

PERSPECTIVES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF CZĘSTOCHOWA AS A TOURIST RESORT – OPINIONS OF INHABITANTS

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Abstract

This paper presents the results of the sociological research conducted among the citizens of Czestochowa concerning its development as a tourist resort. In this article some theoretical aspects of tourism marketing, city marketing, management of local government and management of settlement units are presented. The nature of Czestochowa as a potential tourist resort, mainly in the scope of its history and attractions is an important issue which is discussed in this paper.

The main part of this paper is the discussion on the results of the research concerning opinions about the possible augmentation of tourist traffic within the city, the opportunities and threats for Czestochowa's development, the strengths and weaknesses of the city as a potential tourist resort and also the forms of promotion to create and raise interest among potential visitors. The presented research is a part of the process of the city's strategic development that is based on consultation with the community. Without the approval of the city's inhabitants the implementation of this strategy would be doomed to failure.

The paper consists of four parts. The first one is a presentation of Czestochowa. Following this the conceptualization of the issue for analysis and theoretical problems of promoting tourism and the city are discussed. In the third part the methodology of the research is presented: the research process, sampling procedure, structure of the population under analysis. The fourth part of the paper is focused on analysing the issue of developing the tourist resort as one of the key elements of Czestochowa's marketing focus. This part also contains some considerations about the possible ways to promote the city.

Key words: *tourism, marketing, city management, sociology of local community, strategy of city and regional development*

JEL classification: *J24, L83, O15*

INTRODUCTION

The research presented is concentrated on the development and promotion of Czestochowa as a tourist resort. Nowadays, tourism can be described as being more and more open (the accession of Poland and other central European countries to Schengen zone for instance) and related to the increasing well-being of societies, while also one of the key determiners of economic development influencing the service sector which in fact produces most of the national income. In Poland the reserves in this area are enormous so it seems to be most valid to make use of them.

This research was conducted by the Department of Sociology and Psychology of Management at the Faculty of Management within the Czestochowa University of Technology commissioned by the Czestochowa City Council within the COESIMA project which is a part of the EU programme known as INTERREG IIIC South. "COESIMA's objective is to build a perpetual network of 7 shrine-towns whose management is built around one aim in order to organise its tourist activities better and emphasize their role in the economic and social development of the region in question" (www.coesima.eu).

In formulating the subject of research the following assumption was made: the main element of

Czestochowa's brand is the Jasna Gora Sanctuary and the city's function as a pilgrimage centre within an international context is uncontested. How to expand the function to make the city a centre for tourism as well has become the key question to be answered through the results of the aforesaid research. The next question is the logistic consequence of the previous one and aims of creating ways to promote Czestochowa as a tourist resort. These questions were addressed to the citizens because their opinions seem to be the basis for further research considering the city's image and its strategy of promotion in the development of tourism.

The analysis of the opinions expressed by the inhabitants of Czestochowa is an element of internal marketing that assumes that the citizens are the most important "clients" of the city.

1. CZESTOCHOWA AS A TOURIST RESORT

Czestochowa is located in the south of Poland. It is famous for the 600 year old Jasna Gora Sanctuary. Every year it is visited by 4-5 million pilgrims which puts Czestochowa in third place in Europe – following Rome and Lourdes. The feature which distinguishes Jasna Góra from other sanctuaries is the large number of foot pilgrimages, a unique form of pilgrimage on a world scale – over 200,000 people come to Jasna Góra in this way per year. The sanctuary is located on the hill at the end of the most known street in the city – St. Mary's Avenue. It is one of the main pilgrimage centres within the modern Christian world. The Pauline Monks settled there in 1382 and the appropriate ranking for this place was confirmed by placing the painting of Our Lady called The Black Madonna there (a Byzantine icon dating back to the 6th – 9th centuries). "It is the miraculous presence of the image which has always attracted pilgrims not only from all over Poland but from all over the world, as the numerous votive offerings show" (www.jasnagora.pl). Many constructions of unique architecture are located in this monastery and it is also a kind of museum restoring priceless pieces of art dating from the Middle Ages to modern times.

