REMARKS ON E-TOURISM IN VOIVODESHIP STRATEGIES IN POLAND

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ABSTRACT

The author is interested in the development of e-tourism in Poland. One of the ways, which let compare information about regions including their policy for local development, is analysis of documents adopted and respected by each voivodeship - Strategy for Regional (Voivodeship) Development. Documents indicate the directions of development and the region priorities. They specify the main directions of future activities, in compliance with the requirements set by national policy of development and also have to respect European Commission documents. The main article's objective is to identify if there is an interest in e-tourism development, or although, e-services what can also mean e-services for tourism support, planned for realization in regional strategy development by local government.

Key words: tourism, e-tourism, ICT, development strategy, regional development

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the fundamental aspects of policy towards its development. It is beyond doubt that tourism is an engine of economy development of the region and this development brings benefits also beyond the local dimensions. The task of local authorities is to determine the place of tourism and its development issues in developed strategies at the local level. Efficient infrastructure in areas such as transportation, public safety and accommodation, is necessary for the development of tourism activities. Increasingly important is the use of new solutions in the city, such as audio tours or tourist navigation systems. In the current programming period, the European Union supports investments related to tourism. The funds are directed to projects for the development of the hospitality and the digitization of cultural heritage. Given that the promotion of entrepreneurship in the region is in the interest of local authorities, the support of tourism sector should be one of the priorities for them. The strategy of the European Union - Europe 2020 [6], prepared by the European Commission, defines smart growth as one that supports the creation of new products and services, growth and employment of the area. In addition, the intelligent and sustainable development is one of the main objectives in the new programming period (2014-2020). The priority is to achieve better results in the creation of the information society. Sustainable development of

the information society requires investment in ICT infrastructure, implementation of educational programs, but also developing the range of services provided by electronic means, including but not limited to e-tourist services.

The objective of this article is to present the results of the analysis done on the documents prepared by the local authorities – Voivodeship Development Strategies for each region (voivodeships) of Poland and to indicate whether it is planned to support tourism or government services by use of ICT tools.

2. TOURISM AND E-TOURISM

Tourism is one of the economy branches that generate the revenue used for accelerating the development of the city and the whole region. In 2011, Poland was visited by 13.1 million tourists, what means an increase over the previous year by 5% [4]. In next years, further growth is expected. The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2012 ranked the competitiveness of Poland's tourism sector at 49th (the score 4,4 for 7 possible) out of 139 countries. At the five first places there are countries from Europe with Switzerland as the first [9]. Each region of our country has natural beauty or cultural heritage worth of interest, which is perceived by the local authorities. Digitization of many spheres of life, the universality of the Internet, multimedia, and mobile devices are changing the look of the city, including the tourism industry. This forces a change in the way of offering travel services.

ICT plays a critical role for the competitiveness of tourism organizations and destination. E-tourism is most often associated with the purchase of travel services. ICTs empowers consumers to identify, customize and purchase tourism products and supports the globalization of the industry by providing tools for developing, managing and distributing offerings worldwide. But this concept, however, is much broader and includes all the applications and devices applied in tourism, such as audio guide, mobile travel guide, electronic cards in museums, the information for tourists, information systems, virtual museums and others. The term "e-tourism" means the use of ICT technologies in all processes related to tourism. That means the tourism activities in conduct, promotion of tourist product, sale of these services, exploring and navigating travel destinations, gather information, book a flight or room [2]. The nowadays tourist is often not interested in reading the notes at the museum exhibits. He prefers to listen to the short information, or see a movie connected with them. A number of interactive museums increase and popularity of mobile audio tours prepared specially for individual tour grows, and what is very important, the tourist can often choose its language. Guiding may be accompanied by carefully selected background like: music and effects related to the historical aspect (such as the sounds of fighting, the sounds of the ancient city, etc.). This increases the availability of the object, especially for handicaps and the elder people, who move slowly. Mobile applications that are run on smartphones are more popular. Their number increasingly growing. There are augmented reality systems that link real-world image (photo taken with the phone camera) with virtual elements, which are complementary to the image of the real world with additional information elements.

3. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The National Development Strategy is concerned as a medium-term strategy. Its main objective is to strengthen and make use of the economic, social and institutional capabilities in order to ensure rapid and sustainable development of the country, and to improve the quality of life. The National Development Strategy 2020 (NDS) is a part of the national development management system, the foundation of which is determined by the amended law on the principles of development policy and by the document on Poland's Development Management System. Due to the need to adjust the National Development Strategy 2007-2015, to the new socio-economic conditions and to the internal and external challenges, as well as to the requirements of the introduced development policy management system, it was decided to update it and to extend its time horizon up to 2020. The efforts to update the strategy were correlated with the work

on other strategic documents under development, such as the Long-term National Development Strategy and the Integrated Strategies.

The main strategic documents of the new system, on the basis of which the development policy is implemented, are: Long-Term National Development Strategy – LTNDS (Poland 2030 - Third Wave of Modernity) which defines major trends and challenges as well as the concept of development of the country in the long-term, Medium-Term National Development Strategy – MTNDS (National Development Strategy 2020) which is the most important document in the medium term, setting out strategic objectives for the development of the country until 2020, and key in determining the development activities, including those that can potentially be funded under the UE financial perspective 2014-2020 and under 9 Integrated Strategies whose aim is to assist in achieving the development objectives: Strategy for Innovation and Efficiency of the Economy, Human Capital Development Strategy, Transport Development Strategy, Energy Security and the Environment, Efficient State, Social Capital Development Strategy, National Strategy of Regional Development 2010-2020, Regions, cities, rural areas, Strategy for Development of the National Security System, Strategy for Sustainable Development of Rural Areas, Agriculture and Fisheries. LTNDS, MTNDS and the 9 Integrated Strategies are joined by a hierarchy of objectives and directions for intervention. The Integrated Strategies depart from a narrow sectorial approach; instead they focus on the integration of areas and on the permeability of various phenomena and processes. The National Strategy of Regional Development indicates the extent of the territorial impact of interventions implemented under various public policies, and therefore also under the remaining Integrated Strategies. It has a particular role in the whole system. It sets out the key regional development challenges and outlines the development objectives in various areas, taking into account the functions such objectives perform as well as the existing potentials and barriers.

4. REMARKS ON DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The voivodeship (in article also: province, region) has been a high-level administrative subdivision of Poland since the 14th century. The Polish local government reforms adopted in 1998, which went into effect since 1st January 1999, created sixteen voivodeships. They are mostly named after historical and geographical regions. For the region, the most important is the National Strategy for Regional Development 2010-2020. The document, which sets out the policy of local authorities (provincial) is a regional development strategy, and contains the concept of purposeful and long-term development of the region. In the long term there may nevertheless be circumstances that require updating the strategies, such as the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy and the Europe 2020 strategy.

Regional development strategies are documents that try to extend the scope of the community problems of the region. They specify the main directions of future activities and possibility of region development, in compliance with the requirements set by EU institutions and documents. That is why they are more general. Their records related to e-tourism refer rather to the development of the information society and economy which leads to the creation of enterprises working for the tourism industry and use of new technologies in services. The objective of the strategy is to set priorities and directions of development in the coming years, but also an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of the region (most often in the form the SWOT analysis) and the problems that need to be taken into account in the implementation of its plans, undertaken projects and the way of their financing and estimating of their implementation.

This article reviews and analyses the strategy documents of each provinces. With each document selected comments on the assessment of tourism development were chosen (part 1) and pointed out the strategic objectives of the region, combined with the development of tourism and the use of ICT in tourism and government services (part 2). There is a summary of this analysis in Table 1.

