

Fewer Foreign Tourists Visit the Lubelskie Voivodeship

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Abstract

The observation of changes in foreign tourist-visit-numbers in a particular region of a country is an important premise to analyze its tourist market and map out a strategy for development. The authors have made an analysis of foreign tourists visiting the Lublin Province in the years 2001–2010 considering their number, the purpose of their visits, their accommodation and the expenses they incurred. The analysis of the findings from the last decade has shown diminishing visits by foreign tourists in the Lublin Province in all the analyzed parameters.

Introduction

The Lubelskie Voivodeship¹ in terms of tourist offer does not belong to the most attractive regions of Poland, especially for foreign guests. For many years due to its location the region has been visited mainly by citizens of neighboring countries (i.e., Ukraine and Belarus). An advantage of this region is preserved natural habitat, which is pointed by such authors as: Wöhler (2001), Raschke (2010), Spohr (2008). Good regional cuisine is worth mentioning. Its role discuss: Woźniczko, Orłowski (2007), Czarniecka-Skubina, Kalata (2009).

However, each region, including the Lubelskie Voivodeship, takes action to promote its tourist offer targeting foreign tourists, because it is a chance for an upswing in the economy.

Therefore, the observation of the dynamics of foreigners visiting the region has its importance, among others, in gathering data which could serve to work out a strategy for tourism in the local areas. The issue has been presented over the years by researchers belonging to the Institute for Tourism in Warsaw (Borne-Januła et al. 2002; Byszewska-Dawidek et al. 2007; Byszewska-Dawidek, Legienis, and Radkowska 2009; Byszewska-Dawidek and Radkowska 2011), and it is included in the papers written by the authors (Bergier 2003, 2004, 2007; Bergier and Soroka 2010).

Particularly important is the analysis of trends in the foreigners' visits over a longer period of time, and such are the findings gathered in the last decade.

1 Foreign tourists in Poland in 2010

In 2010 58,3⁽²⁾ million foreigners crossed the Polish border, which is an increase by 8,3 million when compared to 2009. The largest increase in the number of the people visiting Poland concerned neighbors outside the Schengen Area i.e. Ukraine (32%) and Belarus (31%). The authors also registered an increase in the number of visitors from the “new” EU member states, which amounted to 12%, mainly from Romania (33%), Slovakia (19%), and the Czech Republic (13%). Also a decrease in the number of visitors was registered. It concerned mainly Estonia (12%) and Latvia (10%). The number of visitors from the “old” EU countries remained on the level from 2009.

1. Voivodeship — Polish administration region on the NUTS2 level. Poland is divided into 16 voievdeships.

2. [In the journal (in both Polish and English texts) European practice of number notation is followed that is, 36 333,33 (European style) = 36 333.33 (Canadian style) = 36,333.33 (US and British style). Furthermore in the International System of Units (SI units), fixed spaces rather than commas are used to mark off groups of three digits, both to the left and to the right of the decimal point.]

An increase in the number of tourists coming from such countries as Finland (20%), Belgium (14%), Italy (12%) and Spain was also registered.

The foreigners spent USD 10,4 billion, which is 9,3% more than in the previous year. The average expenditure per capita amounted to USD 390, and the daily expenses amounted to USD 75.

It should be pointed out that in the following year we observed a decrease in the percentage of the revenues from people of the most important market (i.e., the German market) from 43% in 2009, to 35% in 2010. The revenues from the other neighboring countries increased from 35% in 2009, to 44% in 2010.

In 2010 12,5 million foreign tourists came to Poland which is by 5% more than in the previous year. A larger number of tourists concerned visitors from Russia (by 25%), which is a value similar to the largest market (i.e., Germany). There was an increase in the number of visitors from remote countries (i.e., the USA, Canada, South Korea, Australia) — by 18% all. Besides the largest increase was registered (by over 10%) in the case of visitors from countries such as Belarus, Turkey, Finland, Romania, Belgium, Latvia, Spain, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Austria. The largest decrease concerned the citizens of the “old” UE countries (i.e., Greece by 13%, Denmark by 10%), and the “new” UE countries — Estonia (by 22%). To sum up, the number of foreigners visiting Poland in 2010 should be assessed as positive.

2 Foreign tourists in the Lubelskie Voivodeship region in the years 2001–2010

It should be pointed out that the number of the arrivals of foreign tourists in the Lubelskie Voivodeship has been consistently decreasing since 2001, except for the years 2005–2006. It should be emphasized that the decrease in the number of tourists between 2001 and 2010 amounted to 900 thousand (tab. 1). The decrease in the number of tourists concerned mainly Ukraine (by 510 thousand) and Belarus (by 350 thousand) and to the largest degree — Germany, from 100 thousand in the best years to 30 thousand in the last two years. A similar phenomenon to a slighter degree concerned Russia. A decrease in the number of tourists from Lithuania, from the record-breaking 70 thousand in 2008 to 30 thousand in 2010. Probably the main reason for the lower number of tourists coming to the Lubelskie Voivodeship are the regulations enacted in 2008 after Poland’s joining the Schengen Area, which increased the legal requirements for the main guests (i.e., visitors from Ukraine and Belarus). It should be observed that as far back as in 2007 over 1 million tourists from these countries visited Poland, while last year — only 690 thousand.

