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## TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS OF CENTRAL-EUROPEAN METROPOLISES

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To careful analysis eleven metropolises from Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic and Hungary were chosen. Identified cities are the Metropolitan European Growth Areas (MEGAs) such as: Warszawa, Szczecin, Gdańsk, Poznań, Łódź, Wrocław, Kraków, Bratislava, Budapest, Praha and Brno. The paper ranks selected metropolises according to the Tourism Attractiveness Index (TAI), which scores from 1 to 5 the performance of a given metropolis in four Subindexes: cultural resources, ranking in the international sources of tourist information, transport accessibility, accommodation establishments. Praha is indisputable leader ranked out of all Central-European metropolises in the TAI, followed by Budapest and Kraków.

*Key words:* tourist attractiveness, Central Europe, metropolis

Sightseeing tourism is one of the major growth tourism industries since the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century and one of the most desirable development options for metropolises, which offer visitors a wide range of attractions and facilities in a relatively compact area.

To careful analysis eleven metropolises from four Central European countries were chosen. Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic and Hungary are post socialist countries, where international tourism development has started in the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Metropolises were chosen according to a typology of FUAs which has been elaborated by EPSON according to their **functional importance** in the European context, where **the Metropolitan European Growth Areas (MEGAs)**, identified in Central Europe were chosen: Warszawa, Szczecin, Gdańsk, Poznań, Łódź, Wrocław, Kraków, Bratislava, Budapest, Praha, Brno.

Poland, as the biggest and the most populated country in the chosen region has noticeable polycentric urban systems, where eight cities are defined as MEGAs.

However Czech and Slovak Republic's urban systems is defined as "rather polycentric" (Tab. 1.) only their capital cities were acknowledged as MEGAs, as it was in the case of Hungary, which by EPSON is defined as "Rather monocentric".

Tab.1. Monocentricity and polycentricity of urban systems in the Central-European countries

Rather monocentric urban systems	Rather polycentric urban systems
<p><b>Hungary:</b> Budapest (1.78 million inh.) represents 17% of total population. Eight cities (Debrecen, Miskolc, Szeged, Pécs, Győr, Nyíregyháza, Kecskemét and Székesfehérvár) with a population of 100.000 to 210.000 inhabitants have a national role and a more or less important transnational role.</p>	<p><b>Poland:</b> Warsaw (1.610.000) represents only 4 % of total population. Eleven cities, in addition to Warsaw have a population in the range of 250.000 – 800.000 inhabitants. All these cities have an important national role. Seven of them have an important transnational role (Katowice, Wrocław, Łódź, Gdańsk, Kraków, Poznań and Szczecin), while the others have a relatively less important transnational role.</p> <p><b>Czech Republic:</b> Prague (1 180 000 inh.) and Brno (380.000 inh.) and Ostrava (320.000 inh.) have an important national and transnational (nearly „European”) role, while less populated Plzen and Olomouc have a comparatively less important transnational role.</p> <p><b>Slovak Republic:</b> Bratislava (430.000 inh.) represents 8% of the total population. Kosice (240.000), has a relatively important transnational / national role.</p>

Source: Interim Territorial Cohesion Report (Preliminary results of ESPON and EU Commission studies), Luxemburg, 2004, p.11.

### Methodology

The methodology is based on Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report [4]. The paper ranks selected metropolises according to the Tourism Attractiveness Index (TAI), which scores from 1 to 5 the performance of a given metropolis in four Subindexes: cultural resources, ranking in the international sources of tourist information, transport accessibility, accommodation establishments (Fig.1).

Each of the pillars has been calculated as an unweighted average of the individual component variables. The Subindexes are then calculated as unweighted averages of the included pillars. The overall TAI is then the unweighted average of the Subindexes. Moreover all statistic data are counted as relative values (per capita or per area).

The standard formula for converting each hard data variable to the 1-to-5 scale is:

$$4 \times \left( \frac{\text{metropolis score} - \text{sample minimum}}{\text{sample maximum} - \text{sample minimum}} \right) + 1$$

The sample minimum and sample maximum are the lowest and highest scores of the overall sample, respectively.

