contribute to the development of their village, urban area or region by offering accommodation services as well as mediating other activities in the area of trade, hospitality, handicraft, machinery maintenance etc. Activities connected with organizing the accompanying programmes for tourists (entertainment, sport, local attractions and others) are also of a high importance.

The development of rural tourism and its specific products counts among very important tools for the economic recovery of regions, but there are also many other facts for which this area of tourism deserves

more attention. Its other contribution can be seen in the stabilization of country population, landscaping, then also in the limited scope of ecological risks connected with it, mediating man's return back to nature and respecting natural environment.

This work is aimed at determining the situation in the area of rural tourism in the Czech Republic, at understanding the attitudes of entrepreneurial sphere and country population to this kind of business and especially at determining limiting factors that hinder more distinctive development of this form of tourism. For reaching this goal, a primary questionnaire inquiry was used; it was conducted among the entrepreneurial and agricultural subjects in the country within the scope of the individual NUTS II regions in the Czech Republic.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

At present, tourism counts among the leading economic activities in most economically developed countries. Čertík (2001) states in his publication that according to the data of the WTO (World Tourism Organization) and the WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council), tourism industry is the biggest employer in the world and one of the most profitable branches of world economy. According to the WTO estimations, tourism industry contributes to gross domestic product in the world with almost 11% and it employs approximately 11% active world population (in the Czech Republic 9–10%), and its following dynamic development is still expected.

The significance of tourism, as Pourová (2000) states furthermore, is also given by the fact that it secondarily affects many other branches of national economy in a positive way, especially transportation, trade, building industry, agriculture (agrotourism), culture and sports and so on. Considering this secondary importance, we have to admit that tourism in global standards is on the first place in creating job opportunities (Figure 1).

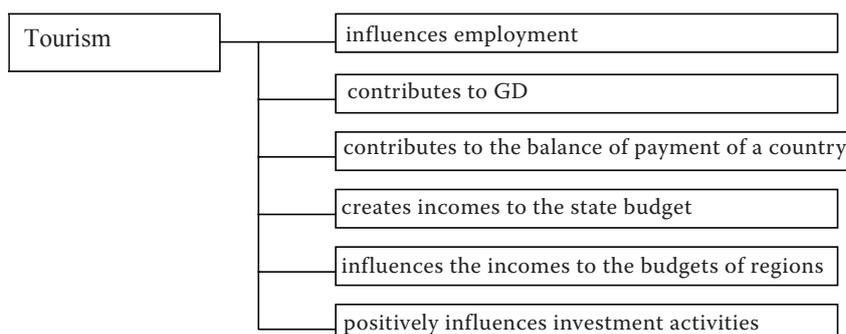


Figure 1. Macroeconomic importance of tourism

Source: Pourová 2002, p. 11

Table 1. Latent potential of tourism and traveling for new member countries of the EU

Country	Change from current levels by moving to the EU 15 performance for each component of Travel & Tourism demand			
	T&T Industry	T&T Economy	T&T Industry	T&T Economy
	GDP (€ milliard)		jobs	
Cyprus	288	744	12 138	31 380
Czech Republic	1.164	3.058	76 076	199 911
Estonia	215	564	16 769	44 058
Hungary	8.939	19.036	551 624	901 094
Latvia	286	752	27 994	73 552
Lithuania	472	1.240	36 668	96 342
Malta	443	604	19 478	26 539
Poland	6.520	19.414	500 235	1 489 575
Slovakia	381	1.002	37 369	98 200
Slovenia	167	438	9 287	24 403
Total	18.876	46.853	1 287 635	2 985 054

Source: Welcoming the new EU member states with jobs and growth (2004)

According to Malá (1999), tourism also plays an important part in the revitalization of economically weak areas. The multiplication effect of tourism enables to keep, or as the case may be to create new job opportunities and financial sources for the development of such areas.

Table 1 demonstrates the latent potential and increasing importance of tourism in new member countries including the Czech Republic as calculated by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). The estimations concerning increasing share in GDP and creating new job opportunities were calculated with the help of averages that are current in the former EU 15 countries and the following application of the established data on new member countries. The analysis reveals that ten of these accession countries can make other € 46.9 milliard and this branch could create other 3 million new job positions. For the Czech Republic, such latent potential of tourism represents additional € 3.058 milliard and almost 200 000 new job positions.