TABLE 1. INFORMATION ON EACH VOIVODESHIP

Voivodeship name:	Information from Voivodeship Development Strategy:
Dolnośląskie DS	- tourism is one of the main spheres of activity. Region well-developed with tourist infrastructure. *Priorities/objectives:* Increasing competitiveness of the region concerning development of tourism sector, including the concentration of activities on branded touristic products Strengthen the image of the region as an attractive tourist destination
Kujawsko-pomorskie KP	- insufficient use of nature attitudes nad cultural heritage - lack of promotion and diversification of touristic offer *Priorities/objectives:* The development of ICT infrastructure The intergration of information systems in government, and development the database of culture heritage, accommodation
Lubelskie LJ	- the high quality of the nature - well developed rural tourism - underdeveloped tourism infrastructure (accommodation and catering, transport and security) *Priorities/objectives:* Supporting tourism infrastructure, the development of tourism in areas with special tourist values (eg, the Vistula River Valley, Roztocze, Polesie)
Lubuskie LB	- interesting but not promoted values of the nature - tourism is not one of the major economy sectors - underdeveloped touristic infrastructure *Priorities/objectives:* Dissemination of the ICT (stimulating the use of digital technologies by the administration and public services, the development and promotion of e-services such as e-government, e-health, e-tourism, digitization of public resources, creating the portal Lubuskie Gates – the objective is an access to information). Implementation of international projects, such as "Odra River for tourists 2014" and branded tourism products – like Lubusz Wine and Honey Trail.
Łódzkie LD	- unsatisfactory state of telecommunication infrastructure and IT level *Priorities/objectives*: Creation of telecommunication infrastructure Supporting and promotion of activities aimed at creating global information resources available in the internet Cooperation through the use of cultural and tourism attractions for the promotion of the region
Małopolskie MP	- has a rich and unique cultural and landscape attitudes, - a large number of cultural institutions. One of the most popular regions. *Priorities/objectives*: Heritage and natural assets should be treated as an regional element of potential opportunity, and condition of development of tourism industry
Mazowieckie MA	- not enough trails and bicycle routs, - expansion/modernization of tourist infrastructure, - lack of information and insufficient promotion of the region *Priorities/goals:* Development of infrastructure for the dissemination of knowledge using ICT solutions, (including the creation the Mazowiecka Digital Library) e-development of the region The creation and implementation of the infrastructure for spatial information related to such structures as: e-government, public administration.
Opolskie OP	- lack of tourist products - poor technical condition of buildings including cultural heritage monuments *Priorities/objectives:*

	The development of e-services and ICT solutions integrating support the implementation of electronic public services, the development of information web sites such as "Opole in the Internet" Raising the level of competence and skills in the use of ICT techniques (learning society)
Podkarpackie PK	- favorable geopolitical location, natural beauty, the occurrence of mineral water, a well-developed tourism. - unsatisfactory information about the region and insufficient promotion of tourism *Priorities/objectives:* Tourism as a factor of socio-economic development of the region (Improving the competitiveness of the tourism products, the development of regional tourism)
Podlaskie PD	- insufficient standard of tourism infrastructure - Tourist monuments and places of interest are placed far one form another - Insufficient IT infrastructure - Significant natural attitudes of the region *Priorities/objectives:* Tourism development using natural and cultural heritage can be achieved through: a comprehensive and innovation tourist management, extending the touristic season, stimulating the development of cultural institutions and the arts, cultural promotion, recording and investigation of monuments, heritage conservation cultural heritage.
Pomorskie PM	- unique heritage and cultural diversity of the region. *Priorities/objectives:* To become the first tourist destination in Poland. The unique tourist and cultural offer (interesting during all year, well-known image of the region and better recognition of regional brands and cultural tourism)
Śląskie SL	- varied and attractive tourist offer - attractive natural environment and interesting cultural heritage conducive to the development of different forms of tourism and leisure - the development of e-services and modern solutions - increasing importance of tourism as an impulse for local economy *Priorities/objectives:* The development of skills and information society services, including e-commerce services, including: e-government, e-business, e-education, e-culture. Tourism economy is one of emerging economy items. Increasing the attractiveness of the region will contribute to the development of enterprises directly related to tourism, leisure and recreation, but also to firms and organizations working around tourism, like: catering or accommodation. (Developing of an efficient system for promoting tourist products, including an integrated network of tourist information and services, using information technology)
Świętokrzyskie SW	- attractive tourism location (central part of the country) - rich precious mineral resources - relatively well-developed rural tourism - a small number of regional and branded tourism products, - insufficient promotion and marketing of tourism products *Priorities/objectives:* Protection and rational use of natural resources and cultural heritage (Development of tourism infrastructure to support processes of local and regional tourism products, development of integrated system for promotion and tourist information, labelling and provision of tourist attractions) Development of systems of technical and social infrastructure, broadband internet in education, science and culture (e-business, IT systems implementation in the economy - trade, banking, travel services, etc.)
Warmińsko-mazurskie WM	- favorable natural conditions for developing tourism and agro tourism - underdevelop tourism infrastructure - lack of concept of treatment of the environment as an advantage