It should be pointed out that in 2001 the Lubelskie Voivodeship was ranked second in Poland in the number of foreign tourists visiting the country and also in the number of foreign tourists per capita. In 2010 the Lubelskie Voivodeship, having 900 thousand visitors, fell to sixth place in the country and seventh in the number of tourists per capita.

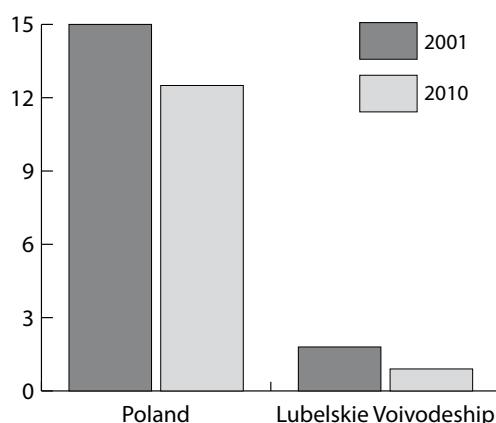


Fig. 1. Number of foreign tourists visiting Poland and the Lubelskie Voivodeship
Source: Own elaboration on the basis of the data from the Institute of Tourism in Warsaw.

Tab. 1. Visits of foreign tourists to the Lubelskie Voivodeship in the years 2001–2010 (in thousands)

Country	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ukraine	960	920	690	520	770	900	750	420	350	450
Belarus	590	390	420	410	220	370	260	240	170	240
Germany	80	100	130	110	120	120	100	40	30	30
Lithuania	20	30	10	10	10	30	10	70	40	30
Russia	20	30	30	10	30	80	10	60	20	20
UK	.	.	10	.	10	10	10	.	.	10
Holland	10	20	.	20	10	.	10	.	.	10
USA	.	10	20	20	.	20	10	.	20	10
Italy	.	.	.	.	10	.	10	.	.	.
Latvia	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	20	20	.
Sweden	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	10	.	.
Finland	.	.	.	.	.	10	.	.	.	.
France	.	.	.	.	.	10	.	.	10	.
Hungary	.	.	.	10	.	.	.	.	.	.
Estonia	.	.	.	.	10	.	.	.	.	.
Israel	.	.	.	20	.	.	.	.	20	.
Other	150	60	40	60	60	110	70	40	90	70
Total	1800	1600	1400	1200	1300	1700	1200	900	800	900

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of the data from the Institute for Tourism in Warsaw.

The decrease in the number of tourists last year concerned all the countries, mainly Ukraine and Belarus (70 thousand each). A considerable drop in the number of tourists was found in the case of Lithuania, from 70 thousand to 40 thousand (i.e., by 43%), and from Russia, from 60 thousand to 20 thousand (i.e., by 66,7%). The reason for the change were probably the regulations enacted in 2008 after Poland joined the Schengen Area, which increased the legal requirements for guests from Ukraine and Belarus.

What should be emphasized is the consistent decrease in the number of tourists from Germany, which so far was ranked third as far as the number of people visiting the Lubelskie Voivodeship is concerned, from 100 thousand to 30 thousand in 2010.

Despite a considerable drop in the number of tourists from Lithuania, from 70 thousand in 2008 to 40 thousand in 2010, this country is ranked third, together with Germany as for tourists visiting the Lubelskie Voivodeship.

The number of visits to a particular area is one of the most important indexes of the tendencies in the development of tourism. In order recognize the tendencies the authors compared the numbers of tourists visiting Poland and the Lubelskie Voivodeship in the given years (fig. 1). The data confirmed the adverse phenomenon for the tourism in the Lubelskie Voivodeship, where visits to Poland dropped by 17% and the visits to the Lubelskie Voivodeship — by no less than 50%.

3 The purposes of visits

Only a few years ago tourism and rest were a major purpose of visiting the Lubelskie Voivodeship by foreign tourists, in 2003 — 32%, 2004 — 14%, 2005 — 17% (tab. 2). However, this purpose of visits is consistently decreasing and in 2010 it was just a trace value (i.e., only 5%), though it should be stressed that it constitutes an increase when compared to the previous year (tab. 2).

