

# SKI RESORTS IN GIANT MOUNTAINS SWITCH TO RUSSIAN LANGUAGE



Czech ski resorts welcome growing numbers of well off Russians. Half of all visitors come from Poland.

This winter, the employees in ski resorts of Giant Mountains, Czech Republic, have to use Russian language more often than before. **Increasing numbers of visitors from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine or Lithuania come to the country for ski holidays.**

East European tourists come to the mountains to celebrate their Christmas as well as the New Year. "Most of them came here around the Three Kings' Day, the 6th January, and remain for two to three weeks," said Milan Goc from a renowned ski resort in Harrachov, reported Idnes.cz.

Increasing numbers of skiers from the former Soviet Republics have also discovered the neighboring resorts in Rokytnice nad Jizerou. "They try to speak English but we can tell where they are from by the accent. Most often we offer them to speak in Russian, which they always welcome," said Renata Zalska from Horni Domky resort.

Other groups of east Europeans speak only Russian even though they know other languages. "They are not ashamed of their country. Quite the opposite, they are proud of it. You can recognize them by the language but also by the flags on their hats and by their cars," explained a guest house owner. According to him, among the visitors are often former occupants who invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968. "They come to see the places they know from the past and want to visit them this time as tourists."

**Russians came back to the Giant Mountains after four or five years when their numbers were declining.** "This year we are surprised that they showed up again and of course are happy to welcome them. They are very good clients that are willing to spend great amount of money while on holiday," added Zalska.

The Giant Mountains and Jizera Mountains have been facing declining profits over the last years. Growing numbers of people prefer three or four day holidays instead of the whole week on the slope. Consequentially, the profits of the resorts go down. Today Russians are one of the richest tourists in the region. In the past the well off skiers came mostly from Germany. Poles represent approximately fifty per cent of all visitors coming to the Giant Mountains.

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