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Master's Thesis

**The impact of Covid-19 on hotel industry in Czech Republic
2019-2020.**

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Thesis title

The impact of Covid-19 on hotel industry in Czech Republic 2019-2020.

Objectives of thesis

The objective of this study mainly focuses on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on tourist travel risk and management perception to assist the tourism industry to provide coping strategies in the face of the tourism crisis. Thus, future study should be conducted to investigate the factors that influencing tourists travel risk attitudes and risk management perceptions during the 2019 Covid-19 epidemic and 2020 year. This might be helpful for tourism managers and practitioners to pay attention to the control of Covid-19 crisis, and a systematic management strategy to promote the development of the tourism industry.

Methodology

This thesis will discuss the economic effects of the 2019-2020 Covid-19 pandemic on the hospitality industry in Czech Republic. The First Chapter will analyze the effects of the Czech government's interventions and restrictions on freedoms that began in February.

The second Chapter of the paper will compare the revenue losses for hotels within the chain, will review differences through the changes in domestic and international customers and spending habits due to the restrictions brought in the Czech Republic. The main result will be the loss of the selected hotels compared to 2019.

The final chapter of the paper will include the recommendations. The main recommendations that the Czech government should follow a Swedish Model when implementing lockdown restrictions.

The proposed extent of the thesis

70 pages

Keywords

Hotel business, tourism, Czech Republic, Covid-19, pandemic outbreak, economy.

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled «The impact of Covid-19 on hotel industry in Czech Republic 2019-2020» by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break copyrights of any their person.

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The impact of Covid-19 on hotel industry in Czech Republic 2019-2020

Abstract

The relevance of the study is due to the fact that the COVID 19 coronavirus pandemic has had a strong impact on the life of every person. Every day we have to adhere to a large number of rules and restrictions that allow us to preserve our health and the health of the people around us. The pandemic has almost radically changed the habitual rhythm of everyone's life, and no one knows when everything will return to its former course and whether it will return at all. The wave of cancellations and bans of cultural, political, religious and sports events caused a huge response in society, but the greatest chagrin was the closure of national borders for entry and exit of citizens.

The Czech Republic, located in the heart of Europe, is one of the most interesting countries for tourists. There are many reasons for this. Natural conditions: geographical location features - easy accessibility at the crossroads of the most important routes, picturesque landscapes due to the hilly and mountainous terrain of the country, the presence of beautiful lakes and well-preserved forests have always attracted travelers. Rather long periods of political calm and stability, hard work and entrepreneurship of the Czech people contributed to the creation of beautiful monuments of architecture and other types of art, and also led to the rapid economic development of the country, which subsequently led to the creation of the foundations of the tourism infrastructure.

The analysis showed that the dynamics of the tourist flow in the EuroAgentur Hotels chain is generally positive, apart from political and economic transformations in connection with the pandemic. In 2019, the tourist flow of hotels has significantly decreased due to the pandemic. By 2020, the decline in tourist traffic has decreased. In 2021, there was an expected decrease in the tourist flow of the hotel chain associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

To develop recommendations for the EuroAgentur Hotels chain in the Czech Republic, it is necessary to highlight some global trends that were identified during the pandemic era and will influence the structure of the hotel market and further international business development in the long term.

Keywords: economy, tourism, GDP indicator, COVID-19, coronavirus pandemic, hotel business, tourism, Czech Republic, pandemic outbreak.

Dopad Covid-19 na hotelnictví v České republice 2019-2020.

Abstract

Význam studie je dán skutečností, že pandemie koronaviru COVID 19 měla silný dopad na život každého člověka. Každý den musíme dodržovat velké množství pravidel a omezení, které nám umožňují zachovat naše zdraví a zdraví lidí kolem nás. Pandemie téměř radikálně změnila obvyklý rytmus života všech a nikdo neví, kdy se vše vrátí do původního směru a zda se vůbec vrátí. Vlna rušení a zákazů kulturních, politických, náboženských a sportovních akcí vyvolala ve společnosti obrovskou odezvu, ale největším zklamáním bylo uzavření státních hranic pro vstup a výstup občanů.

Česká republika, která se nachází v srdci Evropy, je jednou z nejzajímavějších turistických zemí. Existuje pro to mnoho důvodů. Přírodní podmínky: geografické rysy - snadná dostupnost na křižovatkách nejdůležitějších tras, malebná krajina díky kopcovitému a hornatému terénu země, přítomnost krásných jezer a dobře zachovalých lesů vždy přitahovaly cestovatele. Poměrně dlouhá období politického klidu a stability, tvrdé práce a podnikání českého lidu přispěly k vytvoření krásných památek architektury a dalších druhů umění a také vedly k rychlému hospodářskému rozvoji země, který následně vedl k vytvoření základů infrastruktury cestovního ruchu.

Analýza ukázala, že dynamika turistického toku v řetězci hotelů EuroAgentur je obecně pozitivní, kromě politických a ekonomických transformací v souvislosti s pandemií. V roce 2019 se turistický tok hotelů v důsledku pandemie výrazně snížil. Roku 2020 došlo k poklesu turistického ruchu. V roce 2021 tak došlo k očekávanému poklesu toku turistů v souvislosti s pandemií COVID-19.

K vypracování doporučení pro řetězec EuroAgentur Hotels v České republice je nutné upozornit na některé globální trendy, které byly identifikovány v době pandemie a v dlouhodobém horizontu ovlivní strukturu hotelového trhu a další rozvoj mezinárodního obchodu.

Klíčová slova: ekonomika, cestovní ruch, ukazatel HDP, COVID-19, pandemie koronaviru, hotelnictví, cestovní ruch, Česká republika, vypuknutí pandemie.

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Introduction

The relevance of the study is due to the fact that the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has had a strong impact on the life of every person. Every day we have to adhere to a large number of rules and restrictions that allow us to preserve our health and the health of the people around us. The pandemic has almost radically changed the habitual rhythm of everyone's life, and no one knows when everything will return to its former course and whether it will return at all. The wave of cancellations and bans of cultural, political, religious and sports events caused a huge response in society, but the greatest chagrin was the closure of national borders for entry and exit of citizens. As a result, the tourism industry — one of the largest industries in the world - was completely immobilized.

Tourist demand collapsed to an unimaginably low level, and therefore the hotel business, which is one of the main employers in the world, began to incur huge losses. The consequences affected hotels all over the world and all classes, but the greatest risk was incurred by small chain hotels and non-chain hotels that rent their space.

The Czech Republic, located in the heart of Europe, is one of the most interesting countries for tourists. There are many reasons for this. Natural conditions: geographical location features - easy accessibility at the crossroads of the most important routes, picturesque landscapes due to the hilly and mountainous terrain of the country, the presence of beautiful lakes and well-preserved forests have always attracted travelers. Rather long periods of political calm and stability, hard work and entrepreneurship of the Czech people contributed to the creation of beautiful monuments of architecture and other types of art, and also led to the rapid economic development of the country, which subsequently led to the creation of the foundations of the tourism infrastructure.

When tourism emerged as a socio-cultural phenomenon in the XIX century, the Czech Republic was an attractive point for the first tourist flows. This tradition has not been interrupted in the future, continuing to our time. After significant socio-political and economic changes at the turn of the XX and XXI centuries, the Czech Republic actively joined the process of pan-European and global integration, became a member of the European Union, which led to an even more intensive development of tourism in this country, which annually receives millions of tourists from all over the world. Vivid evidence of the world

recognition of the importance of Czech culture, including for world tourism, is the fact that twelve of the most valuable monuments of Czech art, and above all architecture, are protected by UNESCO as the heritage of all mankind. A number of factors contribute to the development of a wide variety of types of tourism in the Czech Republic. The country is easily accessible to visit, as it is located in the very center of Europe, at the crossroads of important communication routes. It has a picturesque relief and a fairly well-preserved nature, which made it possible to create many nature reserves and nature protection zones that have become important objects of ecotourism.

The presence of a large number of healing mineral and thermal springs in the Czech Republic has long brought it fame as one of the centers of European hydrotherapy, which led to the intensive development of medical and wellness tourism. The importance of studying the development of the hotel industry in the Czech Republic in the context of the COVID 19 coronavirus pandemic determined the choice of the research topic.

The object of the study is the hotel business in the Czech Republic

The subject of the study is the impact of the COVID 19 coronavirus pandemic on the hotel business in the Czech Republic

The purpose of the study is to develop recommendations for the development of the hotel business after the COVID 19 coronavirus pandemic.

The achievement of this goal will be facilitated by the solution of a number of tasks.

1. To review the literature on the research topic.
2. To characterize the impact of the 2008 financial crisis on the hotel business in the Czech Republic.
3. To analyze the activities of hotels in Prague during the Covid-19 pandemic.
4. To develop recommendations for the development of hotels and for the Government of the Czech Republic on the development of the hotel business.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Covid-19 Background

Infectious diseases common among humans and animals are caused by pathogens that once originated from other organisms: host animals. In addition to the already known ones, new infectious diseases periodically arise. In the most severe cases, they can cause pandemics, such as COVID-19, in other cases there are "dead-end" infections or small epidemics. Known and already described diseases can also occur repeatedly, for example, as a result of geographical expansion, an increase in transmission cases or an increase in pathogenicity.

The emergence of infectious diseases reflects dynamic equilibria and imbalances in complex, globally distributed ecosystems, including humans, animals, pathogens themselves and the environment.

Understanding these variables is a necessary step in the fight against the coming outbreaks of devastating epidemics. A few months ago, it was impossible to imagine how the impending COVID-19 pandemic would turn our whole lives upside down, questioning past assumptions and shaking confidence in the future.

COVID-19 simultaneously possesses three characteristics that allowed it to deliver a historic blow to humanity by launching a global virtual "lockdown" as the only weapon against its uncontrolled spread.

COVID-19 combines the characteristics of a virus that, as far as we know, has never infected people on a permanent basis before, together with its extreme effectiveness against human-to-human transmission and relatively high morbidity and mortality rates, especially among the elderly and those with concomitant diseases.

This is a real "perfect storm" of an impending infectious disease.

Nevertheless, pandemics such as COVID-19 are not such a new phenomenon. New (and emerging) infectious diseases have been threatening people since the Neolithic (12,000 years ago), when people (hunter-gatherers) settled in villages, began to tame animals and grow crops (Dobson and Carper, 1996; Morens et al., 2020b ; Morens et al., 2008a).

This was the beginning of domestication and the earliest steps in the systematic and widespread manipulation of nature.

The oldest zoonoses, such as smallpox, tropical malaria, measles and bubonic/pulmonary plague, have fatal outcomes.

Some, for example, the Justinian plague (541 AD) and the Black Death (1348) led to the death of a significant part of people in the "known" world, that is, a world whose records have been preserved, at least in Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Infectious diseases common among humans and animals are caused by pathogens that once originated from other organisms: host animals.

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Table 1. Emerging Infectious Diseases in History

Year	Name	Deaths	Comments
430 BCE	“Plague of Athens”	~100,000	First identified trans-regional pandemic
541	Justinian plague (<i>Yersinia pestis</i>)	30–50 million	Pandemic; killed half of world population
1340s	“Black Death” (<i>Yersinia pestis</i>)	~50 million	Pandemic; killed at least a quarter of world population
1494	Syphilis (<i>Treponema pallidum</i>)	>50,000	Pandemic brought to Europe from the Americas
c. 1500	Tuberculosis	High millions	Ancient disease; became pandemic in Middle Ages
1520	Hueyztahuatl (<i>Variola major</i>)	3.5 million	Pandemic brought to New World by Europeans
1793–1798	“The American plague”	~25,000	Yellow fever terrorized colonial America
1832	2nd cholera pandemic (Paris)	18,402	Spread from India to Europe/Western Hemisphere
1918	“Spanish” influenza	~50 million	Led to additional pandemics in 1957, 1968, 2009
1976–2020	Ebola	15,258	First recognized in 1976; 29 regional epidemics to 2020
1981	Acute hemorrhagic conjunctivitis	rare deaths	First recognized in 1969; pandemic in 1981
1981	HIV/AIDS	~37 million	First recognized 1981; ongoing pandemic
2002	SARS	813	Near-pandemic
2009	H1N1 “swine flu”	284,000	5th influenza pandemic of century
2014	Chikungunya	uncommon	Pandemic, mosquito-borne
2015	Zika	~1,000?*	Pandemic, mosquito-borne

This was the beginning of domestication and the earliest steps in the systematic and widespread manipulation of nature.

The HIV/AIDS-a pandemic, recognized in 1981, claimed the lives of at least 37 million people. And the last decade has witnessed unprecedented pandemic explosions: H1N1 swine flu (2009), Chikungunya fever (2014) and Zika virus (2015), as well as Ebola outbreaks in most of Africa (2014 to the present).

Since four endemic types of coronaviruses have been described that circulate in the human population worldwide, coronaviruses must have originated and spread in the era preceding the recognition of viruses as human pathogens.

The coronavirus causing severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) (SARS-CoV) originated from a host animal (presumably civets) in 2002-2003 and practically caused a pandemic before it was destroyed thanks to public health control measures. The related Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) coronavirus (MERS-CoV) entered the human body from camels in 2012 but has since spread weakly among humans (Cui et al., 2019).