In their works, many authors mention new products of tourism that have ideal conditions for their more striking development in the Czech Republic. Apart from traditional products of tourism, such as spa treatment, urban tourism, cultural cognitive tourism and so on, there is an opportunity for rural tourism in the Czech Republic, as mentioned in the publication "Odvětví cestovního ruchu" by Němčanský (1999). Rural tourism with its subproducts (agrotourism,

ecotourism and others), as a product of sustainable development of tourism, can be applied more or less broadly even in nature reserves and national parks.

Vaško (2002) discusses the whole range of new forms of tourism that are associated by thoughtfulness towards tourism destinations, consideration for nature as well as entire environment, for cultural and historical treasures and also consideration for relationships among people. These new forms of tourism are included in so-called "green tourism".

Green tourism is characterized by the desire of visitors to blend in with nature as well as human environment. It is a kind of tourism with mainly active content, respecting and protecting nature. It appears mainly in the form of ecotourism and rural tourism. Cottage and farmhouse stays are ranked among the repeated recreational stays and the other forms of rural tourism – agrotourism, ecotourism, ecoagrotourism and others – among one-time tourist and recreational stays (Figure 2).

Similarly as determining appropriate goals for the realization of each business activity is very important, also the objectives of rural tourism are determined and defined in the way described by Čertík (2001):

- To stimulate the development of further business activities in the country
- To decongest the overloaded infrastructure of towns
- To reduce the migration of rural population to towns and to stabilize rural area

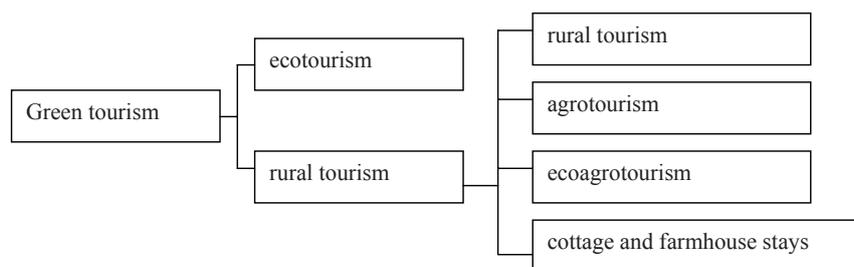


Figure 2. The structure of green tourism

Source: Pourová 2002, p. 43

- To respect natural environment, maintain and develop it
- To contribute to landscape creation and general environmental care
- To popularize local beauties, uniqueness and traditions, contribute to their maintaining and development
- To return the man to nature

Rural area<sup>1</sup>, as it is defined, is connected with low population density, open space and settlements of not more than 10 000 inhabitants. As far as soil utilization is concerned, agriculture and forestry are predominating, as well as nature reserves and national parks. The society living in these regions has strong tendencies to traditionalism – the influence of traditional customs and past years is quite strong in most cases.

For these reasons, rural tourism should have the following characteristics, as Janotka (1999) describes. It should be:

- Located in rural regions
- Functionally rural, established on the specific features of rural world – small-scale production, open space, contact with nature, heritage of the past, traditional customs and manners
- Rural in its standard, i.e. small buildings, small settlements
- Traditional in its character – slow and organic development in connection with local families
- Sustainable – in the meaning that its development should help to maintain the rural character, should not liquidate local resources and specifics. The resource of rural tourism should be considered to be a tool for financing nature and landscape protection

- and sustainable development rather than a tool for further urbanization and fortune increase
- Rural tourism consists of many kinds and forms of activities and services which are a follow-up to the specific conditions of rural environment, village and family traditions and customs and specific initiatives of individuals and families in providing such services

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has conducted a study focusing on the problems of rural tourism and the contribution of this form of tourism to the development of the country<sup>2</sup>. As it is stated in this source, tourist activities can be divided into typically rural ones or, on the contrary, typically urban ones, and also those that are on the boundary between rural and urban tourism. These types of activities can be seen in Table 2.

