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## A MAP OF INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE WITH REFERENCE TO CROATIA

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In the frame of the Atlas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, edited by the Austrian Institute of East and Southeast European Studies in Vienna, a map on international tourist attractions in Central and Southeastern Europe is under elaboration. This map is compiled by an international team of tourism geographers and will represent besides Croatia Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, "Yugoslavia", Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Moldavia in total as well as large parts of Germany, Austria, Italy, Greece, Turkey, the Ukraine, Belorussia, Russia and Lithuania in the scale 1: 3,000,000. It is the aim of this map to provide international investors in tourism and travel agencies with a comparative survey over the touristic potential of this larger region, not available from tourist guides or national studies. The paper informs about the methods and problems of categorizing and ranking tourist attractions on an international scale based on the discussions around and the experience derived from the elaboration of this map and tries to evaluate Croatia's international tourist attractions, their relative attractiveness and their perspectives within the scope of a further valorisation of tourist attractions in this larger region.

Key words: Tourism potential, tourist attractions, competitive advantages, thematic mapping, Central Europe, Southeastern Europe

### 1 INTRODUCTION

In the framework of its Atlas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe [1] the Austrian Institute of East and Southeast European Studies in Vienna is elaborating a map on international tourist attractions in Central and Southeastern Europe plus accompanying explanatory text. The map is conceived to represent in a scale of 1:3,000,000 the countries Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Serbia-Montenegro ("Yugoslavia"), Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Moldavia in total as well as larger parts of Germany, Austria, Italy, Greece, Turkey, the Ukraine and Belorussia and minor parts of Lithuania and the Russian Federation. The map aims at highlighting attractions for international tourism, i.e. tourism potential, of all kinds in a comparative manner with as little reference as possible to existing touristic infrastructure and actual tourist flow. It will offer information not available from usual tourist guides which in general refer only to a definite country, deal preferably with certain kinds of tourist attractions and - with some exceptions - reflect by their density of representation just current patterns of tourist flow

determined mainly by existing infrastructure and accessibility. The main purpose of the map is to show the far from being fully valorized tourism potential of the post-communist countries in comparison to traditional touristic destinations (Italy, Austria, Greece, partly, however, also Croatia and Slovenia) and to offer tour operators, tourism businesses and agencies a scientific basis for investment decisions.

The elaboration of the map has started in 1995. The project has been organized as an international collaboration of tourism geographers from most of the countries represented on the map\*. At first a draft of the map was prepared by the editorial board of the Atlas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe in Vienna, based on available written and cartographic sources. This draft has been corrected and supplemented by the national experts and discussed in a workshop meeting. After the harmonization of the national experts' inputs by the editorial board in Vienna and an approbation of its results by the national authors the map is to be published in 1997.

## 2 CONTENTS AND METHOD OF THE MAP

On the map three layers of information will be shown; (1) a topographic base comprising coastlines, rivers, state borders and the main transportation network, represented by lines of different pattern and colour; (2) the areal distribution of natural landscape types, represented by areal colours and (3) tourist attractions, represented by circles of different size as well as by line symbols.

### 2.1 Natural landscape types

The layer of landscape types is conceived to replace a touristic evaluation of natural landscapes which has despite all efforts of tourism geographers [2, 3, 4, 5] proved not to be feasible for a wider than a very specific segment of touristic demand and for more than a rather limited and uniform geographic region.

As soon as several social and educational strata of tourists and tourists of different cultural and regional descent are involved and as soon as the region to be represented comprises different climatic and geomorphological zones a systematic touristic evaluation of landscape types proves to be impossible.

The layer of landscape types shown in the map serves therefore just as a neutral information on geomorphological, climatic and vegetational characteristics and differences within the region and it is left to the reader, whether an area indicated as

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hilly, warm, semi-arid and cultivated is considered touristically more attractive than an area indicated as mountainous, moderate in temperatures, humid and forested.