Thus, COVID-19, identified at the end of 2019, is only the latest example of an unexpected, new and devastating pandemic disease, from which we can conclude that we have entered the era of a pandemic (Morens et al., 2020a; Morens et al., 2020b). The reasons for the new dangerous situation are multifaceted, complex and worthy of serious study.

1.2 What is a Pandemic

1.2.1 What is An Epidemic

The Greek word means a disease that has a global scale of prevalence, against which no immunity has been formed in the human body. The definition used in medicine cannot indicate the level of danger to the body, only indicates that the epidemic has become international.

The factor of the pandemic is the emergence of a new viral strain that is actively spreading between people. Force majeure is associated with a mutation that allows the strain to be freely transferred from one human organism to another in a short time.

After a pandemic, immunity to infection is formed. A problematic viral strain may still have some prevalence for several years, but it is limited to local epidemic episodes. The factor of the pandemic is the emergence of a new viral strain that is actively spreading between people. Force majeure is associated with a mutation that allows the strain to be freely transferred from one human organism to another in a short time.

After a pandemic, immunity to infection is formed. A problematic viral strain may still have some prevalence for several years, but it is limited to local epidemic episodes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization are engaged in controlling the spread and intensification of viral infection.

The decision to declare a pandemic is made by WHO, taking into account the degree of prevalence of infection, its impact on the body, the level of preparedness of the population for the situation. The announcement made by the organization has no legal significance, does not imply activities other than those carried out during the epidemic. Therapeutic and protective actions at the discretion of WHO participants remain standard.

WHO experts are in no hurry to declare a pandemic outbreak, since imported infection has become widespread. A large percentage of the first infected are foreign tourists and travelers returning home. These cases of infection with a competent approach are quickly detected and stopped, so they are not included in the statistics for declaring an emergency. It is necessary that the infection in the region went to the second wave, the sick began to be detected in many countries of the world.

Epidemics have been around for thousands of years and are becoming more frequent every century.

Since the 16th century, the frequency of new global infections has been 10-50 years.

Famous pandemics in the history of mankind:

The Justinian Plague (540-541 AD);

the Black Plague, which claimed about 60% of the population of Europe (1345-1350);

Cholera (1900-1923) - the first pandemic of the 20th century; Spanish flu (1918-1920);

Asian flu (1957-1958);

Hong Kong flu (1968-1969);

Swine flu (2009).

«Spanish Flu» it spread rapidly, in the first six months of 1918, it sent 25 million people to the grave. Moreover, its peculiarity was that the deceased turned out to be mostly young people. The huge mortality was caused by wartime: poor nutrition, unfavorable sanitary conditions, the accumulation of refugees in cities, and the wounded in hospitals.

In the twenty-first century officially announced two infections worldwide: the swine flu H1N1 (2009) and coronavirus (2019).

According to the US Center for Disease Prevention, as a result of the spread of swine flu, 150-570 thousand people died, the approximate number of infected is 1.4 billion. Following H1N1 in the 21st century, humanity is threatened by a new flu – Covid-19 (abbreviation – Corona Virus Disease 2019). This is the last pandemic that has been officially declared, which was announced on March 11, 2020.

Thus, in the entire history of mankind, there has not been a single year without fighting a viral infection. Therefore, despite the development of medicine, the responsibility of each person for their health is important. According to epidemiologists, humanity will not be able to cope with viruses even in the distant future, so new pandemics are inevitable.

The mass spread of infection progressing over time within one area, exceeding the norm, is called an epidemic. The epidemic, which is caused by social or biological factors, is based on an epidemic process in which the transmission of the causative agent of infection occurs and a chain of infectious conditions arises that develop sequentially and are interconnected with each other (disease → carrier of pathogenic bacteria). Under certain natural and socio-hygienic conditions, the epidemic can cover several countries and even continents.

The following types of diseases can take the form of epidemics and pandemics: plague; cholera; anthrax; typhus; AIDS; polio, etc. In natural conditions, the infection is transmitted in several ways: fecal-oral (intestinal infections); transmissible (blood infections); aspiration (respiratory infections); contact (infections of external organs). (Baseler L., D.S. Chertow, K.M. Johnson, H. Feldmann, D.M. Morens The Pathogenesis of Ebola Virus Disease *Annu. Rev. Pathol.*, 2017).

The epidemic process can take over a specific territory for a long time. There is a concept of "mental epidemics" when the population of a city or an entire country under the influence of political, religious and other moods experiences a strong affect. The emergence of the epidemic is facilitated by factors such as the presence of the causative agent of the disease, the ways of its transmission between people and the lack of resistance of the human body to this infection.

Low resistance of the body can be a consequence of weakened immunity due to the lack of a vaccine and ways to combat this type of infection in medicine, as well as poor living conditions of people.

The course of the spread of infection also depends on the climate, geography of the region, household and hygienic living conditions.

Understanding the causes of the epidemic, the ways of its spread, knowing preventive measures, the spread of even the most terrible diseases is no longer a global problem. During the evolution of infections, new viruses are constantly appearing. American scientists are studying 335 new infections, 60% of which are pathogens of unknown viruses, the frequency of occurrence of which has increased several times over the past fifty years. Most often, these infections are transmitted to humans from animals, while humans do not have immunity to them. The cause of new diseases can also be a mutation of microbes under the influence of anthropogenic environmental changes (Baseler L., D.S. Chertow, K.M. Johnson, H. Feldmann, D.M. Morens the Pathogenesis of Ebola Virus Disease *Annu. Rev. Pathol.*, 2017).

The main processes that cause such processes to arise and proceed: Destruction of communications (heating, sewerage, water supply). In the emergency zone, the sanitary and hygienic situation has deteriorated sharply (rotting corpses or food appeared in the immediate vicinity). Rodents have multiplied massively. People's susceptibility to infections is changing.

Medical-preventive and sanitary-hygienic institutions do not work in the emergency zone.

The spread of infections is also facilitated by people themselves, who are traveling more and more, moving from one continent to another.

During an epidemic, you need to follow certain rules that will help protect you from infection:

Wash your hands as often as possible.

Avoid contact with patients.

Don't touch the face.

Humidify the air in the room.

Take vitamin C.

To prevent infection, you need to lead a healthy lifestyle: you should eliminate bad habits and revise your diet.

Thus, an epidemic is a massive and progressive spread of an infectious disease within a certain territory, significantly exceeding the usually recorded incidence rate for the same period. In all infectious diseases, from the moment of infection to the manifestation of the first

visible signs of the disease, a certain time passes, called the incubation period, during which a person remains outwardly healthy.

1.2.2 Epidemic to Pandemic

An epidemic and a pandemic imply the spread of a certain infection, the difference lies in the scale of the phenomenon.

An epidemic is an infectious outbreak that has manifested itself in a limited area or in a single population.

The incidence of the population does not exceed 5% within the borders of the country, region, locality.

If the infection spreads aggressively, manifests itself in neighboring regions and countries, then there is a high probability of its transition to a pandemic level. A pandemic is a disease that has spread beyond the borders of a focal state.

The main difference from the epidemic is the scale. Translated from Greek, "pandemos" means "belonging to humanity." An example is the smallpox pandemic in the XVIII century or the plague in the XIX century, when 15 million inhabitants of the planet, mainly China, India, Bangladesh and Hong Kong, became victims of the infection. Seasonal epidemics are a frequent, habitual phenomenon. They are usually caused by known strains of the virus that have been interacting with the human body for a long time. And the pandemic is provoked by new types of infection, to which the human immune system does not yet have an answer (Morens, D.M., Folkers, G.K., Fauci, A.S, 2009.).

The difference is that global outbreaks are often more dangerous than local ones, their signs:

- active distribution;
- more negative effects on the body;
- unpredictable flow.

The rapid development of civilization and the associated water pollution, deforestation, construction of roads and dams, create favorable conditions for the rapid spread of infections.

The environment is changing every year, the risks of outbreaks of infections are increasing. And if a person does not change his attitude to nature, the consequences will be the most terrible: mass outbreaks of epidemics will occur again and again.

The epidemic is a real natural disaster, salvation from which is sometimes difficult to find even in the age of modern technology.

For preventive purposes, it is necessary to improve the cleaning of territories, drains and drinking water, monitor hygiene, monitor the correctness of storage and processing of products, as well as minimize the communication of carriers of infections with a healthy population (Morens, D.M., Folkers, G.K., Fauci, A.S, 2009).

Epidemic is a term that is often widely used to describe any problem that has gotten out of control. In relation to diseases, an epidemic is defined as "an outbreak of a disease that occurs in a wide geographical region and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population." The term "epidemic" is usually used to describe health issues (for example, the opioid crisis in America has grown to epidemic proportions), but sometimes it is used colloquially to describe behavior (an epidemic of hysteria among preschoolers) or behavioral phenomena ("epidemic hysteria").

A pandemic in the modern world can become a source of a large number of problems. The fact is that viruses have much more opportunities to spread than in the past. Moreover, the occurrence of panic when people try to leave the epicenter of the outbreak can lead to an even greater spread of the disease. Making a vaccine can take months or years, as pandemic viruses are new agents. Medical facilities will be overloaded and there may be a shortage of staff to provide emergency care, both due to the pandemic and for other reasons.

As the epidemic spreads, it becomes necessary to build additional medical facilities for the treatment of infected people, which, coupled with the need for various consumables (tests, personal protective equipment, medicines, etc.), leads to significant additional health care costs.

Epidemics and pandemics can have serious social and political consequences, weakening States, provoking foreign and domestic political contradictions, exacerbating social tensions and discrimination. Pandemics of the past caused serious social and political upheavals caused by the shock effects of mass mortality and the demographic shifts caused by it. (Morens, D.M., Folkers, G.K., Fauci, A.S, 2009).

In particular, mortality from smallpox and other diseases introduced to the American continent became the direct cause of the collapse of many indigenous societies, weakening their institutions and military potential to such a level that they were vulnerable to European conquerors. Subsequent pandemics did not have such dramatic consequences, mainly due to

the emergence of more advanced means and methods of prevention and treatment of infectious diseases. As experience shows, epidemics and pandemics can contribute to increasing political tensions and provoke unrest. These problems may be particularly acute for States with unstable political systems in which violence has recently taken place or armed conflicts continue.

1.3 The „Spanish Flu“ Pandemic

History always repeats itself, and it has repeated itself this time. What the world is going through now in connection with the worldwide coronavirus pandemic, humanity has experienced more than once. The first to come to mind are the medieval epidemics of the plague, called by contemporaries the "black death", which sometimes mowed down almost half of the population of medieval Europe.

But the most terrible and deadly epidemic in history was the epidemic, or rather the pandemic of the so-called "Spanish flu" - the Spanish flu, which happened 100 years ago - in 1918-1920. Read on about how it was.

The outbreak of the Spanish flu epidemic occurred in 1918, which is notable for the fact that this is the year of the end of the First World War, the most terrible in history at that time (later this one of the most terrible wars will be surpassed only by the Second World War). It is not known exactly where the Spanish flu virus originated, and who was its "patient zero", but definitely not in Spain itself, perhaps somewhere in the front trenches of France or Germany (Andrews, E., 2020).

In November 1918, a peace treaty was signed, and the exhausted soldiers began to return home. It seemed that the worst was over, but alas, the soldiers did not return by themselves, but brought with them a deadly virus of a hitherto unknown strain of influenza.

Since strict military censorship was in effect in wartime in all the warring countries: England, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, it was impossible to write about the outbreak of a deadly virus among soldiers, so as not to undermine morale. The first to openly talk about the virus and its consequences was Spain, which did not participate in the First World War, and therefore did not have military censorship. It is for this reason that this flu virus began to be called Spanish, or abbreviated as «Spanish Flu».

At the same time, Spain itself was not the primary epidemic focus, it was only the first to declare this to the whole world.

Meanwhile, the Spanish flu spread rapidly throughout Europe, and then the world, the speed of its spread was facilitated by technological progress: ships, the first planes and airships. In Spain itself, 40% of the population has had this flu, including the King of Spain Alfonso XIII himself. In other countries, the statistics were no better.

Of course, flu epidemics have happened before, but unlike them, this strain of flu was extremely deadly. Moreover, if older people were usually in the high-risk group (as, indeed, even now with coronavirus, it is among older people that the highest mortality rate is), then the Spanish flu, on the contrary, mainly killed the young, strong and healthy.

This happened for two reasons: Firstly, many older people experienced several epidemics of a similar strain of influenza back in the XIX century. Secondly, the Spanish flu caused a malfunction of the immune system. Usually, the immune system successfully copes with the flu, but with the Spanish flu, the so-called "cytokine storm" occurred, when the immune system, in an attempt to get rid of the virus, begins to destroy, including healthy cells of the body.

As a result, it was young people with strong immunity and excellent health who became the most frequent victims of this terrible disease. The medicine of that time was much worse than it is now and could not contain the spread of the Spanish flu in any way, as a result, more people died from it than even from the First World War. According to an approximate calculation, 550 million people were ill with Spanish flu in 1918-1920 (and this is 29.5% of the world's population at that time for a minute), 50 to 100 million people died, that is, the mortality rate was 10-20% of the number of infected, or in other words, every 5th patient died (Andrews, E., 2020).