The TAI aims to measure the factors that make it attractive to tourism development in different metropolises.

In the research both primary (timetables on the websites of particular airports, train stations) and secondary (statistic yearbooks, online database, maps etc.) sources of tourist information were used. For the research statistic data from the year 2008 were used.

Joining to the EU in 2004 enable changes in collecting and facilitating statistic data, which allows for comparison of selected indicators on the supply of tourism services and the demand for these services in the European Union countries.

**Cultural resources and ranking of metropolises in the international sources of tourist information**

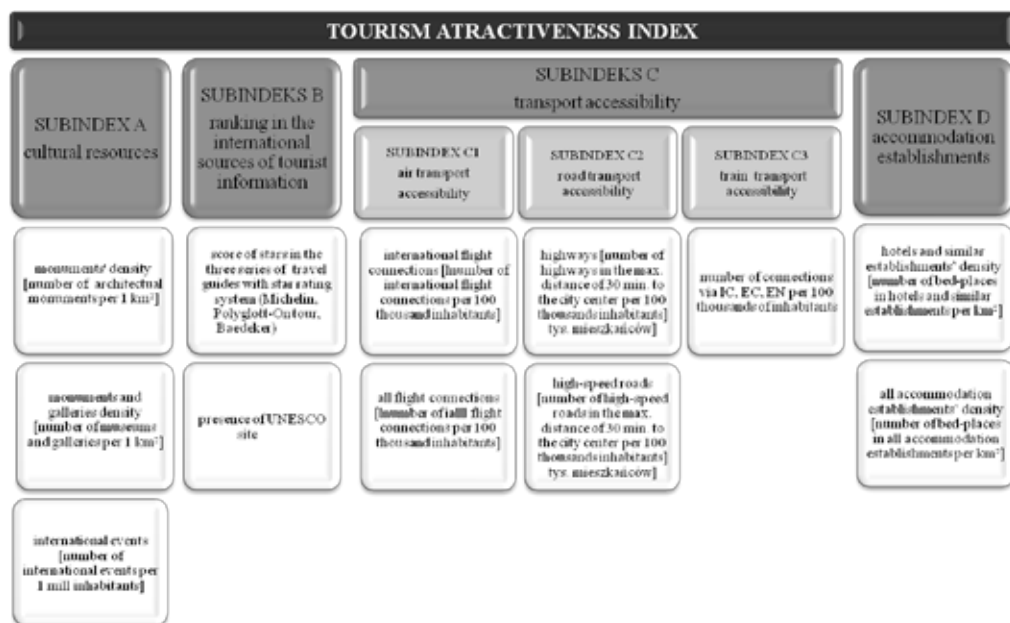


Fig. 1. Composition of the Tourism Attractiveness Index

Source: own elaboration.

Praha is the absolute leader in concentrate monuments - over two thousands, among them are the most frequent visited monuments in the country: Prague Castle with the St. Vitus Cathedral, the Charles Bridge, The Astronomical Clock on Old Town Square, the Church of Our Lady before Týn, the Old New Synagogue or the Old Jewish Cemetery. Moreover the historic centre of Prague, which *admirably illustrates the process of continuous urban growth from the Middle Ages to the present day* [28] has been included in the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites and Městská památková rezervace [urban conservation area]. In 2008 in Praha were located 89 museums and galleries, among them three the most frequent visited museums in the Czech Republic: the Jewish Museum in Prague (612 thousand visitors in 2008 [17]), The National Gallery and the National Museum (560 thousands of visitors each). Moreover Praha scored maximum star ranking in all three analyzed tourist guide series (Michelin, Polyglott-On tour and Baedeker).

However Kraków doesn't concentrate as many tourist attractions as, in the comparison of its area and population it seems to be the leader in the cultural resources category. It hosts the biggest amount of international tourist events and has the biggest density of museums and galleries, among which is the most famous Polish museum - Wawel Royal Castle The National Art Collection (1,5 mill of visitors in 2008 [36]). Kraków also scored maximum star ranking in the tourist guide series. Its Europe's largest market square and numerous historical houses, palaces, churches, the 14th-century fortification, the Wawel Hill, the medieval site of Kazimierz with its ancient synagogues and one of the oldest universities in Europe - Jagellonian University was added to the UNESCO list and the National Historical Monument of Poland.