## *2.2 Tourist attractions*

### 2.2.1 Categories

The main information of the map, however, is the layer of tourist attractions. It differentiates between (a) attractions of cultural history, history, popular art and folklore - subdivided into (aa) prehistoric and ancient, (bb) medieval to baroque and (cc) modern attractions, (b) thermal and mineral springs, (c) places of pilgrimage, (d) nature attractions (caves, gorges, lakes etc.), (e) shores suitable for bathing and water sports, (f) skiing sites, (g) areas attractive for mountaineering, climbing and hiking, (h) attractive cultural landscapes (as a symbiosis of nature and anthropogenic impact, e.g. coastal slopes cultivated by vineyards or mountain valleys settled by traditional farmsteads), (i) other attractions (museums, studs etc.).

The symbols stand for locations, not necessarily for individual attractions. In some cases even adjacent locations of the same category are represented by one regional symbol. The agglomeration of different attractions at one location is expressed by the subdivision of the location symbol into sectors.

With historic monuments of architecture reconstructions count equal to originals, since this difference is not essential for a tourist and since most of the historic monuments of architecture have actually at least partly been reconstructed up to our days.

As mentioned before, the map is conceived to address the pure tourism potential and not to take into account existing touristic infrastructure and the current volume of tourism (number of visitors, overnight stays etc.) when the attractiveness of a touristic location is evaluated. This "purism", however, proves to be just an ideal. It cannot be fully realized with some categories of attractions. For example, if all major thermal and mineral waters were evaluated just by natural criteria, a number of waters far from valorization would have to be represented. Consequently spa installations, other characteristics of the touristic infrastructure as well as the touristic image of the spa must be taken into account too. Another case in point are sites for skiing and other wintersport activities; the natural potential for skiing, defined by geomorphological and climatic indicators, is widespread over mountainous and hilly regions of the moderate climatic belt. It is necessary, therefore, to take also indicators of economic reclamation into account like the existence of deforested slopes, cable railways etc. Places of pilgrimage must by definition be evaluated on the basis of visitor figures, visitors' origin and image.

The layer of categories of tourist attractions is supplemented by the indication of festivals of all kinds (music, theatre, film, folklore, fine arts; also in four ranks) and national parks, which may on the one hand be regarded as touristic attractions in themselves, on the other as administrative measures to protect certain territories from touristic overburdening, thus having an ambivalent function related to touristic evaluation.

### 2.2.2 Ranking

The touristic rank of all locations besides the category "shores suitable for bathing and water sports" is indicated on the map by four symbol sizes. The verbal explanation of the highest rank runs "World attraction - attraction for which it is worthwhile to undertake a separate journey". The second rank is explained by "Major international attraction - attraction for which it is worthwhile to accept a major deviation", the third by "Important international attraction - attraction for which it is worthwhile to accept a deviation" and the fourth by "International attraction - attraction for which it is worthwhile to accept a minor deviation". Thus the map shows, due to its comparatively small scale, only attractions of importance for international tourism.

The authors are well aware that ranking is one of the most problematic aspects of this map. While for some categories of tourist attractions like "attractions of cultural history, history, popular art and folklore", "spas" and "places of pilgrimage" a ranking can mostly be based on reliable and authoritative, albeit frequently internationally not comparable sources this is not the case with other categories, and it is also difficult to define the correspondence between the rankings of different categories. In general, the final decision in respect to ranking must therefore be left to the personal synoptic evaluation of experts. National experts in turn tend to over-estimate the rank of their national attractions and need to be corrected by experts from other countries and from outside the region represented on the map.

The rank of a touristic location which is an agglomeration of several individual attractions is defined by the cumulative importance of the individual attractions. A location with several lower-ranking attractions may thus be ranked higher. The highest ranks will be obtained mostly by larger agglomerations of attractions, i.e. by cities in the category of architectonic monuments. By the same principle also a location with actually no individual attractions of international importance may well be represented on the map as an ensemble.