According to these figures, it was the worst and most tragic pandemic in the history of mankind. At that time, there were no medicines for her, in general, the level of medicine of the early twentieth century left much to be desired, and for many poor people, going to the doctor was an unacceptable luxury at all. Having fallen ill with the Spanish flu, a person could only wait and hope for recovery. Therefore, then (as now) the only effective deterrent methods to combat the spread of the Spanish flu were the introduction of strict quarantine measures, the widespread use of masks, hygiene.

In many European and American cities, people were allowed to board trams exclusively in protective masks, and in one of the American states, handshaking was even legally prohibited. Many shops were closed, and those that were open did not let people

inside, serving through special windows, that is, everything that we see today in connection with the coronavirus already once was. The Spanish flu epidemic has not bypassed our country, Ukraine. So in 1918, according to some data, only in Kiev there were about 100 yew. infected (despite the fact that the then population of our capital was 500 yew. people). The main source of the Spanish flu was the Kiev railway station, where soldiers from the fronts and refugees from other regions arrived.

In order to stop the epidemic, the government of Hetman Pavel Skoropadsky completely isolated the station and the surrounding area from the rest of the city, and also completely closed the entrance to Kiev – columns of refugees were redirected to other cities. The station itself was turned into a large infirmary; two carriages were adapted to the needs of patients as medical aid points. Alas, the authorities did not have the money for more, given that in addition to the Spaniard, there were many other problems at that time: civil war: whites, Reds, Makhnovists, economic upheavals. Over time, the Spanish flu pandemic came to naught. Although there was no effective treatment against it at that time. Those people who were ill and at the same time remained alive, developed collective immunity against the disease (Andrews, E., 2020).

However, this virus has brought some positive things: The «Spanish Flu» spurred the development of health systems that were in their infancy before. People realized the importance of the development of medicine. After the «Spanish Flu», the "world anti-virus bureau" appeared, which became the forerunner of the WHO – the World Health Organization. In the USA, after the Spanish flu epidemic, health insurance appeared, paid for by employers, which then began to be actively used in other developed countries.

1.4 The effect of the 2008 financial crisis on hospitality in Czech Republic

1.4.1 The Global and National Wider Economic effects

The economic crisis that began in 2008 did not hit the Czech Republic as hard as other EU countries. So, in 2009, the fall in GDP was only 3.4%, which allowed the Czech Republic, along with Norway and Switzerland, to enter the top three least affected European countries.

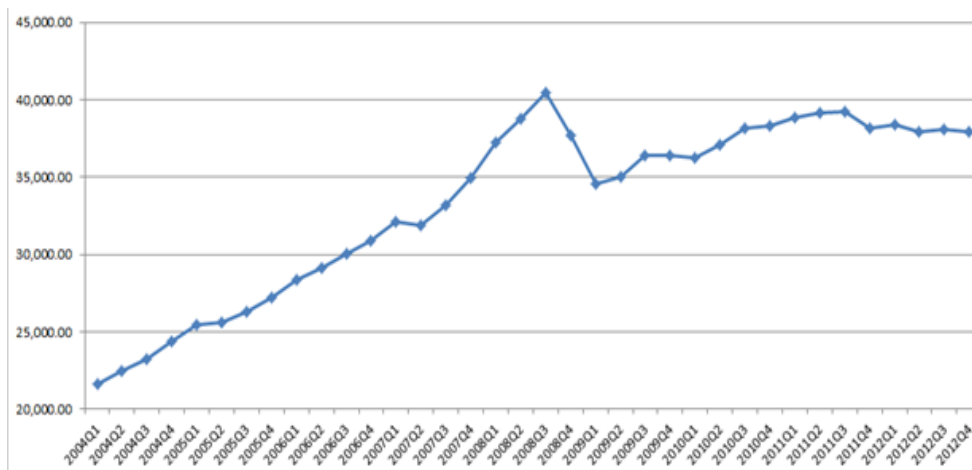


Figure 1. GDP of the Czech Republic in 2004-2012 (million euros)

Source: Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic (MF CR)

First of all, the crisis affected the automotive industry, glass and textile production. The automotive industry is the leading sector of the Czech economy, and the crisis in this industry has adversely affected the economic situation as a whole. Due to falling demand for their products, manufacturers such as Skoda Auto and Hyundai were forced to reduce production and the number of employees. However, thanks to several measures taken by the state (subsidies, VAT refund when buying a car by a firm or entrepreneur, payment of premiums for the disposal of old and purchase of new cars), Czech companies are returning to pre-crisis production rates.

A more negative situation has developed in the production of glass and textiles. The crisis only accelerated their decline, because the downward trend in demand for their products was observed several years before it began. At the same time, unlike car manufacturers, they could not count on state subsidies. As for the banking and financial sector, it was the least affected by the crisis, since it only minimally participated in investing in those products that brought down the world economy.

According to the head of the Czech National Bank, most of the Czech financial market was closed from the impact of the global economic crisis, which did not entail the need to take special measures to support it.

A certain negative impact of the crisis was observed in the mortgage lending market — some banks stopped providing one hundred percent mortgage coverage and tightened the requirements for the creditworthiness of customers.

The main reason for the measures taken was that banks wanted to protect themselves from falling real estate prices, which primarily affected illiquid housing - overpriced properties, bad panel houses, houses and apartments located in disadvantaged areas.

Prices for these types of real estate returned to the level of 2005 and fell, on average, by 10-30%. Prices for high-quality private homes, good new buildings, elite projects, liquid housing and some commercial facilities not only almost did not fall, but also continued to grow rapidly after the Czech Republic emerged from the recession.

The state has taken a number of measures, thanks to which this sector has overcome the financial crisis relatively painlessly - a reduction in bank mortgage lending rates, a strengthening of the Czech krona exchange rate and a gradual increase in VAT from 5% to 21% over several years.

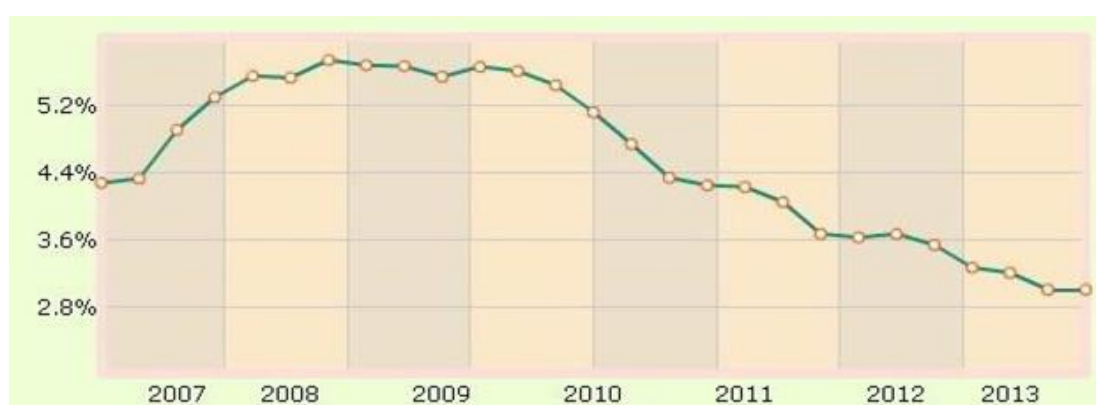


Figure 2. Weighted average mortgage rate in the Czech Republic in 2007-2013

Source: Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic (MF CR)

The crisis also affected the hotel and tourism sector — the incomes of some hotels and travel agencies decreased by a third, and some objects were put up for sale. As experts warned, the market was not in danger of falling at all, there was only a redistribution of forces — major players such as Marriott and Hilton strengthened their presence.

Another indicator of the effects of the financial crisis of 2008 on Czech economy is the inflation rate. This is shown in Figure 3 between the years 2004 and 2021 (prediction)

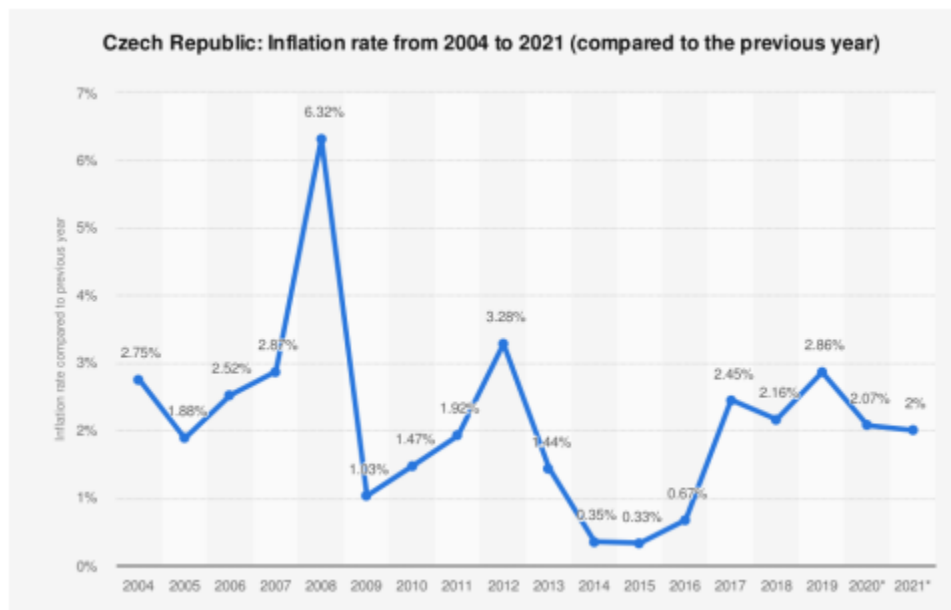


Figure 3. Inflation rate (%) in Czech Republic, 2004-2021, Statista 2020.

Source: Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic (MF CR)

Figure 3 shows that in 2007, the inflation rate was 2.87%. This number increased to 6.3% in 2008. The main factors that caused were the government reforms of public finances and higher oil prices (Dybczak, Voňka and van der Windt, 2008). Czech Republic then saw another increase during the second recession. That time it peaked up to 3.28% (EEIP, 2013).

This can be seen in Figure 3. A high rate of inflation means "an increase in the cost of living as the price of goods and services rise" which can in turn decrease consumer's buying power (Pettinger, 2018).

However, the real picture is more complex because if wages are greater than the inflation rate then consumers can still find themselves with more purchasing power.

Another indicator of how The Czech Economy was affected by the financial crisis is the exchange rate. This is shown below this paragraph in Figure 4. Before the crisis, The Czech Economy was growing fast.

By the summer of 2008 due to Czech National Bank (CNB) monetary policy, the national currency stabilized at approximately 23 CZK/EUR. The stabilization and even the strengthening of the Czech koruna support the fact that before the crisis, the Czech Republic's economy was in good shape. By February 2009, the exchange rate rose dramatically to over 29 CZK/EUR. According to CNB, the koruna was falling as a response to the ongoing financial crisis. Its weakening decreased international investment, however there was an

increase in export of domestic goods. Figure 4 the exchange rate started to stabilize rather quickly. During the second recession in 2012 it also experienced some fluctuation (Hledik et al., 2016).

The number of tourists from European countries — Germany, England and the Netherlands - has slightly decreased, but the total number of people visiting the Czech Republic has increased, and their growth continues from year to year. In general, the Czech economy has shown its resilience to the crisis, and despite the decline in some indicators, it confidently overcame the recession and continued its growth.

1.4.2 Specific effects on travel and tourism

A significant part of the country's population directly or indirectly lives off tourism. According to Mr. Vondruska, Minister for Regional Development (2009-2010), the number of international tourists in 2009 fell by 1% only compared to 2008 (Ministry of Regional Development, 2008).

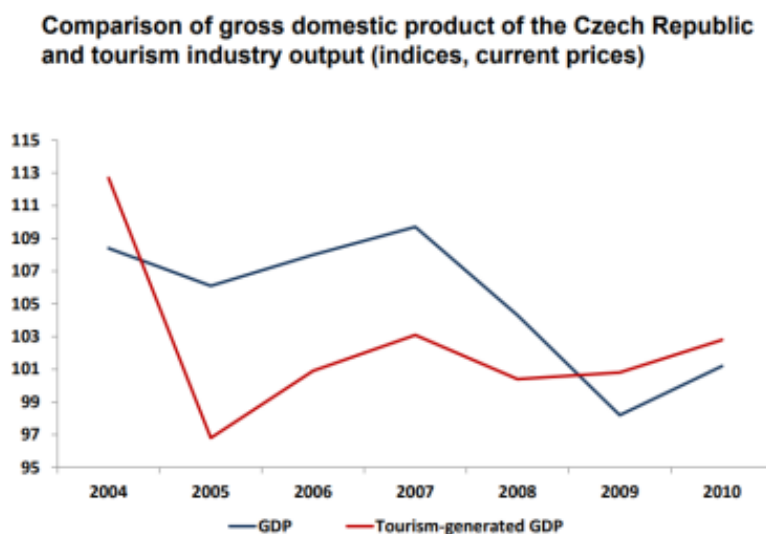


Figure 4. Main indicators of the national economy and tourism in the Czech Republic in 2003-2009, CZSO, 2020.