Czestochowa is a city with glamorous history connected with the presence of the monastery of the Order of St. Paul the Hermit at Jasna Gora. Throughout the centuries it has been a place for religious events, frequently with strong patriotic themes.

The city rights were given to Czestochowa in 1356. Nowadays, it is inhabited by 243,000 people. In 1998 Czestochowa was the first city in Poland to be awarded the Prix de l'Europe by the Council of Europe. Apart from its historical roots, the city has become a buoyant industrial and commercial centre as well as an academic one – there are over 40,000 students in Czestochowa (www.czestochowa.pl).

2. THEORETICAL BASIS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Definition of tourism

There are many definitions of tourism. WTO indicates the following interpretation of the term: "the activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the practicing of an activity remunerated from within the place visited." In sociology tourism is described as a social process. W. Gaworecki assumes that tourism is a social process and its results should be observed (Gaworecki, 2003, p.25). In the case of a more humanistic approach, individual tourism is acknowledged to be a factor influencing personality. Tourism provides the best forms and possibilities to develop a human being's personality from a social, psychological and cultural point of view. All journeys causing changes in the environment and pace of life refer to personal contacts

with natural, cultural and social qualities of the areas visited. The definition presented by K. Przeclawski is characteristic because he interprets tourism as a specific way of realizing different human activities. The peculiarity of tourism is the result of the following:

- Changes within natural, social and cultural environment (or all at the same time);
- Changes of everyday pace of life;
- Creation of interactions with nature, culture or people (Gotembowski, 2002, p.22).

2.2. The model of sustainable development of tourism

It is necessary to answer the question as to which model of tourism can be realized in regions while bearing in mind the social and economic aspects. It seems that the idea of sustainable development can be optimal.

According to the indications of WTO "sustainable development of tourism and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche segments of tourism. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability." The desirable effect can be obtained by the following: making optimal use of natural sources, respecting the socio-cultural independence of host communities and provision of socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders. The implementation of this idea requires political leadership and continuous monitoring. Moreover, "sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of satisfaction among tourists and ensure a meaningful experience for tourists, while also raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable practices of tourism amongst them" [7]. The formula of sustainable development covers the following elements: ecological stability, economic development, social fairness and sustainable and square development [8], p.12.

In order to respond to the expectations formulated by the sustainable development strategies for tourism, marketers must not only aim at their market success, but also consider avoiding the negative influence on local heritage. With regard to sustainable development of strategies for tourism, the aspect of marketing in this case, "needs to focus on: ways and means to influence the visitors' choices of location, access timing and product provision, develop local understanding and knowledge of tourism" (Nedelea et al, 2008, pp.13-14) These indications spread the use of marketing and set a standard for marketers. Although any further standardization can be difficult because, as Nedelea (2008, p.14) indicates, this depends on the specific nature of tourism and its complexity.

2.3. The research methodology

In this research the standardized interview was used. The first part of the research was conducted in the form of polls - telephone and street interviews. The 22 question (mostly closed and categorized) questionnaire

was used as a research tool. The second part was based on interviews with experts – details of that part were not included in the paper because of its limited dimensions.

The polls were conducted in two ways. 266 inhabitants of Czestochowa were interviewed by telephone first, while later the opinions of 253 citizens were revealed by street polls. In the case of telephone interviews the samples were taken on a random basis. The street polls enabled the control of the choice of respondents so that they represented the population of the city with regard to the fundamental demographic variables.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF CZESTOCHOWA AS A TOURIST RESORT

3.1. Features indicating the image of the city

In this paper the discussion is concentrated on the issue of Czestochowa's image. "Image is a set of beliefs, ideas and impressions a person holds regarding an object" (Kotler, 2000, p.553). It may be assumed that the image of a settlement unit is its perception by different groups from its environment, created by cognition and emotional attitude towards the unit or its sub-products (Luczak, 2006, p.168). Hence, a city's image is what people think of it, as well as what their expectations are with reference to the place. It may not be in accordance with the real situation although it is important that the image should be coherent with the identity.