	Priorities/objectives: Promotion of tourism and tourism products Maintaining a high level of information system and continuous promotion of the region Underlining the profits of being present in "web" Raising the quality of information and improving the forms of communication (including websites) Supporting the ability to use the Internet for different services
Wielkopolskie WP	- natural and cultural values are the tourism advantages *Priorities/objectives:* Improving the availability and consistency of communication in the region (development of infrastructure databases, and websites, educational and promotional activities, construction of e-services infrastructure) Increasing the competitiveness of the main city - Poznan (stimulating the development by integrating scientific, economic, tourism and cultural resources)
Zachodniopomorskie ZP	- insufficient standard of tourist accommodation and its infrastructure - insufficient promotion of the region and its attractions. - a small number of known tourist products - unused opportunities for active tourism, including rivers and lakes *Priorities/objectives:* The growing importance of the knowledge economy and e-business ventures (irrespective of the activities related to the improvement of the information infrastructure, and now also indicates the need for development of e-economy institutions (development and promotion of tourism products))

Analysing the table 1, it should be noted that each region has natural or cultural potential to develop tourism and understands the importance to invest and develop this branch. Regions, which already benefit from tourism, intend to maintain their leader position by planning new investments. Voivodeships, where the services are not at satisfactory level, plan some investments in the development of tourism products and brands, expanding existing services. It especially concerns accommodation. The analysis shows that only two documents contain plans of supporting tourism by ICT tools – Lubuskie (LB) and Świętokrzyskie (SW). In next five regions, e-services (including the administration, which may be combined with the development of services in tourism) will be developed – Mazowieckie (MA), Opolskie (OP), Śląskie (SL), Wielkopolskie (WP) and Zachodniopomorskie (ZP). Although initiatives are being taken by governments of other provinces (eg. Mazowieckie - I-SPEED program [5], Małopolskie - Digital Library and Virtual Museums of Małopolskie [3]), these activities are not considered as strategic for the region and was not included in the analysed documents. Others, such as business development (including e-business), expanding telecommunication networks, increase the number of hot spots, are the result of implementation of the European Union strategy to increase the number of e-services in Poland (the government plans to implement the recommended twenty public government e-services for citizens and business eAdministration, eHealth, eEducation and others) and the State Informatization Plan for the years 2011-2015 [7].
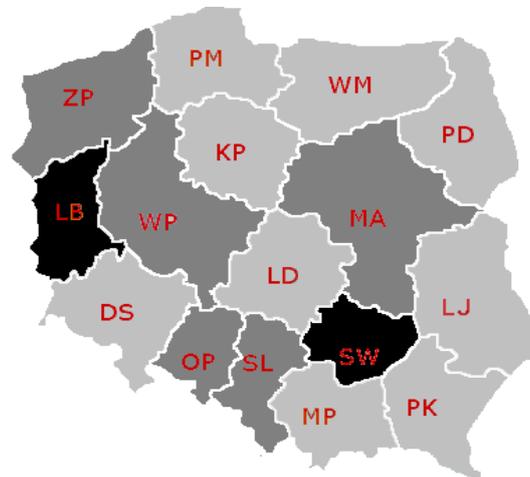
FIGURE 1. THE MAP OF POLAND WITH VOIVODESHIP INTERESTED IN E-TOURISM (BLACK) AND E-SERVICES (DARK GREY)