Source: Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic (MF CR)

Figure 4. shows a comparison of GDP and tourism GDP indexed to 2020 prices. The biggest fall occurs in 2004-2005, a time that precedes the financial crisis. The biggest factor in

this is that the falls are related to the general trend of the koruna strengthening post-communism, which in turn decreased travellers' purchasing power.

Other reasons such as the Czech Republic's reputation for poor and unfriendly service could be a factor (Smrčka et al., 2011).

Number of resident and non resident guests in overnight stays in Czech Republic.

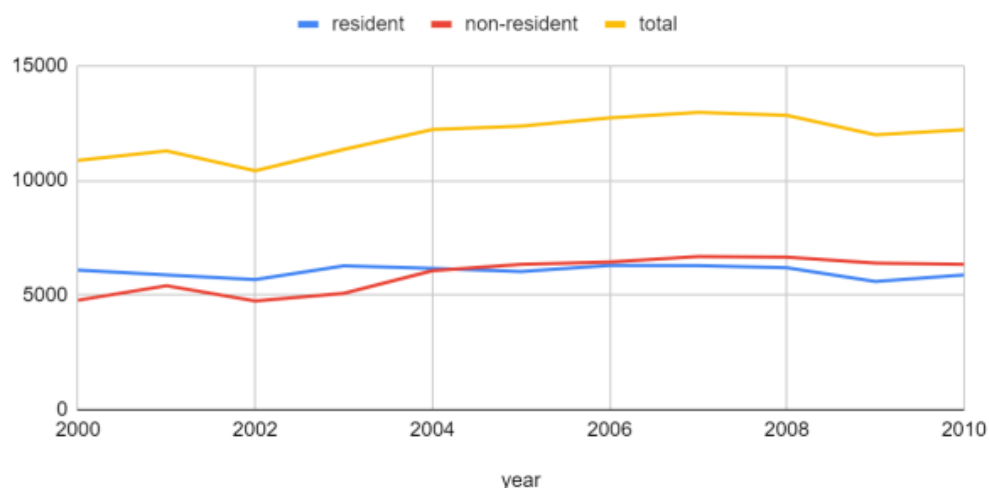


Figure 5. Number of resident and non-resident guests in overnight stays in Czech Republic 2000-2010.

Source: CZSO, 2020.

Figure 5 shows that the number of foreign and domestic overnight stays were not affected significantly during the last 10 years including the years 2007-2010.

This could mean that we assume that there was no significant effect of the financial crisis on tourism and hospitality. However, this is not necessarily the correct view. As the number of guests does not necessarily correlate with total overnight stays.

Non-Resident, Resident and Total overnight stays in Czech Republic

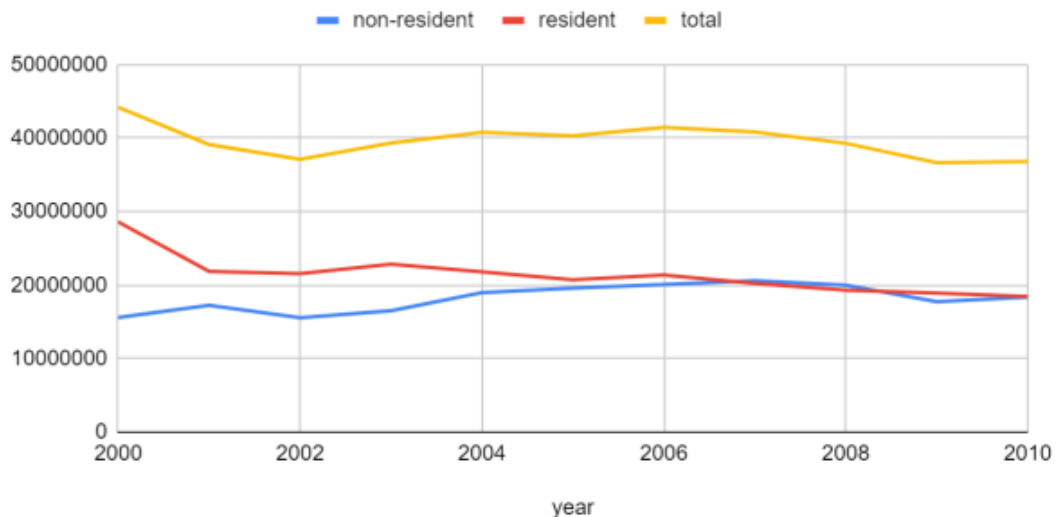


Figure 6. Total overnight stays resident and non-resident guests in overnight stays in Czech Republic 2000-2010.

Source: CZSO, 2020.

From Figure 6 it can be seen that from the years 2000-2010 there has been a decrease in total overnight stays from approximately 4.4 Million to 3.5 Million. Given that guest numbers have remained roughly the same the only explanation remaining is that guests are spending less nights in accommodation overall.

This could be linked to the decreased purchasing power from the inflation rates as shown in Figure 2. Between the years 2007-2010 Figure 7 shows a decrease of 40.8 to 36.8 million Overnight Stays, about 10%.

These are the years of the financial crisis. This could be related to increases in inflation as observed from Figure 3.

One other thing to note is that Non-Resident stays actually increased over this period indicating higher demand. The biggest factor that affects this is usually the Koruna/Euro exchange rate and this was quite volatile varying from 29-23 Koruna/Euro over this period. This would not lead us to suggest there would be increased tourism. The best explanation for this is that these fluctuations did not matter so much for international tourists because prices were still relatively low.

There could also be somewhat of a paradoxical effect at play where decreased incomes of Europeans led to more visitors to the Czech-Republic. This is because the Czech Republic is seen as a cheaper destination when compared with Western Europe.

Tourists who have had their incomes fall but still want to go on holiday decided to come to the Czech Republic as opposed to France, Germany, Italy etc (Exner, 2009). In this section the Effects of the 2007-2008 financial crisis on hospitality were discussed.

It was asserted that the indirect effects of the financial crisis such as fluctuations of the exchange rate (International tourism) and currency inflation (domestic tourism) were two key drivers for the Tourism/Hospitality industry. It can be shown from these indicators that undoubtedly the crisis had its impact on the industry. But these effects are small and, in some cases, it is possible to say there was no/very little effect. Overall, the Czech/Republic hospitality/tourism industry was strong enough to avoid significant damage.

According to the results of 2010, the total number of arrivals of foreigners to the Czech Republic increased by 5% in 2010, and the number of overnight stays in Czech hotels for foreigners increased by 3.5%. The total number of arrivals of foreigners to hotels in the Czech Republic in the first 12 months of 2010 increased by 5% compared to 2009 and amounted to a total of 6 million 336.3 thousand people. However, compared to 2008, the number of arrivals of foreigners decreased by 4.7%. Recall that at the end of 2009, there was a decrease in arrivals of foreigners to the Czech Republic with an indicator of 8.5%.

According to the results of 12 months of 2010, the first place in the Czech entry market was retained by the German market with a weight share of 21.3%. The Russian market rose to the second place at the end of the year with a share of 6.5% (or 413.8 thousand people). The third place was taken by the British market with a weight share of 5.8%. 3. The total number of nights spent by foreigners in hotels in the Czech Republic in the first 12 months of 2010 increased by 3.5% but compared to 2008 it decreased by 8.1%. The German market is leading with an even more significant advantage: the share of German overnight stays was 25.1%. The Russian market is in second place with an 11.4% share of overnight stays. The third place was taken by the Italian market with the share of overnight stays of 5.2%. According to the results of the 12 months of 2010, the German market of inbound tourism to the Czech Republic decreased by more than 3%, the flow of Englishmen decreased by almost 1%, but the Russian market grew by 26.6%, showing absolutely the best growth

rate. The incoming flow of Americans increased by more than 13% and the incoming flow of Frenchmen increased by 12%.

The average occupancy of hotel rooms in all regions and categories in the Czech Republic for the first 12 months of 2010 was 40.7%, which is 2% more than the average annual occupancy of hotels in 2009. The highest load was observed in the hotels of Calovy Var - 54.9% and in Prague 54.4%.

The highest hotel occupancy, depending on the category, was observed in 5-star hotels (52.9%) and 4-star hotels (51.6%), the lowest in 2-star hotels and below (26.1%).

The Russian market came in second place in the overall ranking of arrivals of foreigners to the Czech Republic, second only to the German market, but ahead of the UK, Italy and Poland markets.

According to the results of the 12 months of 2010, the incoming flow from Russia increased by 26.6%, amounting to almost 414 thousand people, and the number of overnight stays of Russians in hotels in the Czech Republic increased by 25.4%.

However, despite these high figures, the dynamics of arrivals of Russians compared to 2008, although slightly, is still negative.

According to the number of arrivals to the Czech Republic in the first 12 months of 2010, the Russian market took second place with a weight share of 6.5%, second only to the German market (share of 21.3%), but ahead of the British (share of 5.8%), Polish (share of 5.5%) and Italian markets (share of 5.3%). A year ago, Russians took fifth place with a weight share of 5.4%, behind Germans (23.1% share), Britons (6.2% share), Italians (5.9% share) and Poles (5.7% share). Thus, over the past year, Russia has risen by three positions and increased the incoming flow to the Czech Republic following the results of 12 months 2010 by 26.6% or in absolute terms by almost 87 thousand people. It is interesting to note that according to the results of the 4th quarter of 2010, the growth of Russians amounted to 44%. This growth rate is the best among the countries forming the main entry flow to the Czech Republic.

Absolutely the best is the increase of Russians to the Czech Republic and by the end of 12 months of the year 26.6%. However, in comparison with 2008, which is absolutely the best for Russians, the dynamics of arrivals was minus 1%. According to the number of nights spent in hotels in the Czech Republic, according to the results of the 12 months of 2010, the Russian market also ranks second with a weight share of 11.4%, second only to the Germans (share of 25.1%). The growth of Russians in the fourth quarter of 2010 amounted to 45.3%,

and in the 12 months of 2010 25.4%. These indicators are also the best in terms of growth dynamics among all the countries forming the main entry flow to the Czech Republic. However, in comparison with the same period of 2008, Russians again have a negative dynamic of overnight stays, minus 4.3%.

The average length of stay of Russians in hotels in the Czech Republic for the first 12 months of 2010 was 5 nights, this is the maximum value among all countries forming the main entry flow to the Czech Republic. This indicator is 0.1 nights less than a year ago and more than 2 nights better than the average stay in the Czech Republic of foreigners (2.9 nights). According to the statistics of the TOURMARKET competitor price monitoring system.INFO at the end of 2010, the Czech Republic ranked 15th in terms of the number of requests processed by TOURINDEX user agencies.

The number of requests for the Czech Republic in 2010 in the TOURINDEX system increased by more than 78% compared to 2009. According to the results of the period from January to December 2010, the weight share of requests for the Czech Republic in the TOURINDEX system among requests for other countries was 1.1%, which is almost 0.4% more than the share indicator of 2009.

The most popular operators in the Czech Republic in the TourIndex system among users of this system in the period July-December 2010 were Lanta-Tour Voyage with a share of 8%, Capital Tour with a share of 5.9%, Travelsystem with a share of 5.8%, Russian Express with a share of 4.8%, NTK-Intourist with a share of 4.4%, Pax with a share of 4.3%, BSI Group and Vedi Tour Group-M with a share of 4.1% for each company, Neva Travel Agency with a share of 3.7% and VKO Travel with a share of 3.6%. The share of the 10 aforementioned tour operators in the Czech Republic accounted for almost half of all agent requests in the Tourindex system.

In comparison with the period of July-December 2009, the share of Travelsystem increased by more than 3%, and the share of Lanta-Tour Voyage increased by almost 3%. At the same time, the share of requests for operators outside the top ten decreased by almost 15%. The most popular resorts in the Czech Republic for requests in the Tourindex system in the period from July to December 2010 were Prague with a share of 67.5% and Karlovy Vary with a share of 25.1. Other regions accounted for no more than 8% of all TourIndex requests.

According to TourIndex statistics, the most popular tours to the Czech Republic in the period July-December 2010 are trips lasting for one week with a weight share of 25%,

followed by tours lasting for two weeks with a share of 9.1%. Then there are tours with a duration of 4 and 6 nights with a share of 7.1%, for 5 nights with a share of 7%, for 10 nights with a share of 6.3%, for 8 nights with a share of 6.2%, for 9 nights with a share of 6.1%, for 3 nights with a share of 5.1% and for 11 nights with the share of 4.5% . Thus, the share of the 10 aforementioned tours of various durations accounted for more than 83% of all requests for the Czech Republic by TourIndex agents in the period July-December 2010.

According to TourIndex statistics, according to the results of the second half of 2010, from July to December, the most popular category among TourIndex agents on tours in the Czech Republic are 3-star hotels with a weight share of 46.4%, followed by 4-star hotels with a weight share of 38.3% and 5-star hotels with a share of 11.4%.

Other categories accounted for no more than 4% of requests from TourIndex agents. Compared to the same period in 2009, the share of requests for a choice of 3-star hotels increased by more than 3% and the share of requests for 5-star hotels decreased by 2%.

The maximum number of requests for tours to the Czech Republic in 2010 in the TOURINDEX system was in October (more than 15 thousand), and the minimum for May and August (about 4 thousand).

