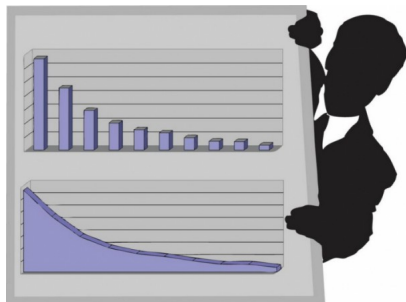


INTEREST OF TOURISTS IN CZECH REPUBLIC DECLINING



Fewer tourists came to the Czech Republic in 2009 than the year before. Reasons are the global financial crisis and the continuous decline in interest in the Czech Republic as a tourism destination.

According to the annual report by an analytic company Mag Consulting, **less than six million foreign tourists visited the Czech Republic last year. It is a ten per cent decline in year-to-year comparison.** Mag Consulting expects similar development also for 2010.

The manager of Mag Consulting, Jaromir Beranek, claims there were two key factors that caused the decline: "The interest in the Czech Republic as a tourism destination on foreign markets has dropped. This decline in interest was observed as early as in 2008. The global economic crisis has also influenced tourists' behavior."

Czech News Agency informed that hotelkeepers were not only interested in the numbers of tourists coming to the country but naturally, mainly in the number of nights they spent in hotels. According to the analytic company, **in 2009 foreigners stayed only 17.6 million nights in Czech hotels, which is an 11 per cent decline in year-to-year comparison.** This means that tourists spend fewer days in the country than they did before.

Mag Consulting expects the number of visitors to further drop in 2010. They estimate that there will be five per cent less visitors and the number of nights spent in hotels will drop by six per cent.

Revenues of hotels and restaurants were understandably down last year. According to Mag Consulting, revenues of tourism related businesses dropped by nine per cent to €5 billion. Because of the negative development in the sector, businesses had to lay off employees. According to Mr. Beranek 3,000 people lost their jobs last year.

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