The findings show that over the years the authorities failed to promote region as an attractive place in terms of tourism. A deeper analysis should be made as far as this phenomenon is concerned and the authorities should allot more money for promoting one individual place, because current financial policy is not conducive to the development of tourism in the Lubelskie Voivodeship, especially foreign tourism.

Tab. 2. The purpose of visits of foreign tourists to the Lubelskie Voivodeship in the years 2003–2010 (percentage)

Purpose of visit	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Tourism and leisure	32	14	17	6	3	9	2	5
Business	28	15	24	18	14	40	28	25
Visits to family and friends	12	17	13	14	8	13	27	20
Shopping	15	31	19	38	53	20	24	30
Transit	7	10	18	18	16	9	5	3
Other	6	13	6	6	6	9	14	17

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of the data from the Institute of Tourism in Warsaw.

Also the number of tourists visiting Poland for another reason i.e. business is unsatisfactory and its index dropped from 40% in 2008 to 25% in 2010, which is equal to the level in 2005.

The authors of the paper observed an increase in visiting family and friends as the purpose of staying in the Lubelskie Voivodeship, from 13% in 2008 to 20% in 2010. One should bear in mind that this purpose has less impact on the development of typical tourism.

The visits to do the shopping attained in the 2010 the level of 30% i.e. close to the result in 2004 (31%) and higher than 2003 (15%). What should be underscored are the diversifying tendencies of this purpose of visits in the years 2003–2007, which are situated in the 15%–53% band. Probably such diversification is an outcome of the changes in customs regulations as well as local differences in the prices of goods between Poland and neighboring states that is, Ukraine and Belarus. Also crossing the Lubelskie Voivodeship in transit considerably decreased in 2010, producing the lowest result in the analyzed years.

Apart from the lower number of the tourists, an analysis of the purpose of visits is another unfavorable premise when analyzing the tendencies of visiting the Lubelskie Voivodeship by foreign tourists.

4 Foreign tourists accommodation

The number of foreign tourists in the accommodation facilities fluctuated between 80 thousand and 100 thousand in the years 2003–2010.

It reached its apogee in the years 2006–2007 (i.e., 100 thousand people). The years 2008–2009 the lowest number of tourists was observed. It is heartening that it increased to 90 thousand in 2010. A similar tendency is observed in the number of rendered accommodation services — for example, the highest value was registered in the years 2006–2007 (over 150 thousand) and the lowest value — in the years 2009–2010. A slight increase was registered in 2010 (128,9 thousand) yet it still remains on a similar level when compared to previous years (tab. 3).

A more positive phenomenon has been observed in the length of stay of the foreign tourists in the last years, an example of which is a consistent increase in the length of stays for 8 or more nights in a hotel facility, which reaches its highest values amounting to 10% of all the stays. What is decreasing is the structure of shorter stays i.e. up to 3 nights, which attained a high of 82% in 2010. An upswing in the tendency can be observed in the last two years when compared to the previous ones (tab. 4).

Tab. 3. Foreign tourists at hotel facilities in the Lubelskie Voivodeship in the years 2003–2010 (in thousands)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number of tourists	91,9	90,1	92,0	99,7	97,5	81,5	79,1	89,9
Number of nights	143,6	141,8	147,1	154,6	158,6	139,0	124,2	128,9

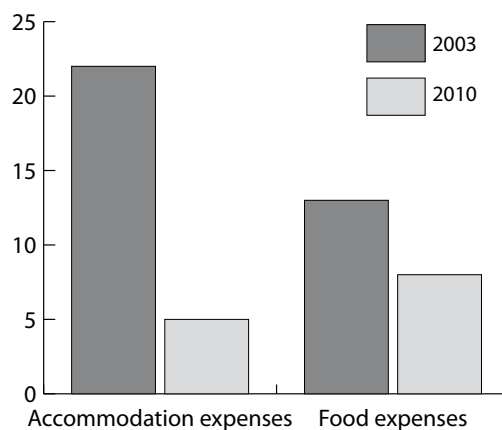
Source: Own elaboration on the basis of the data from the Institute for Tourism in Warsaw

Less favorable is the structure of basic expenses (i.e., accommodation and food). The rising amount of money was not spent on the accommodation, because they dropped from 22% in 2003

Tab. 4. Visits of foreign tourists to the Lubelskie Voivodeship in the years 203–2010. The length of stay (percentage)

Length of stay	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1–3 nights	76	72	76	85	92	87	86	82
4–7 nights	16	19	17	9	6	9	4	9
> 8 nights	8	9	7	6	2	4	10	9

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of the data from the Institute for Tourism in Warsaw.

**Fig. 2.** Percentage of accommodation and food expenses incurred by tourists visiting the Lubelskie Voivodeship in 2003 and 2010

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of the data from the Institute of Tourism in Warsaw.

to 5% in 2010. the rise did not concerned food either, because they considerably decreased i.e. from 13% in 2003 to 8% in 2010 after Poland joined the Schengen Area (fig. 2).

