

# EUROPEAN TOURISTS ARE NOT INTERESTED IN SLOVAKIA



Slovakia attracts only 0.5 per cent of European tourists. What is more, visitors from the most important source markets are nowadays discouraged by Slovak new currency, Euro. The lack of interest could be also blamed on bad marketing.

According to Eurobarometer, only 0.5 per cent of Europeans would pick Slovakia as holiday destination. Vice president of the Slovak Association of Travel Agencies and Tour Operators (SACKA), Stanislav Macko, brought this fact to attention at a press conference.

Slovak internet newspaper Sme.sk informed that last year **Slovakian lodging facilities had welcomed 3.38 million tourists, which is 17% less travelers compared to the year 2008**. The decline was more significant among foreign (26%) than domestic (10%) visitors.

According to Mr. Hasala, the president of SACKA, the main source markets for the country are Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. Nevertheless, when Slovakia switched from Slovak Crown to Euro, the country became less attractive for visitors from these countries. The unfavorable exchange rate is likely to hold for some time making Slovak tourism perspective even less optimistic.

SACKA claims that the Slovak tourism also suffers because of a rather ineffective marketing campaigns organized by Slovak Tourist Board. According to Mr. Hasala, "The Slovak Republic is the only country that finances its marketing from European funds and not from its own budget." He also claims that there is enough money but it is often spent unwisely for example on promoting the Central European countries in Peru or in China. He suggests that Croatian marketing could be used as a model for Slovakia. Croatia promotes itself on foreign TVs but Slovakia does not appear even in foreign press.

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