Tourism does not include only accommodation or boarding for tourists, but also the care for their leisure time. Well-organized tourism should also contain interesting and attractive accompanying programmes that together with accommodation and boarding services act as the whole offered product. This does not only mean activities organized by the provider of the services, but mainly the activities in the connection with the surrounding environment. Stříbrná (2002) mentions the following:

- Boarding – the offer should concentrate on food and customs connected with the village. For example bio-food in connection with organic agriculture or typical rural meals, regionally then at local specialities (wine-making areas)
- Agricultural activities – recuperation activities linked with the help of tourists

<sup>1</sup> For the classification of regions EU uses the methodology of the OECD based on the criterion of the recalculated population density. According to this methodology, NUTS 3 regions are divided into three types: predominantly rural regions – more than 50% population live in rural settlements (for this purpose defined as villages with fewer than 150 inhabitants per 1 km<sup>2</sup>), significantly rural regions – 15–50% inhabitants live in rural settlements. In the CR, all regions except for the region of Vysočina – predominantly rural region – fall into the category of significantly rural regions (the programme for rural development for the period 2007–2013).

<sup>2</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development: Tourism strategy and rural development. Paris, 1994.

Table 2. The differentiation of typically rural and typically urban forms of tourism

Typically rural holiday	Holiday with the features of rural or urban holiday	Typically urban holiday/in holiday resorts
Hiking	swimming	sightseeing
Mountaineering	holiday on little or medium frequented beaches	shopping
“Adventure” holiday	downhill skiing in medium frequented places	holiday on the beach in highly frequented places
Canoeing	golf	downhill skiing in highly frequented places
Rafting	holiday oriented at learning about traditions	holiday oriented at urban traditions
Cross-country skiing	holiday oriented at nature protection	zoological gardens
Downhill skiing in little frequented places	educational holiday	spas
Studying nature	cultural shows	industrial tourism
Hunting	holiday devoted to handicraft	important conferences/meetings
Cycling	camping	holiday in resorts
Horse-riding	sightseeing	sports events
Studies of rural traditions	conferences of lower or medium importance	popular sports – football, hockey
Chill-out holiday	sailing/entertaining sails	
Conferences/meetings of lower importance	fishing at sea	
Fishing		

Source: Tourism strategy and rural development (1994)

- Horse rides and horse-riding schools – offering these services depends on the possibility of the farmer’s agricultural subject to have or to keep horses. This can also be mediated by another business subject
- Hunting, fishing, mushrooming – again depends on the complete background of the subject, its scope of property in terms of woods and ponds
- Summer and winter sports – also the character of the surrounding countryside plays an important part. The offer can include hiking, cycling, swimming, mountaineering, in winter ice-skating, skiing etc.

Local sights can be ranked among other accompanying programmes. The information about these attractions represents a certain packaging, as Pourová (2000) describes, in which the complete offer is presented. The same can also be applied to natural uniqueness, local customs, ethnographic traditions and others. For the accompanying programmes it is highly important to create a complex offer and the compact programme of the stay. Its specific form will always be dependant on the character of the village itself,

its facilities and the character of wider environment (Malá 1999).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First references concerning rural tourism and agrotourism in the Czech Republic come from 1993, when 15 farms begun to conduct their business in this field. A year later, there were already 51 of them and the attendance was represented by 800 tourists. Nowadays, approximately 28 000–38 000 people spend their holiday at farms and one third of them are foreign tourists. According to the ECEAT organization, the length of their stay does not change and remains on the level of 3–4 days. When the guests come by the means of travel agencies, they stay for up to 7 days, which represents the length of programme packages. Among accommodation providers for rural tourism, we can find running farms, small campsites, country cottages, summer flats, boarding houses and also themed hotels.

Nowadays approximately 1 000 entrepreneurs work in the area of rural tourism services – these estima-

Table 3. The structure of respondents according to the individual regions in the Czech Republic

The structure of responders	NUTS II Region							CR
	SE	SW	MS	SE	SW	CM	CB	
The number of respondents	23	21	17	36	17	22	17	153
% of respondents	15	14	11	23	11	15	11	100