The characteristics of the area, identification with the subjective attitude of the users of the city space are the basis for the image creation process. Specifying these features is aimed at the identification of the strengths and weaknesses and at the same time the city's attractiveness for the current and potential clients (particularly tourists, investors and other citizens).

In order to estimate Czestochowa's image the research was conducted and respondents were asked to

indicate the city's most specific objects. In the opinion of citizens, Jasna Gora (56.6% respondents), and St Mary's Avenue (18 %) are the most specific. Other objects i.e. museums, historical buildings, Czestochowa Steelworks were not perceived as typical for Czestochowa. In order to find any possible differences between different categories of citizens and perception of the city further analysis was conducted – links between the social and demographic characteristics and the perception of Czestochowa perception were searched for. It appeared that the level of education was an argument causing distinction between respondents. With F_i Youla = 0.53, $p \leq 0,05$ index it was claimed that people declaring a higher level of education more often indicated Jasna Gora than other groups (higher level – 72.4%, secondary level – 64.4%, elementary level – 68%, professionals – 34.4%). Apart from this the main avenue was indicated more frequently by the groups declaring secondary level (21.8%) and higher level education (19.6%). Within all groups other places were rarely mentioned.

Based on the afore-mentioned analysis it may be assumed that as far as the creation of Czestochowa's image is concerned, Jasna Gora and St Mary's Avenue should be taken under consideration as these are attributes that are strongly associated with the city. These attributes also enable us to distinguish ourselves from the competition. Thus, the image should reflect the potential of the area which is possible to be used and determine the economic and social development. It should indicate the qualities that are deemed to be the most important by the unit. The strengths based on emotional factors causing sympathy and goodwill of the target society should be regarded as being of great importance.

To create the city's image it is necessary to assess its future nature and this is the basis for further discussion. During the research the citizens were asked how they anticipate the future of Czestochowa with the following question: What is the most desirable nature of the city in the next few years?

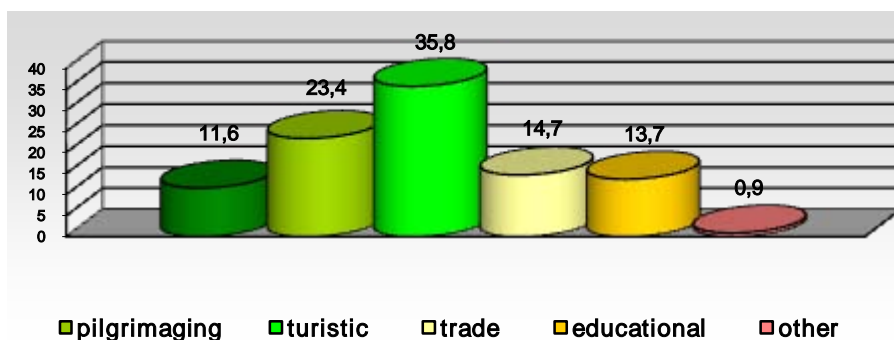


Figure 1 - Future nature of Czestochowa in the opinion of its citizens

With regard to the content of Figure 1 the citizens most commonly indicated Czestochowa as a tourist resort providing different types of services in future (35.8%). The aspect of pilgrimages was indicated by 23.4% of respondents. Thus, it may be assumed that more than half of the citizens can see the future of the city as connected

with tourism, in the manner of satisfying the different needs of tourists. The answers indicating other possible potential options for Czestochowa were definitely less popular – a trading centre was indicated by 14.7%, an educational centre by 13.7% and an industrial nature by 11.6%.

