

Dr. Andrea Nemes¹:

Developing business in the castle tourism market in Central & Eastern Europe in a competitive environment

Abstract

Purpose – This paper present the product development of the Compagnie des Châteaux d'Europe Centrale (“CCEC”). It seeks to broach the issue of the heritage of historical monuments, especially the castles, palaces, fortresses and the possibility of their usage in the tourism market.

Design/ methodology /approach – The paper is showing the business development in the castle tourism market, focusing on the Central European countries, especially on the Czech Republic and Hungary.

Practical implications – It seems to be the only way for the governments in Central & Eastern Europe to preserve their national heritage for the future generation without overburden the state budget.

Keywords: national heritage conservation, project development, investment, castle tourism market, Central & Eastern Europe, Czech Republic, Hungary.

1. Introduction and problem

Central & Eastern Europe is very rich on historical monuments, especially on castles, palaces, fortresses. Most of them are in bad conditions, belongs to the state, to the regional authorities or to private companies or persons.

Over the past half century many of them were transformed into schools, centres for the disabled, retirement homes, and hospital or state farms. In some cases the Red Army used the castles for their headquarters and barracks.

The preservation of the national heritage needs a high financial contribution from the state budget or from the budget of the regional councils, in the cases, the state is the owner. But nowadays one of the biggest problems is the high state deficit in these counties. Therefore, the governments in the Central European counties are looking to find new vocations for the rich heritage of castles, which might be the only way of saving many others from decay.

Growth in inbound tourism traffic has, in the last years, been further stimulated by the development and improvement of air transportation networks, airports and road infrastructures, thereby increasing the accessibility of these destinations.

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