SE – South-east, SW – South-west, MS – Moravian-Silesian region, SE – South-east, SW – South-west, CM – Central Moravia, CB – Central Bohemia, CR – the Czech Republic

tions come from the total number of subjects found in catalogues of various travel agencies and tourist information centres. However, in the Association of the Entrepreneurs of the Czech Republic (Svaz podnikatelů ČR), only 168<sup>3</sup> subjects are registered. The most well-known accommodation facilities for rural tourism can be found especially in Šumava, the South of Bohemia, in the Podkrkonošský region and in the Orlické mountains. However, the literature dealing with this form of tourism can see a big growth potential in other places, too, when the variety of the countryside, tourist attractiveness and rather good infrastructure are taken into account. At present times, there are programmes offering rural tourism in the Czech Republic that are covered by the Association of the Entrepreneurs of the Czech Republic in cooperation with the ECEAT organization (European Centre for Ecological and Agricultural Tourism) and the allowance organization of the Czech Centre of Tourism – Czechtourism. These programmes represent a compact offer of services in the frame of projects Holiday in the Country (Prázdniny na venkově), Green Holiday (Zelené prázdniny) and Heritage Paths (Stezky dědictví).

Below you can find the results of the conducted primary inquiry the main goal of which was to identify the factors that limit business activities in tourism in the rural areas. The partial goals were to assess the current conditions for the rural tourism development, to obtain information about tourist attendance and to analyse tourism clientele in the individual regions in the Czech Republic, then also to find out the attitudes and plans of business and agricultural subjects concerning rural tourism, to determine the most frequent areas of business in rural tourism and to detect the level of awareness of the supplementary state benefits for the area of rural tourism.

The questionnaire survey was conducted in February and March 2006. An agricultural and business subject acting in the country was taken as the established basic unit of marketing research, so the basic set is

represented by subjects carrying out agricultural activities or activities fitting into the area of rural tourism. A non-comprehensive inquiry was suggested for the marketing research, when only a certain sample of units was questioned, especially for financial and time reasons. The intentional selection was used for the research, when agricultural subjects and subjects working in the area of rural tourism services were selected intentionally. The inquiry concerns statistical regional units on the level of NUTS II and at the same time the research is limited to only seven out of eight regions in total, in other words all NUTS II regions apart from Prague.

In total 309 questionnaires were distributed (154 to farmers, 106 to the ECEAT members and 49 to campsite providers), and 153 of these were then available for further processing. So the returnability was as high as 50%. The structure of respondents according to the individual NUTS II regions of the Czech Republic is shown in Table 3.

### Tourist attractiveness of monitored regions

Respondents from individual regions mostly agreed on the attractiveness of living and natural environment from the point of view of rural tourism development. As a great advantage for tourism, they mentioned especially natural resources (87%), cycling and hiking paths were also assessed positively (60%) as well as the occurrence of traditional folk architecture and maintaining local traditions that could become a part of an interesting offer for tourists for their uniqueness. It is important not only to maintain such traditions, but also to offer them in an appropriate way and to benefit from their existence in favour of the area of their occurrence. On the other hand, the region representatives were not satisfied with tourist infrastructure (60%), transport accessibility (50%), and the occurrence of sports facilities (60%).

<sup>3</sup> The data updated 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2006 were found on the ECEAT website. Available at [www.eceat.cz/public/docs/seznam-clensvaz\\_2005.htm](http://www.eceat.cz/public/docs/seznam-clensvaz_2005.htm)

Investments in sports facilities – downhill skiing, swimming pool areas – are exactly the right way how to improve complete facilities of regions, but at the same time the places could become more attractive for tourist clientele.

Tourist attendance in the individual regions has an increasing tendency according to approximately half of the responders. The Czechs are the most common visitors of these regions (27%), as to foreign visitors we can find the same nationalities as those mentioned in the national statistics, i.e. tourists from Germany (17%), the Netherlands (19%) and Poland (11%). Among the tourists, we can also find visitors from Austria, Slovakia, France, Belgium, but also from Lithuania, Estonia, Denmark, Switzerland or the USA.

### **The respondents attitudes towards rural tourism**

This part of the work concludes and discusses the results concerning the respondents relationship towards entrepreneurial sphere in rural tourism. The level of awareness of rural tourism, planned expansion of current activities into rural tourism as well as the attitudes towards business in connection with demographic characteristics of respondents was determined in this part.