## 3 CROATIA'S POSITION IN THE PATTERN OF INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AS REPRESENTED ON THE MAP

Although the map will still undergo a final harmonization, the ranking of Croatia's touristic locations and attractions compared to those of other countries can be discussed on the basis of the second map draft which already contains the input of national experts.

There are 5 locations classified as "world attractions" are placed on the map field; 4 of them are situated in Italy, although Italy is not completely represented on the map; Rome as an agglomeration of ancient and medieval architectonic monuments, Florence as an agglomeration of renaissance architectonic monuments, Venice as an architectonic ensemble and an attractive cultural landscape and the Sexten Dolomites as an eldorado for climbing and mountaineering. Outside Italy only Prague holds this highest rank due to its agglomeration of historic monuments and its architectonic ensemble.

The highest rank but one among four ("major international attraction") is attributed to 51 touristic locations on the map field. The Croatian locations classified on this rank are Dubrovnik as an architectonic ensemble, an agglomeration of medieval and later historic sights and as an attractive cultural landscape as well as the Plitvice Lakes as a

nature attraction. Locations in other countries corresponding to this rank are in the field of architectonic ensembles and agglomerations of historic monuments Cracow, Wrocław and Gdansk in Poland, Budapest in Hungary, Vienna and Salzburg in Austria, Verona, Bologna, Ravenna, Siena, Perugia, Assisi, Orvieto and Naples in Italy, Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Veliko Tärnovo and the Rila monastery in Bulgaria, Mount Athos and the Meteora monasteries in Greece, Istanbul and Bursa in Turkey and Kiev and Lwow in the Ukraine. In the category of nature attractions the caves of Postojna in Slovenia, the Großglockner mountain massiv in Austria, the Iron Gate at the border between Serbia and Romania as well as the Danube delta in Romania are considered to match the rank of the Plitvice Lakes.

In the category "attractions of cultural history, history, popular art and folklore", partly combined with other categories, Croatia is on rank 3 ("important international attractions") represented by Zagreb, Poreč, Pula, Rab, Zadar, Trogir and Split. These locations are considered to be equivalents of places in other countries like Trieste, Cividale, Padova or Castel del Monte in Italy, Ljubljana, Hrastovlje and Škofja Loka in Slovenia, Graz, Innsbruck, Steyr or Krams in Austria, Pécs, Székesfehérvár, Sopron, Ják, Esztergom, Eger or Szeged in Hungary, Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Smederevo, Peć, Dečani or Gračanica on the territory of Serbia-Montenegro, to mention only the equivalents in neighbouring countries.

Rank 4 ("international attractions") of the category "attractions of cultural history, history, popular art and folklore", in some cases connected with attractivity as a cultural landscape is in Croatia represented by Varaždin, Motovun, the chapel of Beram, Pazin, Rovinj, Rijeka, Omišalj, Vrbnik, Krk, Cres, Osor, Nin, Šibenik, the Seven Castles (Kaštela), Omiš, Hvar, Korčula, Ston and Cavtat. They are considered to match foreign locations like Udine, Chioggia or Brindisi in Italy, Piran or Kamnik in Slovenia, Eisenstadt or Rust in Austria, Jajce or Počitelj in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Győr or Kőszeg in Hungary.

The thermal and mineral springs of Croatia are ranking on level 4 at the highest. The Croatian representation is composed of Varaždinske Toplice, Tuheljske Toplice, Krapinske Toplice and Stubičke Toplice as well as Daruvar, Lipik and Topusko. Equivalents in neighbouring countries are e.g. Atomske toplice in Slovenia or Bad Hall in Austria.

In the category "places of pilgrimage" Croatia is represented by Marija Bistrica on rank 4 equalling Međugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ptujška Gora in Slovenia or Maria Luggau in Austria.

Besides the Plitvice Lakes on rank 2 (see above) Croatia is in the category "nature attractions" represented by the Kornate islands on rank 3 and 7 locations ranking on level 4, i.e. the view from Mount Učka, the Risnjak Mountain Massiv, the Paklenica Mountains, the source of river Una, the Krka Falls, the island of Mljet and the Kopačevski rit.