International research firm Synovate prepared a questionnaire about attractiveness of Polish regions and cities. 37% surveyed responded that Pomorskie voivodeship is the most attractive for tourists. Concerning the cities, Kraków (Małopolskie) is the leader - it was indicated by 60% of respondents. Gdańsk (Pomorskie) took second place in the ranking of city attractiveness with 29%, and Zakopane (Małopolskie) was the third one with 26 %. According to the table 1, these two regions (Małopolskie, and Pomorskie) are not interested in investments in tourism, but it is the result of their awareness concerning their attractiveness [10].

The difficulty is also in the relatively low level of Polish preparations for the use of ICT solutions, both in terms of the lack of proper infrastructure and the willingness to use available technology. The Global Information Technology Report 2012 defines the level of maturity of each country to use ICT solutions. Ranking of countries based on the Networked Readiness Index, estimated for Poland was 3.84 and locating us in place 62 out of 138 possible (in 2011), and in 2012 Poland reached the index value as 4.16 with 49th place. For comparison, Latvia has its index equal 4.35 (place 41st) and Lithuania 4.66 (place 31st). Leading places are occupied by Sweden, Singapore, Finland and Denmark. Low rates are due to a lack of promotion of ICT in government policies and strategies, and the lack of their use in public administration. The report clearly indicates weakness of Poland in a coherent vision for the development of the ICT sector and the use of new technologies in different areas of life, including tourism. The challenge for Poland is the plan for the years 2011-2015, which aims, among others, the creation of the information society and increase the efficiency of the public administration. To take advantage of ICT first there must be developed skills of workforce.

Element, that could occur in tourism development plans is the intention or opportunity to interact with IT companies that could develop appropriate solutions for the city. Such cooperation is taken in cities that have implemented smart city concept. One of the examples is Korean Songdoli International Business District that uses a video device (Telepresence), designed by Cisco, to provide security services, education and concierge. In Rio de Janeiro IBM, Cisco and Samsung developed the system predicting floods and mud avalanches and monitoring events involving large numbers of people, sporting evacuation of spectators from the stadium or car accidents. Singapore in cooperation with IBM, introduced Electronic Road Pricing system, which calculates the amount of the fee for entry into the city area taking into consideration the level of traffic [8].

5. SUMMARY

The process of urbanization is in progress. More than a half of the world's population live in urban areas (in Poland it is about 60% of the whole population). Cities offering a variety of attractions and amenities of daily life become more and friendlier for habitants and tourist. The idea and purpose for many of them is to implement the concept of smart city. The services, which are classified as a part of the smart city, include for instance smart grids, urban integrated monitoring systems and e-government. Tourism is also an important part of this idea, exploring natural and cultural heritage of the region/city, contributing to its increasing income. Investments in the development of suitable tools for tourists can only help in the promotion of the city and whole region.

Analyzing the voivodeship development strategies and taking into account that since the publication of the Bangemann Report, we live in the information society, it can be concluded that local governments do not recognize the opportunity in the development of e-tourism. The main and common element that appears in the plans/strategies is the development of telecommunication network, which provides support to the tourists and is the potential mean for the development of e-tourism. In the analysed documents, authorities often plan promotion and development of the tourist information systems. The lack of description for more detailed solutions may be a result of a general document format, not their absence in regional policy.

Finally, it is worth to mention that some cities such as Gdańsk have prepared a development strategy up to 2030. What areas of activity should therefore be promoted to become a smart city? There were some distinguished: transport, energy, media, health, education, administration, economy, culture and the broadband infrastructure. "The city (Gdańsk) need a development strategy for culture, cuisine, entertainment, tourism, sport. Tools, which support smart city should be helpful, but it will drive people involved in the development of a common cultural identity. Therefore, all municipal investments in projects in the field of culture should include the participation of new media, the Internet, social networking sites." [1]

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