Tab.2. SUBINDEX A – cultural resources and SUBINDEX B - ranking in the international sources of tourist information

No.	country	metropolis	monuments' density	museums and galleries density	international events	SUBINDEX A cultural resources	ranking in the tourist guides	UNESCO sites	SUBINDEX B ranking in the international sources of tourist information
1	PL	Kraków	4,30	5,00	5,00	4,77	5,00	5,00	5,00
2	CZ	Praha	5,00	3,47	3,42	3,96	5,00	5,00	5,00
3	HU	Budapest	3,03	4,51	2,32	3,29	5,00	5,00	5,00
4	PL	Warszawa	3,24	3,58	2,52	3,12	5,00	5,00	5,00
5	PL	Wrocław	2,67	1,74	3,09	2,50	4,33	5,00	4,67
6	CZ	Brno	2,70	1,70	1,01	1,80	1,67	5,00	3,33
7	SL	Bratislava	4,18	1,86	1,32	2,45	3,67	1,00	2,33
8	PL	Gdańsk	2,37	1,94	1,22	1,84	4,33	1,00	2,67
9	PL	Poznań	2,40	2,52	2,45	2,46	3,00	1,00	2,00
10	PL	Łódź	1,33	2,00	1,83	1,72	1,00	1,00	1,00
11	PL	Szczecin	1,00	1,06	1,00	1,02	1,00	1,00	1,00

Source: own elaboration based on: Baedeker – Czechy, 2006, PASCAL, Bielsko Biala; Baedeker – Hungary, 2000, AA Publishing; Baedeker – Czech / Slovak Republics, 1994, Prentice Hall Travel, New York; Baedeker, Polen, 2008, Ostfilder, Deutschland; Polyglott on Tour – Budapeszt, 2005; Polyglott on Tour – Polen, 2005; Polyglott on Tour – Tschechien, 2005; Polyglott – Reiseführer – Ungarn, 1992, München; Polyglott – Reiseführer – Tschechoslowakei, 1992, München.; Polyglott – Reiseführer – Polen, 1992, München; The Green Guide – Europe, 2004, Michelin, Hearst, UK; The Green Guide – Hungary, Budapest, 2000, Michelin, Hearst, UK; The Green Guide – Prague, 2003, Michelin, Hearst, UK; Green Guide – Polska, 2006, Michelin; Wykaz zabytków nieruchomych wpisanych do rejestru zabytków, stan na 30 września 2008: <http://www.kobidz.pl/idm,580,zabytki-nieruchome.html> accessed 04/12/2008; Nemovité památky: <http://www.monumnet.npu.cz/pamfond/hledani.php>, accessed 08/12/2008; Kulturális Örökségvédelmi Hivatal – Nyilvántartási és Tudományos Igazgatóság, 2009, KÖH, Budapest; Evidencia kultúrnych pamiatok na Slovensku, <http://www.pamiatky.sk/pamiatky/pamiatkovy-urad/evidencia-kulturnych-pamiatok-na-slovensku>, accessed: 27/02/2009; publications from Kulturális Örökségvédelmi Hivatal (KÖH) in Hungary; Wykaz muzeów w Polsce, <http://www.kobidz.pl/idm,76,muzea.html>, accessed: 20/05/2009; Wykaz galerii w Polsce, [www.culture.pl/pl/culture/instytucje/galerie](http://www.culture.pl/pl/culture/instytucje/galerie), accessed: 13/03/2009; Adresář muzei a galerii České republiky, <http://www.cz-museums.cz/amg/faces/adresar/>, accessed: 14/03/2009; Important Slovak Towns and Villages, [http://www.museum.sk/defaulte.php?obj=mesto&ix=1zoznam\\_en](http://www.museum.sk/defaulte.php?obj=mesto&ix=1zoznam_en), accessed: 22/04/2009; The homepage of Hungarian museums, [http://www.museum.hu/search\\_en/index\\_en.php](http://www.museum.hu/search_en/index_en.php), accessed: 11/02/2009; [www.czechtourism.com](http://www.czechtourism.com), [www.polska.travel](http://www.polska.travel), [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl), [www.vlada.gov.sk](http://www.vlada.gov.sk), <https://magyarorszag.hu>.