Nearly 80% respondents are aware of the term “agrotourism” and they were able to define this term. There can be various reasons for the unawareness of this term – the unawareness of problems or unwillingness or inability to explain it in their own words. At the same time, the existing connection between the awareness and the preferences of rural tourism was found. We can say that those who are informed incline to starting business in this area. Nevertheless, even the awareness can be a factor impeding starting the business. 87% respondents who were aware of this term said “no” to the possibility of expanding their enterprise into the area of rural tourism.

Subjects from rural areas are open to business in rural tourism (approx. 60%) and they are considering the possibility to expand to this sphere (21%). In all the monitored regions, rural tourism sympathizers can be found. In most cases, the centre of entrepreneurs’ attention concerns accommodation in private facilities without boarding (over 40%). Other favourite activities include hiring sports equipment (over 35%), organizing picnics in the countryside (approx. 36%), leisure time activities for tourists (fishing, hunting), and also direct sale of agricultural products or horse-riding tourism. A very important fact is that respondents

expressed positively for enterprise in several areas of rural tourism and so they try to provide a wider offer of their services with the aim to address more groups of tourists.

Besides accommodation services, a facility can also ensure many other ways of spending free time, for instance in case of bad weather – painting, weaving, clay modelling, making leather products, woodcarving and smithery workshops. This does not mean that business subjects themselves should dispose of all of these. Their task is rather to map their surroundings, gain information about opportunities and activities that might be interesting for tourists and with the help of which they could become even more attractive through the appropriate promotion. The concept of agrotourism farm in the form of sports grounds is also one of the European trends; then the offer includes for example combat games with blank shells or the Asian martial sports (aikido, sumo, karate). There is also a purely ladies entertainment – fashion shows, aerobics, lectures about diets, health habits, make up and cosmetics, making decorations for household, such as flower arrangement, decalomania, needlework, knotting and other ways of possible accompanying services.

Another asset of the facility can be special services that add a certain exceptionality to the facility and help differentiate it from competitive services. These extra services also attract a specific target group of clients. Among popular services, mainly in West European countries, we can find for instance the offer of depositing valuables, saunas, laundries, babysitting, training facilities or possibilities to organize social events, equipment for disabled visitors, possibility to accommodate pets and so on.

70% respondents see rural tourism as beneficial for increasing businessmen’ or farmers’ income, and they find even a higher importance in the opportunity for self-realization. The responses for such benefits as, for example, possible stability of population or increasing living standards developed in rather an opposite way. Half of the respondents agreed with the positives of increasing the awareness about the village or creating new job positions.

61% men and 39% women participated in the survey. During the inquiry, it became evident that women are those who run the activities in rural tourism, but men rather incline to the idea of starting such business, while women keep more careful and hesitating attitudes.

51% respondents stated agriculture as their economic activity. The relationship of independently working farmers towards the enterprise in rural tourism was being found during the survey, and the

outcome showed that they are interested in the area of rural tourism (30% of them are interested and 32% already conduct such activities, 23% do not know and 15% farmers refused completely).

Even the age of the respondent can play a certain role when deciding about the rural tourism business. It was shown that although the older generation has its representatives among the subjects working in rural tourism, younger people seem to be more open towards these activities.

Concerning privately owned properties, an agricultural farm and then a family house were mentioned most often. More than half of all the business subjects working in rural tourism are owners of farmhouses, and 65% of the subjects planning to expand into rural tourism own farms. Then it was shown that the owners of family houses would rather not start to conduct business in rural tourism. The main reason are probably worries about losing privacy mentioned a few times before.

Also reached education can have limiting effects on beginning activities in the area of rural tourism. University graduates or secondary educated people incline towards these activities more often.

#### **The most significant factors limiting the development of business activities in rural tourism**

As presented in Table 4, the respondents consider the lack of financial means needed especially for reconstructing and constructing buildings used for rural tourism to be the greatest barrier. According to

the results of the survey, it is difficult to obtain the financial means even despite the existence of state supporting programmes. Insufficient awareness of the possibilities of such state assistance is seen as another limiting factor – 64% respondents are not informed about the programmes coming under the state assistance. Unavailability of this support due to strict conditions that have to be fulfilled appears to be a problem. Another difficulty is the fact that at first a project has to be financed from the entrepreneur's own means and only after that the grant can be asked for. It was also proved that the unawareness of the state support possibility can play a highly important part in making the decision. It is possible that in case of a higher knowledgeability, more responders would be interested in enterprise in rural tourism in comparison with the results of the survey (26%).