Thus, according to a study by the Czech Statistical Office, 3.3 percent fewer tourists visited the Czech Republic in the third quarter of this year than in the same period last year, and they spend less time in the country. Summing up, we can say what was already said at the beginning of the paragraph — there will probably not be a sharp decline in the tourism industry, but there will be a decline in business income. And this cannot but affect the activities of individual enterprises.

1.5 Timeline of significant regulations and limitations in CZ relating to Covid-19.

In the context of the spread of a new coronavirus infection, the Czech Republic was one of the first countries to follow the path of a rigid model of combating the disease. On March 1, Czech doctors recorded the first cases of COVID-19, and on March 16, the Czech government announced a nationwide quarantine and completely closed its borders, including with EU countries. Such decisive actions even frightened and confused the European Commission. However, a few days later, other European countries took similar measures, in fact, violating the Schengen Agreement.

Meanwhile, the restrictions imposed gave quick results. In total, about 24 thousand people were sick with coronavirus in the Czech Republic, the number of deaths was 421.

However, a few days later, other European countries took similar measures, in fact, violating the Schengen Agreement. Since the end of April, the country has gradually begun to return to normal life: shops, markets, hairdressers have started working. Since April 27, the Czech Republic has been one of the first to gradually open its borders.

Now they can enter the country:

- Czech citizens;
- Czech citizens residing in other EU countries;
- temporary or permanent residents;
- EU citizens coming for business purposes or university studies;
- traveling to the country for less than 72 hours;
- diplomats;
- employees from important sectors of the country's economy;
- relatives and family members of Czech citizens and EU citizens.

The authorities began to prepare for the opening of borders for international tourists. Since May 26, Czechs have been allowed to visit Germany and the Republic of Austria. Upon arrival, "coronavirus testing" is required. A day later, the borders with Hungary and Slovakia were opened. Moreover, if you have been in these countries for only two days, then you can not pass the COVID-19 test.

On the first day of summer, the Czech authorities presented a new tourist system "traffic light", which divided all countries of the world into three security zones: "green", "yellow", "red".

Rules for citizens of the "green zone" countries:

- free movement around the country;
- there is no need to undergo quarantine;
- no need to be tested for COVID-19.

Rules for incoming guests from the countries of the "yellow" and "red" zones:

- free movement around the country;
- two-week self-isolation;
- presentation of a certificate with a negative analysis for COVID-19, which was made a day before entry.

These rules apply not only to guests, but also to their own citizens traveling around the world.

As a result, on June 15, on a mutual basis, the Czech Republic opened borders with countries from the "green zone".

Tourists from these countries can move around the regions of the Czech Republic absolutely freely. The prosperous countries included: Cyprus, Germany, Bulgaria, Austria, Iceland, Greece, the Baltic States, Poland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Croatia, Switzerland and even Italy. They got into the "yellow zone": Denmark, Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Malta and Portugal. Tourists from these countries were required to provide negative tests for COVID-19 or go to 14-day isolation.

The "red zone" of European states included: Great Britain, Sweden, Romania and Spain. Citizens of these countries were also waiting for tests or quarantine.

On July 31, the Council of the European Union published a new list of third countries whose citizens were allowed to visit the "pan-European space".

It included: Morocco, Georgia, New Zealand, Australia, Uruguay, Thailand, Rwanda, Tunisia, South Korea and Japan. At the same time, in the Czech Republic, tourists from these countries will have to submit an international medical certificate with a negative test for COVID-19 in order to avoid quarantine.

If you have to stay quarantined in the Czech Republic, then you need to remember that all costs will fall on your account. The same situation is with the coronavirus test — the tourist pays for all services independently. The average price of a COVID-19 test is 1.5 thousand crowns.

Therefore, when entering the country, it is better to take care of the availability of private health insurance that will cover these costs. When traveling to the Czech Republic, it is important where you come from. Individual countries are divided by color depending on the degree of risk of infection (traffic light system). Russia is a very high-risk country. A negative PCR test is required for entry (up to 72 hours), after arrival between 5 and 7 days of stay, it is also necessary to pass a PCR test.

Tourist trips to the Czech Republic are possible only for Russian tourists who are vaccinated with a vaccine recognized by EMA (Pfizer, Moderna) and have a vaccination certificate recognized by the EU. Since December 26, the state of emergency has been

canceled. From 01.07.21, digital covid passports with information about vaccination, test results or transferred Covid-19 are introduced for EU citizens to move around the EU countries.

The regime at the state border of the Czech Republic continues to change, as well as the conditions of stay of foreigners in the country. Due to the expiration of the measures restricting the possibility of leaving the territory of the Czech Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic continues to recommend going abroad only in emergency and necessary situations, mainly due to the expanded restrictive measures currently applied by most countries, as well as significant difficulties associated with transport.

Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan is currently not included in the list of countries according to the Protective Measure of the Ministry of Health and the updated notification dated March 12, 2021, i.e. entry/return to the Czech Republic from these countries is subject to restrictions. A visa is only one of the necessary conditions for an entry permit, and it is necessary to wait until the entry of the corresponding category of foreigners into the Czech Republic is allowed.

Foreign citizens and citizens of the Czech Republic who have stayed for more than 12 hours in the last 14 days on the territory of countries not included in the list of countries with a low risk of COVID-19 infection (countries are indicated in green), and who have a permit to enter the Czech Republic, are required to submit an RT-PCR test no older than 72 hours before the start ways and they must have a negative result in writing.

The confirmation must be presented to the Regional Sanitary Station (Krajská hygiene stanice) based on the place of residence filled out in the arrival questionnaire. Upon arrival by plane, control of the RT-PCR test and the arrival questionnaire begins already before boarding. Upon arrival on the territory of the Czech Republic from the 5th to the 7th day, you need to take an RT-PCR test. Also, in accordance with the epidemiological system, it is necessary to wear an FFP2 respirator on arrival for 7 days when leaving the place of residence.

Thus, the Czech Republic, in the context of the spread of a new coronavirus infection, was one of the first countries to follow the path of a rigid model of combating the disease. The restrictions imposed gave quick results.

1.6 Predictions of the effect of the Pandemic on Hospitality

After continuous growth over the past few years, which has made the Czech Republic one of the most attractive destinations to visit in Europe, the local tourism industry has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions. In 2020, about 10.8 million people stayed in collective housing institutions, which is 51% less than in 2019.

According to official data based on collective accommodation, almost 22 million tourists visited the Czech Republic in 2019, which is an all-time record.

The vast majority (almost 8 million) of visitors last year were domestic tourists, the number of which decreased by 28% compared to last year. This also affected foreign tourists, who were visited by only 2.8 million people in the Czech Republic, which is more than 74% compared to 2019. According to the Czech Statistical Service, due to the global pandemic that has restricted international travel since the beginning of March 2020, they remained significantly below the average of previous years. Germany continued to be the main country of arrival (819,000 tourists; -60%), followed by Poland (287,000; -57%) and Slovakia (271,000; -64%).

Visitors from the UK (125,000), Austria (89,000), Italy (88,000), France (82,000), the Netherlands (81,000) and Ukraine (74,000) also reported a significant decrease compared to previous years. The biggest decline occurred in distant destinations, including China and South Korea, which became the two main source countries for visitors to the Czech Republic. According to a study by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the Czech aviation industry suffered the most in Europe in 2020: passenger traffic fell by 78%. Studies also show that the Prague hotel market has suffered the most in the EU since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the continent: room occupancy has fallen to less than 17%, and room income has fallen by 85%. In 2019, the number of tourists in the Czech Republic reached a new record.

According to data published by the Czech Statistical Service, tourism in the Czech Republic reached a record level in 2019: almost 22 million guests stayed in collective accommodation facilities. This is about twice the country's population of 10.6 million people, and 3.5% (+740,000 tourists) more than in 2018. The total number of tourists visiting the Czech Republic is even greater, since these figures take into account only people living in hotels, hostels, overnight stays and breakfasts, camp sites and other types of collective

establishments. The number of overnight stays also reached a record high of over 57 million last year. Just over half of these 22 million tourists are from the Czech Republic, while the number of local visitors exceeds the number of foreign visitors by about 220,000 people. Most of the tourists are from Germany, Slovakia and Poland.

In general, 10.8 million foreign tourists visited the Czech Republic in 2019. As in previous years, most of them came from neighboring countries, the leaders were Germans (more than 2 million), followed by Slovaks (750,000) and Poles (673,000). The Czech Republic also received a large number of tourists from China (612,000), the USA (584,000), Russia (565,000), Great Britain (496,000), Italy (410,000) and South Korea (385,000). Among all these nationalities, the number of tourists from China (-1%) and South Korea (-7.4%) decreased compared to last year. In 2018, the Czech Republic has already set a new record: more than 21.3 million guests stayed in collective accommodation facilities.

Russians occupied the sixth position in the rating of visitors, but they were leaders in the number of overnight stays in hotels, that is, they left a significant part of their savings here, and therefore they were always appreciated by restaurateurs, hoteliers, and souvenir shop owners. Now there is no one - neither ours, nor the Germans, nor the Chinese (these in recent years have become record holders for the so-called "average check"). In recent times, only a dozen flights arrived daily from Moscow to Prague, and six of our and Czech airlines competed in this direction at once. And the low-cost airline Pobeda regularly delivered passengers to Karlovy Vary. No one knows when this air bridge will start operating again - in July, in August or later? Representatives of carriers refrain from forecasts, and they can be understood.

Therefore, in the same Karlovy Vary, most hotels, despite the lifting of bans, are still closed. Everyone knows that the main contingent on the local "waters" were guests from Russia and CIS countries. Now they are gone. Hoteliers are trying to lure locals. In the traditions of European culture, there is no long-term treatment at water resorts. Czechs, if they come to us, then for two or three nights, and they treat wellness procedures with distrust. There is, however, hope for the "Russian Germans" living in Germany, they have long been our regular customers. This city is not the only one whose well-being is based on the resort business. There are also Mariánské Lázně, Františkovy Lázně, Pödebrady - almost all of their inhabitants are somehow connected with the hospitality industry, and therefore depend on its condition.

The municipal authorities of each of these resorts are now coming up with their own programs to overcome the crisis. For example, the City Hall of Karlovy Vary promises each guest a discount voucher - its face value will depend on the number of nights spent at the hotel. The most modest voucher - for one thousand crowns - is due for a three-day stay, the most generous - for five thousand crowns (this is about two hundred euros) - for a week's rest.

Of course, the story about the entertainment establishment is from the category, rather, anecdotal. The reality is that the tourism industry, apparently, will not receive any significant assistance from the state. There is no money in the budget for this. And the crumbs that are allocated can barely cover the cost of paying taxes.

The main part of the measures designed to ease the fate of the industry has been shifted to the shoulders of local self-government. For example, in Czech Krumlov, which is rightfully considered one of the most beautiful medieval towns in Europe, the authorities canceled the rent for entrepreneurs, the fee for summer terraces of restaurants, halved the parking fee. The city authorities intend to use the "dead season" to reboot, for example, to make the city attractive not only for foreigners, but also convenient for local residents, but such assurances do not look convincing. Since this city has always lived exclusively at the expense of tourism, today the situation there is close to disaster.

If earlier Krumlov was visited by up to two million tourists a year, now there is a frightening emptiness. The famous music festivals, which were attended by the world's most famous stars, have been canceled. The damage is already estimated at fifty million crowns. Having accepted the loss of income from inbound tourism, the authorities, business owners and managers promise to focus their efforts on making the country as attractive as possible for their own citizens. There are a lot of projects, but even here things are not going smoothly - at least because the Czechs prefer to spend the summer at sea, and therefore they are already mainly aimed at Croatia and Greece.

Although there is good news in this sense. Thus, prices in Prague's central restaurants, previously focused on foreigners, fell almost fourfold. And now the Old City, if not bubbling as before, still does not look like a desert - due to the residents of the capital walking around it. On June 5, the Czech Republic announced the opening of its borders to Germans, Austrians and Hungarians. This is regarded here as a light at the end of the tunnel. Already in 2020, the number of tourists in the Czech Republic has halved. According to the latest data from the

Czech Statistical Office, the number of tourists visiting the Czech Republic has halved in 2020.

Thus, the Czech tourism industry is one of the most affected in Europe. According to analysts' forecasts, at first glance, the life of Czech cities has returned to normal. However, there are also such consequences of the disaster that will affect the life of this country for a long time. Perhaps the most important of them is connected with the paralysis of inbound tourism.

1.7 Methodology

The data was collected from the primary and the secondary sources. The primary sources included the reports obtained from EuroAgentur Hotels and the interviews, the government documents mainly regarding restrictions connected to Covid-19 and the statistical data from Czech Statistical Office.

The secondary sources of the data were different kinds of publications such as articles, research papers and books.

Most of the data is up to date due to the recency of the topic.

The single case study presented in the paper is aimed at EuroAgentur Hotels company because the author works there. It gives a better understanding of the situation the company is facing and a larger access to internal documents as an employee. In the case of secondary sources much effort has been made to ensure these are credible high quality sources. For instance, much of the information around pandemics came from the CDC, WHO and The Lancet.

The CDC are heading the pandemic response in the United States of America. The WHO is the worldwide advisory body when it comes to epidemiology and interventions in pandemics. Finally, The Lancet is a weekly peerreviewed general medical journal, It is among the world's oldest and best-known general medical journals (Population Media Center, 2020).