Generally the citizens regard Czestochowa's future as strongly connected with tourism, as a tourist services provider. Particularly the older respondents (aged above 51) declaring elementary or secondary education share that view. The notion of the city's trade and educational nature was definitely less popular. A surprisingly small number of citizens indicated the industrial nature of the city, even though it has been strongly connected with that economic sector for many years.

Among all the afore-mentioned aspects, the most important factors should be chosen and used to find the basis for the creation of the city's image.

3.2. Attractiveness of Czestochowa as a tourist resort

All activities concerning the creation of the positive image of the city are aimed at its presentation as a particularly attractive place for tourists. At this stage it is necessary to prepare and update materials promoting the area containing information about the most interesting places, historical buildings, cycling routes, accommodation, catering facilities and cultural events.

Before these actions are taken it is necessary to find out how the potential attractions are regarded by the citizens.

61.7 % of the citizens analysed express the opinion that the city is attractive from the point of view of tourism. At the same time 22.6% of respondents indicated said that it is very attractive. The remaining part of the sample regards Czestochowa as unattractive (25.3%) or did not have any opinion on this matter (7.6%). The level of attractiveness was noticeably different within different age groups – the younger respondents indicated Czestochowa as an unattractive place more often than other groups.

In order to attain a total evaluation of the city's attractiveness the average was calculated and its value in this case was 2.028 (with 3 - attractive to 1- unattractive scale) so the city is perceived to be not very attractive. That should be taken into consideration by the governors of the city and marketers in preparing marketing campaigns.

3.3. Factors determining tourist movement

Part of this research was focused on external factors determining tourist activities in Czestochowa. This was the reason for asking the citizens what could attract tourists to visit the city (*Figure 2*).

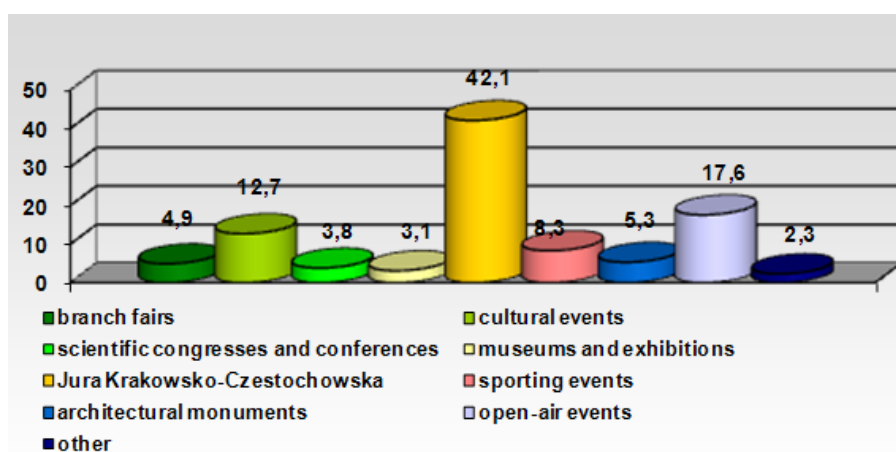


Figure 2 - Factors determining the increase in the number of tourists visiting Czestochowa.

While analysing the data it may be easily spotted that among many other things, the existence of Jura Krakowsko - Czestochowska is the main factor influencing the city's attractiveness and this may persuade more visitors to stay in Czestochowa in the opinion of 42.1% of citizens. At this juncture it is worth explaining that Jura Krakowsko - Czestochowska is an upland area spread out between Czestochowa and Cracow. Many routes for landscape tourism and very favourable natural settings for the qualified forms of tourism i.e. speleology, horse riding, rock climbing make this place very attractive for amateurs of different kinds of tourism. Hence, it should be considered when undertaking actions aimed at the creation of a tourist mega-product consisting of Czestochowa and Jura Krakowsko - Czestochowska. This would include the tourist attractions of the city – i.e. Jasna Gora, the main avenue, historical buildings, museums and

restaurants, swimming pools, as well as the attractions of Jura – i.e. tourist trails, caves, rocks, restaurants, guesthouses, hostels, etc. The product's success would be determined by accessibility that is estimated by the cost of the attractions available (Pluta, 1994, p.91). It is also necessary to integrate different kinds of tourist services provided within Czestochowa and Jura communities to create a service package that would be competitive within the Polish and international tourist market.¹