One of the possibilities of making the state support available also for small businessmen is simplifying the conditions for gaining it, simplifying the administration and also a higher transparency of financial flows, so that the means are fairly distributed and they meet the objectives for which they were provided. Only after that the situation in tourism development can advance in a positive direction and not only will those who have an easy access to the means profit from it.<sup>4</sup>

The current legislation is also seen as a barrier by 2/3 of the responders. Entrepreneurs registered according to the Agricultural Law cannot, according to this law, conduct their business in other areas such as rural tourism, for instance. It is inevitable to apply for a trade certificate in this area, for which in some cases the aforementioned subject has to have professional qualifications. Other difficulties are

Table 4. The order of the most important factors limiting rural tourism business

1		2		3	
The shortage of financial means	89.54 %	Current legislation and bureaucracy	65.36 %	The state of communication and tourism infrastructure	64.05 %
4		5		6	
Missing accommodation capacity	46.4 %	Fears of misunderstanding from neighbors' side	45.75 %	Fears of losing privacy	42.48 %
7		8		9	
Unawareness of the problem. little experience	35.94 %	The shortage of time	29.42 %	Unattractive surroundings	18.96 %

Source: Bálková (2006)

<sup>4</sup> To give an example, one of the respondents mentioned a specific problem of the LEADER programme when one of the MAS selection boards approves projects and allocates funds particularly to the subjects that are the MAS members and therefore there are not enough financial means remaining for local farmers who are considering to provide accommodation services.

complicated conditions and the enormous amount of bureaucratic acts connected with entrepreneurship, which is impossible to cope with during the standard operation.

Poor state of communication is a real problem of the whole Czech Republic and this concerns unsatisfactory tourist infrastructure, too. On the other hand, tourist and cycling tracks as parts of this infrastructure were considered to be satisfactory. Despite the fact that individual regions dispose of rather a consistent network of cycling and hiking paths, not all of them achieve qualities high enough to attract larger numbers of tourists. Approximately half of the respondents assume that insufficient accommodation capacity as a part of tourist infrastructure is one of the factors that limit more considerable development of rural tourism.

Intolerance and misunderstanding from neighbours' side were also mentioned among the limiting factors, as well as a local board's envy. This problem can be caused by the villagers' feeling of losing peace and rural comfort and so they can create obstacles for a business subject by complaining at the local authorities. This area is linked with another defined problem, and that is the fear of losing privacy. Such fears usually arise in case of the owners of family houses who do not have premises as sufficient as farmers to offer. Then there is a possibility to use the titles of subsidises and to construct an independent object to be used by tourists.

The issue of unawareness and also insufficient experience can emerge from rural communities' characteristics that are not prepared enough yet to diversify the existing activities. This problem could be solved by a suitable organizational structure of the village in the frame of which an association for supporting tourism could exist. Such associations are missing in villages as well as in regions. This unit could serve as a consultant and a coordinator of the country development including the area of rural tourism and it would have certain competences, for example selective procedures for development projects, monitoring correct and purposeful drawing of the EU funds for rural development and so on. It could also create new job opportunities and avert the outflow of young qualified inhabitants who could find their self-realization in this unit. Younger generation will bring new ideas and so it can change the traditionalistic tendencies that are inclined to by the older generation living mostly in these rural areas.

The shortage of time needed for tourists and not very attractive surroundings are considered to be rather

marginal issues by the responders, one third, respectively one fifth of them mentioned these matters.

### **The support of tourism from the part of the village and the state, the promotion of facilities**

Nearly 60% respondents think that tourism is not supported in their village. As the most common ways of support, they mentioned investments in local infrastructure and the support of promotion via promotion materials. 8 respondents mentioned the support in the form of grants and 4 of them also stated the village's interest in educating their inhabitants in the area of tourism.