5 Expenditure by foreign tourists

Also in the expenditure by foreign tourists we can observe a decrease from the apogee of USD 350 per capita in 2008 to USD 264 per capita in 2010, which is close to the amount in 2007. A still greater decrease was registered in the average expenses per day that is, from USD 167 in 2008 to only USD 87 in 2010, which is less than in 2007. Thus after the optimistic 2007–2008 increase, the expenditure by tourists has radically lowered.

That provides convincing evidence for the occurrence of crisis in the tourism among the guests from abroad visiting the Lubelskie Voivodeship.

Tab. 5. Expenses of foreign tourists visiting the Lubelskie Voivodeship in the years 2003–2010 (USD)

Expenses	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Per person	81	152	103	111	223	350	238	264
Per day	22	43	30	39	84	167	69	87

Source: Own elaboration on the basis of the data from the Institute for Tourism in Warsaw.

6 Resume — Discussion

The analysis of the visits to the Lubelskie Voivodeship by foreign tourists over the last decade (2001–2010) is not favorable for the region. It decreased by as many as 900 thousand, from 1,8 million (second place in Poland) to 900 thousand in 2010 (fifth place in Poland). One should think that the decrease in the number of foreign guests coming to the region is caused by the fact that Poland joined the Schengen Area, which meant higher requirements for guests of our region (i.e., from Ukraine and Belarus). However, the number of tourists from both the “old” and “new” UE countries despite considerable facilitation in crossing the Polish border generally has not changed.

Also the tendencies in the purposes of the visits do not look favorable. Tourism as the purpose of the visit fell from several dozen percent at the beginning of the century to a few percent now. The main purpose of the visits is shopping, most frequently during a short stay in the country. What should be underscored is the decreasing percentage of business trips. So the view of the purpose of the visits to the region is not favorable for the development of foreign tourism.

The most telling dimension of the development of tourism are no doubt the revenues collected from tourists visiting a given region. Unfortunately also this account is not favorable. In the recent years the amount of expenses per capita and per day are lower, which means that measurable values (i.e., their expenditure and the structure of the purpose of the visit analyzed over the decade) are not conducive to the development of the tourism of foreign guests visiting the Lubelskie Voivodeship.

There is no doubt that at this stage of the development of tourism in the Lubelskie Voivodeship the main issue is to promote the attractive tourist products, which for now seems to be very distant.

Ćwiklińska (2008) named four major weak points in the policy of the local governments that is, lack of professionalism in the promoting the region, incoherence, temporary and superficial character of actions. Some of these elements may still be a weak point in the development of tourism in the Lublin region. Among the main elements of the promotion of tourism of the Lubelskie Voivodeship the following ones should be listed: the participation in national and regional tourism fairs, working out and implementing image campaigns in mass media, working out and implementing the campaign for promoting regional food products (Rochmińska and Stasiak 2011).

Another important issue in the regional promotion campaign is the promotion of its largest city. Perhaps the active participation of Lublin in the “European Capital of Culture 2010” project, though eventually not successful, will produce good results for visiting the region by foreign tourists in the near future.

However, the research conducted by the PwC firm on the financial condition of Polish cities is not favorable for Lublin (Pielak 2011). The report underscores the fact that, when assessing the real economic growth, one should take into consideration not only the rise in GDP per capita but also the rise in real salaries and the improvement of the situation on the labor market. As far as the years 2006–2010 are concerned Lublin is ranked tenth among the cities that were analyzed, just before Białystok. Among the chief assets of the city, the following should be listed: the regional center of higher education, relatively high quality of life in terms of the state of the environment. The authors of the report write: “Lublin has a number of chief assets for development . . . , yet not many people outside Lublin (all the more outside Poland) seem to realize it. Therefore, the forecasts concerning the main city of the region are not optimistic.”

To sum up, we should accept that until the international airport in Świdnik is opened and the new regulations on low level cross border traffic are implemented one should not expect an increase in the number of visitors from abroad.

Conclusions

The analysis of visits to the Lubelskie Voivodeship by foreign tourists in the years 2001–2010 has allowed the authors of the paper to formulate the following conclusions:

1. A sharp decrease in the number of visits made by foreign tourists was registered (i.e., from 1,8 million to 900 thousand) last year.
2. The change in the purpose of the visits is going in the wrong direction. There is a decrease in the number of people coming to the region for tourism, recreation and business, and there is an increase in the number of people coming here to do the shopping.
3. The number of tourists making use of the hotel facilities in the recent years tends to decrease. A positive aspect of the situation is an increase in the number of nights spent in the facilities.
4. After a consistent increase in the amount of money spent by tourists there has been a negative tendency in the amount of money spent per capita and per one day of their stay.

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