¹ An interesting proposition of cooperation between Czestochowa and Jura communities in the area of tourism was presented in the M.A. thesis prepared by K. Szadkowski, *Turystyka jako alternatywna forma rozwoju subregionu czestochowskiego (Tourism as an alternative form of development for the sub-regions of Czestochowa)* elaborated under F.Bylok's guidance at the Faculty of Management, Czestochowa University of Technology in 2004.

The citizens of Czestochowa participating in the research also indicated outdoor events as a factor determining the attractiveness of tourism in the city. Hence, appropriate steps should be undertaken to organize more numerous and attractive cultural and recreation mass-events – i.e. concerts of popular musicians, music festivals, outdoor parties, etc. As can be observed on the basis of the experience of previous years, such events gather participants from Czestochowa and the surrounding areas, while also being interesting and exciting events for tourists.

Mass-events are always popular and well attended, while the periodic ones consolidate the awareness of visitors and sometimes become an important incentive to visit the place in question.

Cultural events were indicated by the researched group as an important factor of tourism (12.6%). Thus, the strategy of promotion could be based on cyclical events with an interesting theme and formula. It would be advisable to use and expand the current events - *Gaudium et Gloria*, *Gaude Mater*, *Sacrum in Literature*, *Sacrum Art*, but also prepare some new propositions addressed to young spectators and participants – for example, youth music festivals, and build different forms of tourism on that basis.

Congress tourism is also worth mentioning within that sphere. As a form of tourism that attracts visitors it was indicated by almost 4 per cent of the researched group.

In the national tourism structure the group of people travelling to participate in congresses, conferences of all kinds is presented. They emerge from groups of scientists, politicians, members of business, sporting, social, cultural and economic organisations. This kind of travelling has become more and more intensive recently and has spread worldwide. There is a need to consider if that kind of tourism is not worth particular attention, especially when the attractiveness of the Czestochowa region responds to that kind of demand. It is strongly advisable to consider the preparation and adjustment of the current facilities to meet the requirements of these congress tourists.

3.4. Advantages of the influx of tourism

Tourist movement causes economic changes. They can occur as benefits or social and economic costs. The benefits and costs overlap as a rule and result in the development of the local community. The situation is good when the benefits exceed the costs significantly. Unfortunately this situation is not common, because the costs (i.e. seasonality and unemployment, devastation of natural landscape, ecological degradation as a result of tourist activities, spoilt landscape caused by tourist facilities, commercialization of culture and art, prostitution, increase in crime, etc) are difficult to be eliminated.

In order to estimate the benefits from the development of tourism the citizens of Czestochowa were asked if they could gain from the increasing tourist movement within the city. The majority of respondents

(85.3%) declared that in their opinion the development of tourism would result in profits for the citizens. Only 5.2% of the researched group consider tourism as a source of costs, instead of benefits. Taking the responses into consideration it is necessary to quote the benefits indicated by the respondents. The possibility to receive more funds to develop communication facilities: roads, buses, etc was the most common answer (30.2%). Further on more money in shops (25.9%), more workplaces in gastronomic services (23.2%) and accommodation sector (19.2%) were indicated.