The support of rural tourism is quite widespread in West European countries and it has many forms. One of them is the exemption from natural person income taxation depending on the number of beds to rent, which is undoubtedly a motivating factor. Another form of support is providing soft loans for reconstructions. Enterprise in agrotourism is permitted without a licence deed and there are trainings for tourist facilities providers starting their business. Then, there are organizations of country businessmen in agrotourism that represent the providers' interests and coordinate the general development. Such organizations are mostly supported by the state and the additional amount of financial resources comes from the members' fees. Despite the fact that in the Czech Republic the support of rural tourism exists in the form of financial support from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Local Development and also in the form of educational and consultant services (courses, seminars, conferences), it is not provided in such an extent and structure as in some EU countries.

When promoting their facility, the respondents mostly rely on the effect of their websites (approx. 77%) and also satisfied customers' references (73%). The ECEAT organization which offers the opportunity of promoting facilities on its web pages was mentioned by not more than 50% respondents. As an explanation to this fact, a few respondents stated increasing prices for the services provided. This fact can also be seen as one of the problematic areas. The organization originally created to support this area is too expensive for some providers. In case of lower prices, the organization could have more members than it has now<sup>5</sup> who – with the help of a suitable promotion – could have more clients and so higher profits and success.

<sup>5</sup> 168 organized members of the ECEAT organization.

Missing cooperation of business subjects that is common in the countries with developed tourism is another problem. In our conditions, we can rather meet the mutual jealousy and the unawareness of the importance and profitability of common operation in meeting tourists' needs and requirements. The promotion of facilities, which is for example used by providers of rural tourism in Holland, can be a tourist attractive network with the help of which providers mutually support one another. Various ways of cooperation bring various advantages:

- Sharing clients → higher occupancy rate (when the businessmen' activities differ).
- Lower financial contribution from every entrepreneur (financially demanding promotion materials, participating at trade fairs of tourism as the entrepreneurs of one region).
- Creating sufficient unique sale qualities or a new product (e. g. cycling paths network, more accommodation facilities, refreshment facilities along the paths etc.).

We can take a programme working in Austria as an example. It is called The Holiday at the Country Yard or Farm Holiday (Dovolená na selském dvoře) and it provides a sufficient income to 21 000 farms in Austria but not a long time ago this kind of tourism was the weakest segment of Austrian tourist industry (problems in the area of marketing or creating a product of tourism). These imperfections were solved with the help of the institutional background and the state support. So called Host Associations (Sdružení hostitelů) were created in the individual regions of Austria whose members exchange their experience, hold collective seminars, trainings and many other events.

Although rural tourism is considered to be one of the new forms of tourism in the Czech Republic, it is inevitable to see it as one of the tools that can help at least partially solve the problems of the Czech rural areas which have emerged after agriculture restructuring. For this, it is necessary to know the preconditions of the development of this form of tourism existing in the Czech Republic, but also to consider the difficulties that those interested in running tourist facilities meet.

## CONCLUSION

This paper summarizes the results of the project the aim of which was to identify factors that limit business activities in rural tourism. This goal was achieved by a questionnaire survey of entrepreneurial

and agricultural subjects in rural areas in individual NUTS II region of the Czech Republic.

The work was aimed at several partial areas in which the conditions for rural tourism development were assessed and the attitudes and plans of the investigated subjects towards rural tourism business were found. Furthermore, the support of this form of tourism was assessed from the part of villages as well as the state, and the connections between the identification data of the responders and their attitudes towards rural tourism enterprise were followed. An independent area of the survey was devoted to the main goal of investigation and there the most significant factors limiting the development of this form of tourism were identified.

These identified factors are mainly insufficient financial means and at the same time insufficient state assistance connected with this. Insufficient awareness of this support as well as its inaccessibility for small business appears to be a difficulty, too. From the other obstacles, we can mention the current legislation system, bureaucracy, the state of communication and tourist infrastructure, fears of neighbours' intolerance and losing privacy and also unfamiliarity and little experience. Another problem is the ownership of the property, namely family houses, the conservatism of older generation and education.

The results mentioned above are a part of the research project, id. code VZ: 62156 48904 "Czech economy in the process of integration and globalization and the development of agrarian sector and service sector in new conditions of the European integrated market", thematic complex 03 "The development of business sphere relations in connection with the changes in lifestyle in the terms of purchasing behaviour of population and the changes of business environment in the processes of integration and globalization" that was realized with the financial support of public funds via the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic – MŠMT.

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