In the case of specific economic predictions relating to hospitality relevant organisations such as the AHCR have been cited.

2. Case Study – select the company group hotels (EuroAgentur Hotels & Travel, a.s.)

2.1 Background to selected company (EuroAgentur Hotels & Travel, a.s.)

EuroAgentur Hotels & Travel. This is a Czech hotel chain that has been operating in the field of tourism and hotel services for more than 30 years.

Comprehensive and full-fledged customer service is effectively carried out thanks to a wide range of services provided. More than 30 hotels under the EA Hotels brand are located in the most attractive tourist and business areas in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

An important part of the services provided is also the EA Culinary restaurant chain, through which the company provides professional catering at many individual events, celebrations and weddings. In addition, the company independently provides conference and congress services.

For the high level of customer service, EA H&T has repeatedly received a number of prestigious awards awarded by specialists and the public in the field of tourism and hotel services. Reliability and trust in the company allow it to provide qualified hotel consulting.

The company's social responsibility is manifested in the support of many charitable and sporting events. An important motive of the company's activity is the emphasis on the quality of services provided and customer satisfaction.

EuroAgentur Hotels & Travel, which owns the largest hotel chain in the Czech Republic, has been successfully cooperating with various travel companies for a long time, which over the years has established itself as a responsible and reliable partner.

List of hotels that are part of the hotel chain EuroAgentur Hotels:

EA Hotel Jasmin ***

EA Hotel Jessenius ***

EA Hotel Julis ****

EA Hotel Esplanade ***

EA Hotel Rokoko****

EA Hotel Elefant***

Ramada Prague City Centre****

EA Hotel Mozart

EA Hotel Jeleni Dvur***

EA Hotel Na Jezere***
EA Hotel Crystal Palace****
EA Hotel Tereziánský dvůr****
EA Hotel Manes****
EA Hotel Churanov***
EA Hotel Royal Esprit****
EA Hotel Sen****
EA Hotel Sonata****
EA Zamecký Hotel Hrubá Skála****
EA Hotel Downtown****
EA Hotel Kraskov****
EA Hotel Tosca***
EA Embassy Hotel Prague****
EA Hotel Populus***
Next, consider several hotels EuroAgentur Hotels.

2.2 Analysis of the EuroAgentur Hotels chain Advance Bookings

2.2.1. General Summary of the EuroAgentur Hotels

As part of this work, we will analyze the activities of several hotels of the EuroAgentur Hotels chain, such as:

- 1) EA Embassy Hotel Prague****,
- 2) EA Hotel Downtown 4*,
- 3) EA Hotel Julis 4*,
- 4) EA Hotel Mánes 4*,
- 5) EA Hotel Tosca 3*,
- 6) EA Hotel Rokoko 4*.

EA Embassy Hotel Prague****. This hotel offers guests: Accommodation in the very center, 960 meters from the Railway Station from the Florence metro station 4 min walk Delicious Breakfasts There is Parking, Free Wi-Fi. The figure shows the hotel.



Figure 7. EA Embassy Hotel Prague****

Source: https://101hotels.com/hotel_chain/czech_republic/praga/ea_hotels

The stylish Embassy Prague Hotel offers quiet, very elegant and comfortable rooms in a carefully restored Neo-Renaissance building built in 1880.

The hotel is located in the center of Prague, in a quiet side street. The center of the Golden City can be easily reached on foot or by metro, the nearest station of which is a few steps away from the hotel.

For an additional fee, guests can use the wellness center, where there are all conditions for relaxation after a day dedicated to work or sightseeing in the beautiful Czech capital. Guests can park their car in the hotel's garage or use the nearby public parking. For both options, an additional fee is charged in different amounts.

2. EA Hotel Downtown 4*



Figure 8. Hotel Downtown 4*

Source: https://101hotels.com/hotel_chain/czech_republic/praga/ea_hotels

The four-star EA Downtown Hotel is located in the center of Prague, 300 meters from Wenceslas Square and the National Museum. It offers stylishly decorated rooms, a spa and wellness centre and free Wi-Fi. Paid multi-level parking is available. All rooms are equipped with a minibar, a flat-screen TV with satellite channels, and a safe.

The layout includes a bathroom with a shower. For an additional fee, guests can use the wellness center, including a sauna and a hot tub. For business meetings, conferences and other events, the hotel has a modern conference hall with a capacity of 60 people and a lounge with a capacity of 20 people.

The nearest metro station is 200 metres away, and the main train station is 2 metro stops away. The Old Town Square with the astronomical Clock Orla is 1.5 km away.

3. EA Hotel Julis 4*



Figure 9. EA Hotel Julis 4*

Source: https://101hotels.com/hotel_chain/czech_republic/praga/ea_hotels

Hotel Juliš is located in the pedestrian area of Wenceslas Square in the center of Prague. It offers quiet, air-conditioned rooms with free Wi-Fi. The standard amenities in the rooms include a TV with satellite channels.

The rooms have a well-equipped kitchenette and a bathroom with a bathtub and a hairdryer. A buffet breakfast with a rich selection of dishes is served daily at the Juliš Hotel from 07:00 to 11:00.

In summer, you can have breakfast on the spacious terrace overlooking the quiet Franciscan Garden. In addition, the hotel has a chess cafe with chess tables and a collection of themed books. For an additional fee, guests can use the heated indoor pool, sauna and the modern fitness center Form Factory. The Můstek Metro Station is less than a minute's walk from this hotel.

4. EA Hotel Mánes 4*



Figure 10. EA Hotel Mánes 4*

Source: https://101hotels.com/hotel_chain/czech_republic/praga/ea_hotels

The EA Hotel Manes building is located in the central part of Prague's embankment, which goes near the Vltava River and just a kilometer from Wenceslas Square. The rooms of the hotel have a modern design and are equipped with air conditioning. There is satellite TV, telephone, mini bar, as well as a safe.

The cuisine is a mixture of Czech and European dishes. Many dishes are prepared socially to order. You can order almost any dish from any kitchen. At the same time, the local cuisine here is very diverse and nutritious. For the convenience of guests, the following services are provided: dry cleaning or laundry, 24-hour front desk and multilingual staff.

A shuttle service from the airport and back (around the clock) and a meeting at the train station are available for an additional fee.

There are many transport hubs near the hotel, which can be reached on foot. In addition, any attraction in the central part of the city can be reached in ten to fifteen minutes at a calm pace.

5. EA Hotel Tosca 3*



Figure 11. EA Hotel Tosca 3*

Source: https://101hotels.com/hotel_chain/czech_republic/praga/ea_hotels

Tosca Hotel is located in the old Vinohrady district in the center of Prague. It is decorated in a modern style.

The Old Town can be easily reached on foot or by public transport. Free Wi-Fi is available. The hotel has a lobby bar. The lobby bar and lounge serves a wide selection of drinks, including Czech wines. A buffet breakfast is served every morning in the lobby bar.

All rooms at the non-smoking Tosca Hotel are equipped with a flat-screen TV. There is also a bathroom. For an additional fee, guests can use a safe. The Old Town is just 1 metro stop away on Line A. The famous Wenceslas Square is a 10-minute walk away.

6. EA Hotel Rokoko 4*



Figure 12. EA Hotel Rokoko 4*

Source: https://101hotels.com/hotel_chain/czech_republic/praga/ea_hotels

On the territory of Wenceslas Square, which is located in the central historical zone of Prague, there is a building of the four-star hotel Rokoko, which is located six hundred meters from the main train station. Rooms are provided that amaze with their cleanliness and luxury. All rooms are non-smoking rooms. There is free Internet access, as well as everything you need for a comfortable stay. The restaurant provides an opportunity to try out various dishes, both local and foreign cuisine. At the same time, the service is provided according to the restaurant menu.

For the convenience of guests, the following services are provided: executive car rental, dry cleaning or laundry, and a 24-hour front desk. A roundtrip airport shuttle (available on request) and a train station pick-up are available for an additional fee. The historical center of Prague is located around the hotel, so you can quickly walk to various attractions, including a number of museums and theaters.

Next, consider the prices for the above-mentioned hotels.

2.3 Comparison of selected company rates for 2019, 2020 and 2021

Halfway through every year EuroAgentur Hotels issues the rates for all the properties where the base prices for each room type are calculated. It is also separated by the seasons from peak to low.

In The Table the rates for the double ensuite room in 2019, 2020 and 2021 in all of the properties are compared (Somewhere Nice, Ghana is excluded once again). A double room is chosen as this room type is presented not only in hotels but in hostels as well. So here we can compare the same room. The prices are taken from the peak season for SunThu and are shown below.

The style of the room stock of the EuroAgentur Hotels hotel chain is decorated with elements of corporate identity, with a predominance of golden, beige and green shades. Any of the rooms of different comfort levels. An analysis of the pricing policy of the EuroAgentur Hotels hotel chain showed that all activities are aimed at meeting the needs of the target client. It is necessary to take into account not only customer requests, but also the level of hotel occupancy during the year (Fig.13).

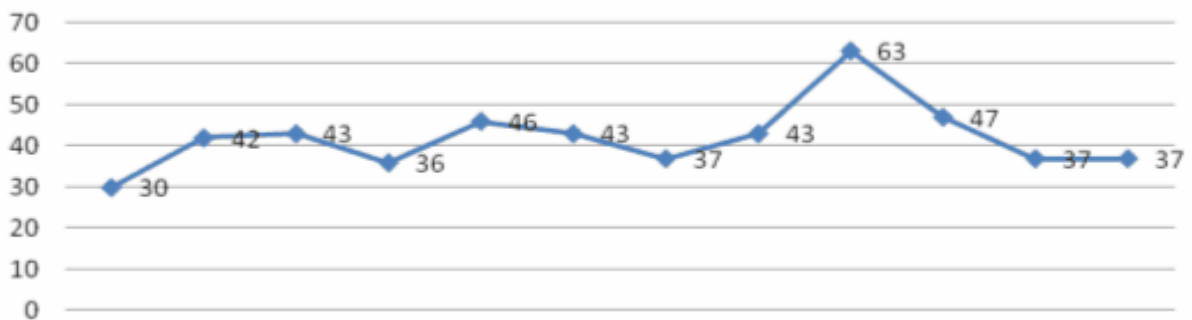


Figure 13. Dynamics of the loading of the room stock of the EuroAgentur Hotels hotel chain for January-December 2020

Source: https://101hotels.com/hotel_chain/czech_republic/praga/ea_hotels

Next, let's imagine the average price for a room by month (Fig. 14)

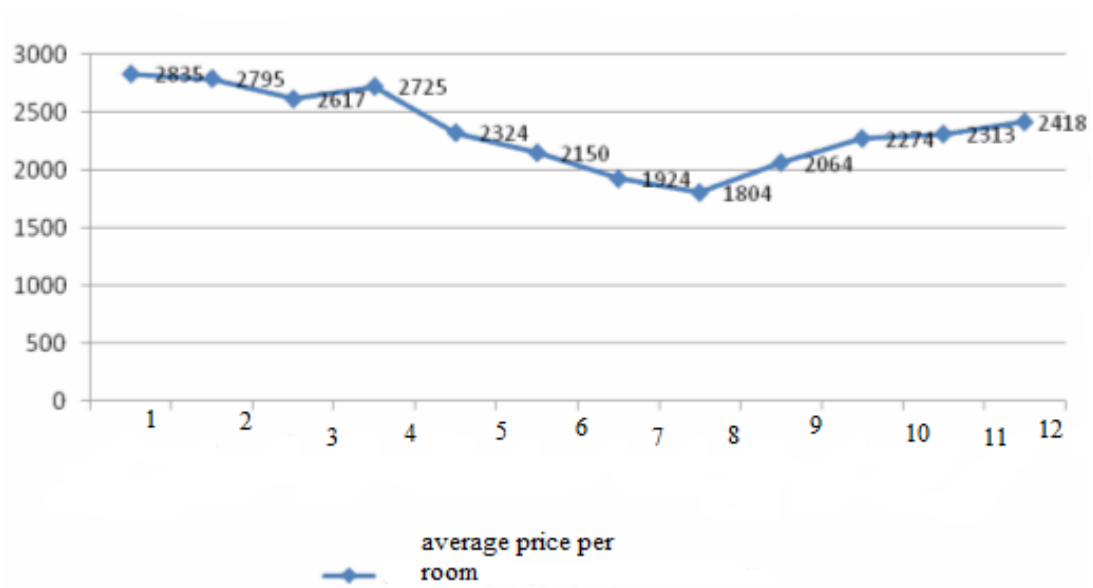


Figure 14. Average price per room in a hotel chain in 2019-2021

Source: EA Hotels in Prague

https://101hotels.com/hotel_chain/czech_republic/praga/ea_hotels

Thus, we can see that EuroAgentur Hotels has positive predictions for the peak season and thus, there was an increase in prices. The only exceptions are MSCB and AMA. For MSCB the difference is considerably small.

The reason behind lowering the prices for these hotels might have been a desire to increase their occupancy. Looking at 2020 and 2021, we can see that the prices went down. MSD and MSCB saw the biggest price decrease.