3.5. Strengths and weaknesses of Czestochowa as a tourist resort

When the development of Czestochowa as a tourist resort is to be considered it is necessary to concentrate on its features that can help with the realization of the aims or indeed hinder the process. In order to prepare the basis for further divagations the citizens were asked to indicate their assessment of the city's strengths. The response to that question is extremely important because it may be the basis for further activity aimed at the evaluation of the city's strategy, because the citizens can observe that Czestochowa has some potential in this area. Jasna Gora Sanctuary is in the opinion of 44 per cent of the citizens the strongest attribute of Czestochowa. The subsequent economic potential (27%) and the city's history were indicated as Czestochowa's strengths.

4. THE PROMOTION OF CZESTOCHOWA

4.1. The need for the promotion of Czestochowa as a tourist resort

One of the questions asked of the citizens concerned their perception of the need to promote the city. It appeared that the vast majority of them can agree to expenditure from the city budget for this kind of development. That response is a consequence of the opinions discussed above. The citizens acknowledge tourist development as beneficial for Czestochowa and its citizens (85% of respondents expressed that point of view).

4.2. Ways of promoting Czestochowa

As previously mentioned the citizens of Czestochowa agree to public expenditure that facilitates the promotion of the city.

During the research they were also asked about the most appropriate forms of promotion the city can avail of. The question was asked because it was important to find out what kind of expenditure would be acceptable and what kind of sources citizens use to gain information concerning their tourist activities.

Among the ones presented in the questionnaire promotion through the media and organisation of events promoting the city abroad were the most common answers (27.3% and 22.7% respectively). The astonishing

fact which merits further analysis is that the internet was indicated most rarely as the means of promotion.

The data gained from this part of the questionnaire enables us to draw the following conclusions: there is a large level of acceptance for the promotion of the city among its citizens. People, even if they declared a lack of acceptance, proposed different ways of a possible promotion campaign. The most frequent form indicated as a means of promotion was that of the media (which allows to presume that this is the most popular and reliable way of gaining information) as well as all kinds of events promoting the city domestically and abroad. In fact all the proposed types of promotion were to be found among the responses of the respondents.

The fact of a low level of acceptance for internet promotion must be surprising. It may be the result of low awareness of the effectiveness of this tool (which is quite understandable) but may also constitute the fact that the citizens use the internet rarely to search for information concerning tourism. For many of them information gained via the internet is probably associated with irritating and importunate ads.

The issue of the future nature of the city and the answers have already been discussed in the previous sections of this paper. However, the research in the section considering promotion was also aimed at finding out what aspect of the nature of the city should be promoted. Respondents could choose two of the following: a world pilgrimage centre, the capital of Jura Krakowsko - Czeszochowska, an educational and research centre, a business and trading centre, a centre of cultural dialogue and others. The larger group indicated the capital of Jura (34.5 %), a pilgrimage centre (23.1%), a centre for cultural dialogue (8.9%) and a research and education centre (10.5%). Only 0.3% of the respondents indicated other possible areas of the nature of the city to be promoted, but they did not indicate anything specific. Statistical analysis revealed the relations between the sex type of the respondents and their expectations towards the promoted image of Czeszochowa ($Y_{oul} F_i=0,15, p \leq 0,01$). Men more frequently than women indicated the pilgrimage nature of the city. Most women chose the possibility to promote Czeszochowa considering its location as the capital of Jura Krakowsko - Czeszochowska.

In accordance with the expectations the proposed image was a consequence of responses to the question about the future nature of the city. Proponents of the city's development as a place attractive for pilgrims proposed the use of this aspect in the promotion strategy. People declaring support for activities aimed at the creation of the image of a tourist resort indicated that aspect as the basis of the promotion strategy. The respondents indicating a business and trade centre as the future for Czeszochowa would consequently build the city's image around these issues. The same rule took place in case of the proponents of the educational nature of the city. The smallest group of proponents were in favour of the development of Czeszochowa as a trading centre.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The research conducted in Czeszochowa was aimed at the familiarization with the opinions of the citizens concerning the further development of the city and its promotion. The research was prepared and conducted on the basis of the rule of the necessity of consultancy with the community especially as far as moving towards the model of sustainable development of tourism is considered.