The category "shores suited for bathing and water sports" is on the map exceptionally represented by line symbols and not ranked in the mode of the other categories. So just the length of the lines may be taken as an indication that Croatia owes besides Italy the best opportunities inside the map field.

The only Croatian skiing site considered to rank among "international attractions" (rank 4) is Delnice. It matches the Slovenian skiing sites Bovec-Kanin or Krvavec, the Austrian site Semmering or the Italian sites Tarvisio, Sella Nevea or Ravascletto.

Paklenica Mountains are considered the only Croatian location of international attraction (rank 4) for climbing and mountaineering. They rank equal to the Julian Alps in Slovenia and Italy or to the Karwendel in Austrian Tyrol.

Among the areas attractive for their cultural landscape, the Riviera of Opatija is considered to rank top in Croatia. It holds rank 3 in the international scale ("important international attractions") and matches e.g. the Wachau, a narrow section of the Danube valley in Austria, the southern and northern foothills of the Tatra Mountains in Slovakia and Poland, resp., the island of Ischia and the coast of Amalfi in Italy or "Saxon Switzerland" in Germany.

#### 4 CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

In respect to Croatia the map underlines on the one hand the widespread and traditional image of Croatia as a touristic destination for bathing, sun, water sports and "doing nothing". It documents on the other hand the rich cultural and architectural heritage of the Croatian coast even compared to the opposite Italian coast of the Adriatic Sea, which in general has the image of being superior to the Croatian coast in this respect. A special potential of the Croatian coast and its hinterland as far as the Plitvice Lakes prove to be its nature attractions - matchless in the Adriatic region. A strong emphasis on the cultural and nature potentials in public relation activities regarding the Croatian coast would stress its competitive advantages.

Tourism potential of the Croatian interior, however, is according to the map not much higher than actual tourism. The marked concentration of Croatia's tourism on its coast is also supported by this map. Taking into account the tourism potential and the touristic offer in neighbouring countries and in other countries represented on the map the main chances for a touristic activation of the Croatian interior seem to be urban tourism in Zagreb and a better valorization of the spas, especially in the Hrvatsko zagorje and in Slavonia.

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Sažetak

**KARTA MEĐUNARODNIH TURISTIČKIH ATRAKCIJA U SREDIŠNJOJ  
I JUGOISTOČNOJ EUROPI S OSVRTOM NA HRVATSKU**

U okviru Atlasa za Istočnu i Jugoistočnu Europu, kojega je izdao Austrijski institut za istočna i jugoistočna europska istraživanja u Beču, razrađuje se karta međunarodnih turističkih atrakcija u Središnjoj i Jugoistočnoj Europi. Ta karta je skupni rad međunarodnog tima turističkih geografa i predstaviti će osim Hrvatske i Poljsku, Češku, Slovačku, Mađarsku, Sloveniju, Bosnu i Hercegovinu, "Jugoslaviju", Makedoniju, Albaniju, Bugarsku, Rumunjsku i Moldaviju u cijelosti kao i velike dijelove Njemačke, Austrije, Italije, Grčke, Turske, Ukrajine, Bjelorusije, Rusije i Litve u omjeru 1:3.000.000. Svrha te karte je da internacionalnim investitorima u turizmu pruži komparativni uvid u turističke potencijale tih velikih regija, što, inače, ne pružaju turistički vodiči ni nacionalne studije. Rad informira o metodama i problemima kategoriziranja i rangiranja turističkih atrakcija na internacionalnoj ljestvici sastavljenoj na osnovu diskusija i iskustava sakupljenih pri razradi ove karte. Karta pokušava evaluirati hrvatske internacionalne turističke atrakcije, njihovu relativnu privlačnost i njihovu perspektivu unutar djelokruga daljnje valorizacije turističkih atrakcija u ovoj velikoj regiji.

Ključne riječi: turistički potencijal, turističke atrakcije, kompetitivne prednosti, tematsko svrstavanje u kartu, Središnja Europa, Jugoistočna Europa