Two other metropolises: Budapest and Warszawa also gathered maximum stars in the travel guides series and were placed on the UNESCO site:

- Budapest: Buda Castle, the banks of the Danube, Andrassy Avenue (including the

Millennium Underground Railway, Hősök tere and Városliget)

- Warszawa: historic Old Town (with the Old Town Market, the town houses, the circuit of the city walls, as well as the Royal Castle and important religious buildings).

Although Budapest concentrates the biggest number of museums and galleries (123) and the second, after Praha, number of monuments (1247), among which are world's famous: Parliament; the Castle Hill with Royal Palace, the Matthias Church, the Fisherman's Bastion; Dohány Street Synagogue, the chain Bridge, the Gellért Hill, its size and population doesn't allowed to be in the top of the ranking in their density.

### **Transport accessibility**

The best transport accessibility per capita has Praha, followed by Bratislava, Budapest and Brno (the only city without airport). The weakest transport accessibility characterizes Polish metropolises.

The highest numbers of travelers (10,87 mill) passed through the Praha-Ruzyne airport, which offered 96 European and 12 overseas connections. Warszawa-Okęcie was the second biggest airport (8,3 mill of passengers) and Budapest-Ferihegy third (7,8 mill of passengers). The rapid increase in the number of low cost airlines, started up after joining the EU, caused development of regional airports in other Central European metropolises.

Brno is the only city without an airport (among the researched cities), but it is also one of the best accessible by road transport per capita. It is connected by main Czech highways D1 (Praha – Ostrava) and D2 (connection with Bratislava) and the express road R52. Slovakia's capital city has the best access by road transport per capita thanks to three highways: D1 (towards Košice), mentioned D2 and small part of D4 (towards Austria).

Praha and Budapest are characterized by the urban ring-road and radiating roads direction systems:

- Praha – accessed by highways: M0 (the Praha ring-road), mentioned D1, D5 (to Germany via Plzen), D8 (to Germany via Ústí nad Labem), D11 (to Hradec Králové) and five express roads: R1, R4, R6, R7, R10;

- Budapest - accessed by highways: M0 (the Budapest ring-road), M1 (towards Austria), M2 (towards Slovakia), M3 (to Debrecen), small part of M5 (towards Romania), M6 and M7 (towards Croatia).

Definitely the weakest road transport accessibility characterizes Polish cities, only two have connections with two high-speed roads: Gdańsk (A1, S6), Szczecin (A6, S3). Most cities have connections just with one: Kraków and Wrocław (A4), Poznań (A2), Warszawa (S8). Moreover most of Polish highways and express roads consist of numerous unconnected sections, what additionally obstruct easy accessibility.

Central Europe doesn't have common access to high speed train connections, the only exception are connections in Czech Republic by Pendolino. All countries offer international connections via high standard trains: EuroCity, InterCity and EuroNight. The best train accessibility per capita has Brno, followed by Budapest and Praha.

Tab. 3. SUBINDEX C - transport accessibility

No.	country	metropolis	international flight connections	all flight connections	air transport accessibility	highways	high-speed roads	road transport accessibility	train transport accessibility	SUBINDEX C transport accessibility
1	CZ	Praha	5,00	5,00	5,00	2,85	5,00	3,93	4,31	4,41
2	SL	Bratislava	4,21	4,20	4,21	5,00	4,46	4,73	3,88	4,27
3	HU	Budapest	2,83	2,72	2,77	3,34	3,02	3,18	4,64	3,53
4	CZ	Brno	1,00	1,00	1,00	4,08	5,00	4,54	5,00	3,51
5	PL	Gdańsk	3,88	3,87	3,88	2,25	3,17	2,71	1,94	2,84
6	PL	Kraków	3,05	3,05	3,05	1,76	1,65	1,70	2,42	2,39
7	PL	Poznań	2,06	2,11	2,09	2,02	1,88	1,95	3,11	2,39
8	PL	Warszawa	3,04	3,18	3,11	1,00	1,29	1,14	2,79	2,35
9	PL	Szczecin	1,09	1,08	1,08	2,40	3,43	2,91	2,06	2,02
10	PL	Wrocław	2,06	2,00	2,03	1,90	1,78	1,84	2,10	1,99
11	PL	Łódź	1,20	1,13	1,17	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,06