It might have been done due to the fact that over lockdown these 2 hotels remained open, and it was possible to analyze which rate would be appropriate for the changed market. AMA did not experience any change in price. This can be explained by the lack of data about the demand in 2020 as the hotel stayed closed since the start of the pandemic.

The figure shows the dynamics of the tourist flow in the EuroAgentur Hotels chain for 2019-2021.

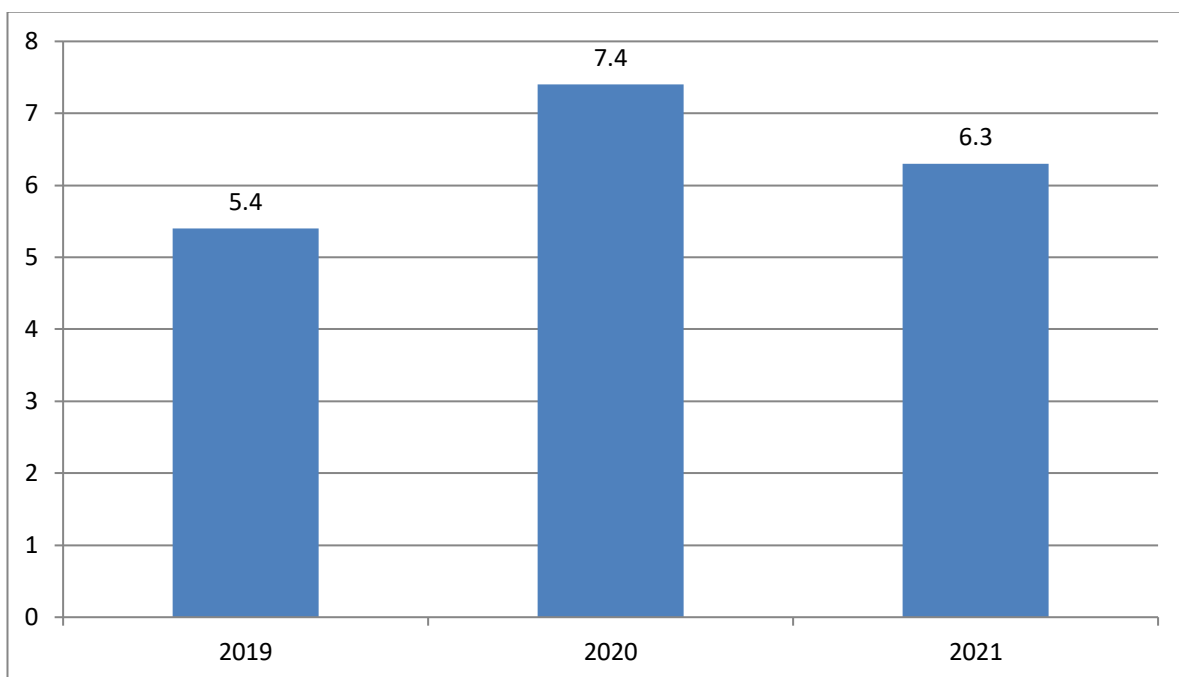


Figure 15. The dynamics of the tourist flow in the EuroAgentur Hotels, million people.

Source: EA Hotels in Prague

https://101hotels.com/hotel_chain/czech_republic/praga/ea_hotels

The analysis showed that the dynamics of the tourist flow in the hotel chain is generally positive, apart from political and economic transformations in connection with the pandemic. In 2019, the tourist flow of hotels has significantly decreased due to the pandemic. By 2020, the decline in tourist traffic has decreased. In 2021, there was an expected decrease in the tourist flow of the hotel chain associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.4 Measures adopted by company over the pandemic

The Czech Republic is gradually opening up to international tourism. From August 23, foreign travelers with a Schengen visa and a vaccination certificate with recognized EMA vaccines can come to the country. At the moment, these are four vaccines – BioNTech/Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca и Johnson & Johnson.

Economic Measures adopted by EuroAgentur Hotels in regard to restrictions:

Shortage and reorganization of staff. The lower demand for manpower made the company decrease the quantity of staff from around 150 to 20 in March. The number rose

when the properties reopened in June to 50 at maximum. The main office was abolished and those who were able were working from home. Those who were not able to work from home were transferred to the hotel reception. It concerned such positions as reservation executive and reservation supervisor. Combining 2 positions at once allowed EuroAgentur Hotels to reduce the staff costs. The First priority was given to full-time employees, as these employees are completely reliant on their salary for living.

Long-term rent of hotel rooms. Effective from March 17th, EuroAgentur Hotels started to offer the room for long-term rent. The offered locations were Sir Toby's, Miss Sophie's Charles Bridge and Downtown. The prices started from 4200 CZK per month (1 bed in a 6-bed dormitory) up to 18400 CZK (double room with a kitchenette):

Shelters. 4 of the properties became temporary accommodation for homeless people. The City council runs this campaign and BOHO receives 6000 CZK per person/month staying in the facility.

Adopt a hostel. (<https://www.adoptahostel.com/>). This is an international campaign that is aimed at financing the hostels during the outbreak. The company operates on a gift card system. You can buy a virtual voucher for your future stay in the hostel. The prices start from 500 CZK. It is possible to make a donation only as well. Over 600 hostels from more than 60 countries joined Adopt a Hostel.

V Praze jako doma / At home in Prague (<https://www.vprazejakodoma.cz/>). The website run by Prague city council offers tourists to choose a hotel from the ones listed on their website and get the points that can be used towards fees to the sightseeing locations and guide services. It includes such attractions as the National Museum, Planetarium, Botanical garden, etc. It is 2 points per person per 33 nights, while the entrance usually costs 1 point. For every 2 points, EuroAgentur Hotels is paying 23 CZK to the city council.

Cancellation policy to 1 day before arrival. The cancellation policy for direct bookings and via OTAs was modified in order to be more flexible. The free cancellation became possible up to 1 day before arrival instead of 2 days before arrival.

Selling a closed property with further relocation. While some properties were used as shelters, a certain amount of its rooms stayed on sale. It gave a possibility to attract more guests. These guests were then relocated to the open property for the same rate.

Credit for prepaid reservations. The credit system for the cancelled due to Covid-19 and prepaid reservations was introduced. The guests can further use the prepaid amount in the

next 2 years towards a new reservation in EuroAgentur Hotels. The full list of conditions looks like this:

1. Reservation needs to be made directly through EuroAgentur Hotels (via e-mail or website). No 3rd party bookings will be accepted.

2. The total cost of the reservation needs to be the same as the offered credit or higher.

3. The offered credit can be used only for accommodation purposes.

4. The offered credit can be used on one booking only, and it will expire in case of a new cancellation.

5. The offered credit is valid for 2 years.

- Adjusting prices and providing discounts. The rates were lowered and as a marketing tool to increase visibility on OTAs and to overcome the competition, various discounts and free deals (for the hotel) were used. Here are examples used on Booking.com.

Government support. EuroAgentur Hotels applied for the government program that refunds the company 300 CZK per not occupied room. The compensation was from 100 to 330 CZK depending on how many stars the hotel has. The hotels were entitled for the compensation in the period from 14th of March until 24th of May (CTK.CZ, 2020)

3. Recommendations

3.1 Recommendations for EuroAgentur Hotels

To develop recommendations for the EuroAgentur Hotels hotel chain in the Czech Republic, it is necessary to highlight some global trends that were identified during the pandemic era and will influence the structure of the hotel market and further international business development in the long term.

For the EuroAgentur Hotels hotel chain, it is necessary to follow a number of recommendations.

1. Changing the vector of development of international tourism and hotel business towards sustainable development. Sustainable development, or "sustainable development", is based on the principles of work in which the satisfaction of any needs of current generations is carried out without prejudice to the possibilities of future ones. These principles include not only the protection of nature, environmental measures and the transition to resource-saving technologies (saving water, using renewable energy, etc.), but also taking care of staff, and creating an inclusive environment and/or jobs for people with disabilities, etc. The concept identifies two main approaches: environmental and socio-economic.

For example, the Preferred Hotel Group, Inc. (more than 700 hotels in different countries of the world), in November 2019 announced the launch of the Beyond Green brand. Preferred Hotel Group, Inc. is a family-owned company that manages global travel and hotel brands, including Preferred Hotels & Resorts, Historic Hotels of America, Historic Hotels Worldwide, PHG Consulting and Beyond Green Travel [8]. The innovative hotel brand includes 24 leading hotels, resorts and lodges located in different parts of the world.

All hotels of the Beyond Green brand comply with three basic principles of sustainable tourism development: environmentally friendly operating methods, protection of natural and cultural heritage and promotion of social and economic well-being of the local population.

A hotel property applying for membership in the Beyond Green program is inspected for two years by sustainable development specialists: the hotel must demonstrate leadership on three key principles of sustainable tourism and progress in achieving more than 50

indicators in accordance with the UN global standards for the development of eco-tourism (carbon reduction targets; rejection of plastic bottles for reducing the use of disposable plastic; supporting initiatives to preserve biodiversity and restore and protect the natural habitat; using local cultural traditions in design and supporting the preservation of cultural heritage sites; priority when hiring local people on the spot, etc.). A business example of such a hotel is the eco-resort Brando on Tetiaroa Atoll in French Polynesia.

The resort is named after the famous Hollywood actor, the first owner of the island and an eco-activist, and is designed for the target segment of travelers following the principles of ecological development and with a high level of income. Thus, the ADR of the hotel in low season is 2900 euros per day per villa, and in high season - 12300 euros, including accommodation, meals, spa treatments, sports and eco-activities. There is no transport at the resort, with the exception of electric vehicles, solar energy and recycled seawater are used (whole ecosystems for processing used water and seawater and using it in the island's water supply systems are built), there are completely no plastic products, etc.

It should be noted that the Beyond Green collection currently includes not only exotic or resort hotels, but also historical castle hotels, for example in Ireland; also undergo inspection for potential entry into the brand and hotels located in the city limits.

2. Changing customer expectations and requirements. Development of new formats of the hotel business.

New trends will have a strong impact on the hotel development market. The need to comply with social isolation measures, the desire of people to minimize the risks associated with harm to health during travel, influenced the development of such a hotel format as residences, which are, in essence, private houses or apartments with service management and compliance with all safety standards of hotel brands.

According to GBTA, corporate clients forced to go on business trips in 2020-2021 are forced to comply with numerous Covid protocols that apply both to the choice of hotel and emphasize the preservation of only those trips that are an urgent business necessity (the concept of essential travel). In this regard, the duration of such trips and the average length of stay of transit customers in hotels is extended to 2-3 weeks, instead of the standard 2-3 days in 2019.

The number of air travel is minimized, corporate clients are interested in a larger hotel room with an ergonomic work area, good daylight and additional light sources, equipped with

a small kitchen and a food and beverage storage area (many customers prefer to eat in the room and avoid excessive socialization and visiting public areas of the hotel). In this regard, corporate clients, as an additional value that increases the ability of a hotel company to conclude a corporate contract for the accommodation of employees of a corporation, require hotels to provide small premises that they can use free of charge by appointment for holding hybrid meetings with partners (online and offline) in compliance with all anti-epidemic measures.

Products such as residences have appeared in the strategic portfolio of many hotel groups. Residences combine apartments, studios, villas, cottages and bungalows that have kitchens and separate living spaces and provide hotel service and round-the-clock assistance provided by the reception and guest service department. In the luxury segment of the hotel business, developers are also successfully implementing a similar hotel format.

3. Changing the functional characteristics of the hotel product and working with new market segments, reaching new levels of competition. During the pandemic, hotel companies began to provide services for long-term rental of hotel rooms for remote work outside the home when closing offices, self-isolation. Hotels that were located in the area of the airports, instead of accommodating air crews, focused on providing long-term rental of rooms to medical workers engaged in the fight against the pandemic.

4. Changes in the marketing policy of hotel groups, digitalization of marketing campaigns to get a quick ROI.

Develop promotions when booking. So, for example, when booking for the Loving Local promotion, a room was provided at the best open BAR price (Best Available Rate); breakfast for two and a credit for accommodation from \$25 to \$70 for hotel services; upgrade to elite status in the loyalty program (includes a VIP gift upon arrival at the hotel, upgrade to the next room categories upon arrival, 2500 bonus points and Internet). Program participants also received discounts from Loving Local partners, who also suffered from the pandemic - Sixth (for car rental in Europe), Avis (in America and Asia), Travel Curious (for booking individual excursions online and offline).

To encourage travel partners, all travel agencies were offered an additional 3% commission to the existing 10% for all bookings made through GDS or direct booking channels, if the agency has a valid IATA/TIDS number.

5. The tendency of hotel facilities to leave large hotel chains and join them to "soft" brands or hotel alliances, associations, consortia.

Often, the total franchise payments for franchisee owners of hotels can reach up to 40% of the revenue of a hotel company. When joining "soft" or soft brands, hotel owners maintain operational independence, while using international resources to develop business in international markets, which is very important during periods of economic turbulence. Termination of the contract with the software brand is also possible after a shorter period of time – minimum contracts are concluded for a period of 3 to 5 years.