The research resulted in the following recommendations that are necessary for further work on the promotion strategy of Czeszochowa:

- The citizens perceive an increase in tourist movement as a chance for the city (despite the threats identified);
- The respondents indicate many shortcomings that may hinder the process of achieving the goals in question. Their elimination would improve the city's attractiveness, as well as enhance the quality of life for citizens;
- According to the respondents an increase in the tourist movement could result in the following: employment increase, improvement of tourist potential, improvement of communal infrastructure, increase of the budgetary revenue;
- Jasna Gora is acknowledged to be the strongest asset of Czeszochowa but should be availed of sufficiently;
- The geographic location is another strength of Czeszochowa. It has also not been taken advantage of because of the lack of proper communication routes – roads, etc.;
- Lack of sufficient accommodation is one of the factors limiting the development of tourism in the region as well as the lack of a cultural package – mass events and smaller attractions;
- The city should be integrated with the region more intensively especially with Jura Krakowsko - Czeszochowska which could be a perfect attraction for tourists willing to rest in areas surrounded by nature and visit the city of strong religious and historical traditions;
- The citizens agree to the need to promote the city, as they perceive tourism as beneficial to the city and themselves;
- In the opinion of the citizens, Czeszochowa should be promoted as Jura's capital and as a pilgrimage centre.

Based on this research (that which is previously quoted and that which is not discussed in this paper) the research team prepared propositions for the governors of Czeszochowa considering its image creation and further development towards a tourist centre.

First of all, action should be aimed towards the preparation of a specific competitive offer for visitors. The proposed mega-product could contain not only elements that are characteristic for Czeszochowa (Jasna Gora and the main avenue and other less popular areas, e.g. the Match Museum) but also offer the unique character of Jura Krakowsko - Czeszochowska. Tourists coming to Czeszochowa spend a few hours here but it is

necessary to offer them possibilities to spend a few days within the city and the region. The service package then should be attractive and adjusted to the needs of the target groups (further research is required on this issue).

The city's image should concentrate on its attractiveness for tourism but it should also indicate other aspects i.e. education. The number of students is decreasing every year in Poland (demographical trends) so steps to attract them to a greater extent are necessary. Moreover, the research results revealed the city is unattractive for youngsters and that should be changed. The power of buzz marketing is well known and its consequences also influence decisions about for example the place to study. This aim should integrate the academic institutions and the city council.

The attractiveness of the city may be increased by the organisation of spectacular events which would satisfy the expectations of the citizens but first of all attract the tourists. The cyclical, reputable and well promoted ones would be the most expedient.

In order to develop the city, investors should also be attracted and the image of economic depression must be changed. These actions require political decisions that may only be promoted by marketers and not undertaken by them.

One of the ways forward could be changes within the tourist infrastructure in the city and the surrounding

regions (e.g. connected with the development of congress tourism).

The city's development towards a tourist centre must be supported by activities aimed at increasing the level of security and cleanliness in Czestochowa. These two factors are indicated by the citizens as disadvantages in attracting a larger number of tourists to the city.

There are many tasks that should be performed before Czestochowa can be perceived as a tourist resort among visitors and the citizens. They should in fact be sorted out prior to any marketing campaign. Better roads and other ways of transport, sport and recreational facilities, attractive offer for visiting people are priorities. The slogan of Czestochowa – "Czestochowa is a good city" must be realized precisely with the acknowledgment of the citizens, visitors and needs of investors. So far the first step has been made.

As mentioned in the introduction, the research was conducted among the citizens of Czestochowa as well as among specialists of tourism. To undertake further steps in preparing the creation of Czestochowa's image it would be necessary to conduct research among people visiting the city from other regions and from abroad and introduce changes that can approve the city's perception among citizens, visitors and investors while respecting the rules of sustainable development of tourism.

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