Similar international soft brands that combine different hotels depending on business segments, geographical location of hotels, etc., include The Leading Hotels of the World, Relais&Chateaux, Small Luxury Hotels, Preferred Hotels & Resorts, etc. According to E.V. Tarasenko, E.L. Ilyina and M.Y. Laiko, it seems natural that among the hotels participating in such alliances there are a large number of historical hotels, many of which have been operated by members of the same family for several centuries: it is most important for such hotels to preserve their unique design, style, and atmosphere.

6. Identification of new risks (cross-cultural, political, epidemiological) that have arisen with the growth of international trips to certain regions and countries that are not priority destinations for mass tourism until 2020.

With the resumption of international flights from Russia to Zanzibar, some hotels in Zanzibar were unable to receive tourists in the required volume. At the same time, if hotels previously focused on such geographical business segments as individual tourists from Central Europe, the USA, then it seems quite natural that cross-cultural difficulties arise due to differences in the perception of the hotel product and the expectations placed on the hotel enterprise by "mass" tourists from Russia and CIS countries arriving at the resort on charter flights from well-known tourist operators. Tourists also faced unforeseen difficulties. For example, in Tanzania, on the eve of the elections, the authorities restricted access to social networks. As a result, WhatsApp users could not upload photos or videos. The Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) declined to comment on the situation.

In general, it should be borne in mind that the situation on the hotel market in the Czech Republic in 2022 will largely depend on the pace of vaccination worldwide, reducing the rate of infection growth.

The recovery of international tourism will take longer than expected – according to the most pessimistic forecasts of analysts of the tourism industry, the recovery may take from 5 to 10 years.

Short-distance trips (to the nearest countries and cities) will be preferred in comparison with trips to more remote regions; the development of automobile tourism is promising, which will entail the development of car camping, glamping, eco-hotels in nature, etc.

Thus, it can be concluded that the priority direction for the exit of the tourism and hotel industry of the Czech Republic will be the development of domestic tourism. It is expected that the States of various countries will take stimulating measures aimed at the primary development of domestic tourism potential, taking into account global hotel trends.

3.2 Recommendations for Government

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a catastrophic impact on tourism, catering and other services, but they intend to restart the industry, no matter what. The share of tourism in the country's GDP is 3%. According to the Czech Tourism Authority, financial losses due to the pandemic will amount to 5 billion euros. Also, about 80 thousand employees of the tourism industry are at risk of being out of work.

On May 26, the Czech Republic opened border checkpoints on the borders with Austria and Germany, as well as with Hungary and Slovakia. Despite the resumption of trips along tourist corridors or for business trips, the Government of the country is not yet ready to fully open international tourism.

According to the portal, the longer the Czech Republic keeps its borders closed, the more the economy will suffer: in the first quarter of 2020, the foreign tourist flow fell by 26%, and in April-June, when the high season traditionally begins in the country, the drop will be even greater.

The Government of the country intends to provide financial support to tourism, but this issue is still being discussed. In the plan of state support for the most affected sectors of the economy, which provides for the allocation of 37 billion euros, the industry is not listed."

The Ministry of Regional Development has proposed to rely on domestic tourism this year. The Czech authorities are ready to provide citizens of the country with discounts on accommodation and transport for traveling around the country. "The accommodation facilities

will receive a little help from the support of domestic tourism, but it will cover only 30-35% of the income from the expenses that foreign guests made. In addition, they accounted for 90% of the load of hotels and inns," the portal quotes the president of the Confederation of Trade and Tourism of the Czech Republic Thomas Prusa. The almost complete absence of foreign tourists will have a negative impact on Prague, which is visited by about 8 million travelers annually. It is assumed that the financial losses of tourism in the Czech capital this year will amount to about 3.7 billion euros. About 9.3 million euros will be allocated to support tourism and culture in Prague.

Meanwhile, the city authorities predict that even if the Czech Republic opens borders with all countries by September, the revenues of museums, galleries, attractions and cultural heritage sites will decrease by about 440 million euros, and about 14 thousand people will lose their jobs. In turn, the Mayor of Prague, Zdenek Hryb, believes that the forced pause and the absence of tourists will allow to recover from overtourism, which has become a problem for the Czech capital in recent years. According to him, if the city stops encouraging accommodation in apartments booked on the Airbnb service, to restrain prices in restaurants and bars, it will be possible to attract more guests from different parts of the Czech Republic. "Domestic tourism will support genuine business. The rest will have to stop working. The city will not support a business that focuses only on foreign tourists," Hryb stressed.

The mayor also said that he is trying to convince the authorities of the need to regulate the activities of Airbnb and other platforms offering accommodation in the capital. As the head of the city noted, it is necessary to give residents the right to independently decide whether it is possible to rent apartments in their house through such services. Nevertheless, Hrb does not expect a serious improvement in the situation with overtourism in the near future. By joining the process of world integration, the Czechs got a chance to visit the most remote corners of the globe. Still, there are always countries of special preference. For Czechs, these are Austria, France, Italy, Croatia, Greece, Slovakia, Spain, Hungary. It is easy to notice that this list includes either the closest neighbors of the Czech Republic, or countries with warm seas, rich southern nature and famous cultural heritage.

The presence of such a rich natural and cultural-historical potential is essential for such an important factor for tourism as its competitiveness. In this sense, the Czech Republic has to compete with countries such as France, Austria, Switzerland or Andorra, which can offer guests high-class mountain and ski resorts. Italy, Spain and Greece have wonderful

seaside resorts. The Czech Republic is deprived of such natural resources. Moreover, with the departure of Slovakia, the Czech Republic received another competitor in the arena of international tourism.

It is no secret that the main natural resources of the united Czechoslovakia were concentrated there. The Tatra Mountains and the Carpathians with their excellent base for the development of skiing and mountaineering, fifteen nature protection zones and six national parks with such famous creations of nature as Demon Caves, Domica canyons or Rocky Places of Slovak Paradise. There are also three cultural monuments listed in the UNESCO World Heritage Lists in Slovakia: Banska Shtyavnitsa, Spishsky grad, Vlkolinet.

Having lost such attractive resources, Czech tourism should compensate for these shortcomings by strengthening activities in other areas, but here experts distinguish a number of weaknesses, in particular, sometimes too high prices for tourist services, shortcomings in the field of tourism infrastructure, in the promotion and promotion of the product on the market, in the information system.

Studies and monitoring conducted by international tourism organizations, in particular the World Tourism Council WTTC, and which covered more than two hundred countries, considering their competitiveness in various areas and aspects of tourism, put the Czech Republic in all categories at the level of the optimal average, noting as a disadvantage an inflated price level, and as an advantage - openness and benevolent attitude towards the guests of the country. In general, the analysis of international tourism organizations leads to the following conclusions.

Strengths and advantages of Czech tourism

1. Favorable geographical location in the center of Europe, easy accessibility, diverse and picturesque nature, good climate.
2. Many monuments of culture, history and technology, folklore traditions and attractions, natural resources in protected areas and national parks.
3. Rich traditions of hydrotherapy, thermal and water resorts with world renown.
4. A dense and expertly marked network of tourist trails and trails throughout the country.
5. Sufficient, from the point of view of the number, the possibility of accommodating tourists.
6. Availability of qualified and trained labor force for the tourism sector.

7. Prague and its monuments - as a world-famous center of tourism.

Disadvantages and obstacles to the development of tourism

1. Insufficiently developed cooperation between private entrepreneurs and the public sector in the field of tourism.

2. Insufficiently high quality of work of the main and additional tourism services.

3. Insufficient use of modern technologies of tourist activity.

4. Gaps in the marketing study of the development of Czech tourism.

5. The lack of a competitive and modern tourism product, as well as the same program.

6. Lack of balance between supply and demand in the market of qualified specialists in the field of tourism.

7. Shortcomings in the maintenance and updating of cultural and historical monuments.

8. Shortcomings in the offer and promotion of the product and tourism services.

9. Excessive concentration of tourists in the capital of the country — Prague.

10. Insufficient statistical information on tourism and the absence of relevant legislation on the development of tourism.

Considering the ways of further development of tourism in the Czech Republic, the researchers point to the following favorable conditions for such development.

1. Increased interest in recreational and educational trips to the Czech Republic both on the world and, especially, on the European market.

2. Increased demand for new modern tourism products.

3. Demand for the development of traditional hydrotherapy.

4. Expansion of cooperation of border areas within the framework of integration in the European region.

5. Membership of the Czech Republic in the European Union.

At the same time, there may be obstacles and negative factors on the way of tourism development, which are also pointed out by tourism researchers.

Among the circumstances that can threaten the successful development of tourism, the following stand out.

- Loss of competitiveness of Czech tourism, if the quality of work of all services and infrastructure of tourism does not improve clearly.

- Underestimation of the human factor and the importance of professional training of specialists for tourism, including educational and consulting activities, as well as events for aspiring entrepreneurs.

- Lack of capital to stabilize and further develop entrepreneurship in various areas of tourism.

- Underestimating the importance of coordination and cooperation between the public and private sectors in the field of tourism - as social partners.

- Disregard for the maintenance of historical, cultural and technical monuments used in the field of tourism.

- Underestimation of the importance of preserving the country's natural resources attracted for tourism activities.

- Shortcomings in providing appropriate services in places attractive to tourists.

Taking into account the above circumstances, Czech tourism figures are trying to draw the right conclusions in order to successfully further develop tourism in the country.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this thesis is to investigate the economic impact of Covid-19 on the hospitality business through a case study of the EuroAgentur Hotels, Prague and on the hospitality industry within Czech Republic as a whole.

As a result of the analysis in the first chapter, the following conclusions were made.

COVID-19, identified at the end of 2019, is only the latest example of an unexpected, new and devastating pandemic disease, from which we can conclude that we have entered the era of a pandemic (Morens et al., 2020a; Morens et al., 2020b). The reasons for the new dangerous situation are multifaceted, complex and worthy of serious study.

In the entire history of mankind, there has not been a single year without fighting a viral infection. Therefore, despite the development of medicine, the responsibility of each person for their health is important. According to epidemiologists, humanity will not be able to cope with viruses even in the distant future, so new pandemics are inevitable.

An epidemic is a massive and progressive spread of an infectious disease within a certain territory, significantly exceeding the usually recorded incidence rate for the same period. In all infectious diseases, from the moment of infection to the manifestation of the first visible signs of the disease, a certain time passes, called the incubation period, during which a person remains outwardly healthy.

In particular, mortality from smallpox and other diseases introduced to the American continent became the direct cause of the collapse of many indigenous societies, weakening their institutions and military potential to such a level that they were vulnerable to European conquerors. Subsequent pandemics did not have such dramatic consequences, mainly due to the emergence of more advanced means and methods of prevention and treatment of infectious diseases. As experience shows, epidemics and pandemics can contribute to increasing political tensions and provoke unrest. These problems may be particularly acute for States with unstable political systems in which violence has recently taken place or armed conflicts continue.

However, this virus has brought some positive things: The «Spanish Flu» spurred the development of health systems that were in their infancy before. People realized the importance of the development of medicine. After the «Spanish Flu», the "world anti-virus

bureau" appeared, which became the forerunner of the WHO – the World Health Organization. In the USA, after the Spanish flu epidemic, health insurance appeared, paid for by employers, which then began to be actively used in other developed countries.

The number of tourists from European countries — Germany, England and the Netherlands - has slightly decreased, but the total number of people visiting the Czech Republic has increased, and their growth continues from year to year. In general, the Czech economy has shown its resilience to the crisis, and despite the decline in some indicators, it confidently overcame the recession and continued its growth.

According to a study by the Czech Statistical Office, 3.3 percent fewer tourists visited the Czech Republic in the third quarter of this year than in the same period last year, and they spend less time in the country. Summing up, we can say what was already said at the beginning of the paragraph — there will probably not be a sharp decline in the tourism industry, but there will be a decline in business income. And this cannot but affect the activities of individual enterprises.

The Czech Republic, in the context of the spread of a new coronavirus infection, was one of the first countries to follow the path of a rigid model of combating the disease. The restrictions imposed gave quick results.

The Czech tourism industry is one of the most affected in Europe. According to analysts' forecasts, at first glance, the life of Czech cities has returned to normal. However, there are also such consequences of the disaster that will affect the life of this country for a long time. Perhaps the most important of them is connected with the paralysis of inbound tourism.

EuroAgentur Hotels & Travel. This is a Czech hotel chain that has been operating in the field of tourism and hotel services for more than 30 years.

Comprehensive and full-fledged customer service is effectively carried out thanks to a wide range of services provided. More than 30 hotels under the EA Hotels brand are located in the most attractive tourist and business areas in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

An important part of the services provided is also the EA Culinary restaurant chain, through which the company provides professional catering at many individual events, celebrations and weddings. In addition, the company independently provides conference and congress services.

The analysis showed that the dynamics of the tourist flow in the hotel chain is generally positive, apart from political and economic transformations in connection with the pandemic. In 2019, the tourist flow of hotels has significantly decreased due to the pandemic. By 2020, the decline in tourist traffic has decreased. In 2021, there was an expected decrease in the tourist flow of the hotel chain associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Czech Republic is gradually opening up to international tourism. From August 23, foreign travelers with a Schengen visa and a vaccination certificate with recognized EMA vaccines can come to the country. At the moment, these are four vaccines – BioNTech/Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca и Johnson & Johnson.

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