Source: own elaboration based on: Guide to the motorway systems worldwide, <http://www.motorways-exitlists.com>, accessed: 13/03/2009; Timetable, <http://www.pendolino.cz>, accessed: 17/01/2011; Polskie Koleje Państwowe, <http://www.pkp.pl/>, accessed: 18/05/2008; České dráhy, a.s., <http://www.cd.cz/>, accessed: 15/05/2008; <http://www.zelpage.cz/razeni/08/cr/EC/>; Železnice Slovenskej republiky: <http://www.zsr.sk/>, [www.rail.sk](http://www.rail.sk), accessed: 18/05/2008; Magyar Államvasutak (MÁV), 2008.

### Accommodation establishments

There is clear dominance of Praha in the number of accommodation establishments per capita. In the 2008 there were 82 809 bed places in collective accommodation establishments, where 74% were bed-places in hotels and similar establishments. Second metropolis in the ranking – Budapest offered 40 351 bed places, in 90% in hotels and similar establishments.

In Poland Warszawa (24 616 bed places, 91% in hotels and similar establishments) and Kraków (22 500 bed places, 71% in hotels and similar establishments), concentrated the biggest amount of bed-places, but Kraków is a leader per capita.

Tab. 4. SUBINDEX D - accommodation establishments

No.	country	metropolis	hotels and similar establishments	all collective accommodation establishments	SUBINDEX D accommodation establishments
1	CZ	Praha	5,00	5,00	5,00
2	HU	Budapest	3,07	2,64	2,86
3	PL	Kraków	2,34	2,43	2,39
4	PL	Warszawa	2,17	1,88	2,02
5	CZ	Brno	1,55	1,68	1,61
6	PL	Poznań	1,45	1,41	1,43
7	SL	Bratislava	1,42	1,43	1,43
8	PL	Gdańsk	1,14	1,71	1,43
9	PL	Wrocław	1,30	1,33	1,32
10	PL	Szczecin	1,08	1,07	1,08
11	PL	Łódź	1,00	1,00	1,00

Source: own elaboration based on: Tourism, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/tourism/data/database>, accessed: 19/04/2011.

### Tourism Attractiveness Index

Praha is indisputable leader ranked out of all Central-European metropolises in the TAI. The Czech capital city is characterized by abundant cultural resources; its transport accessibility is the best among all researched cities. In addition, Praha makes great efforts to develop the accommodation establishments which total gather the highest score in the pillar. Its transport accessibility is among the best.

Budapest, ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> is known for unique attractions and cultural heritage and health and wellness services. Its transport accessibility is among the best. Its ranking is attributable to its accommodation establishments development.

The key pillars of attractiveness of main Polish tourist destinations Warszawa and Kraków are cultural resources and ranking in the international sources of tourist information. However, their attractiveness would be strengthened by upgrading both its transport and tourism infrastructures and by a greater focus on proper promotion abroad. Polish transport infrastructure has started to be gradually upgraded; however, the long-term omissions can hardly be liquidated, eg. insufficient road network. Preparation for EURO 2012 will lead to essential improvements in road infrastructure, accommodation and foodservice. However, the changes will only relate to the cities in which football matches will take place, which are Warsaw, Poznan, Gdansk and Wroclaw [13].

Bratislava is characterized by average cultural heritage, clear strength is transport accessibility, however the city suffers from not sufficient tourism infrastructure.

Tab.5. TOURISM ATTRACTIVENESS INDEX

No.	country	metropolis	area [km <sup>2</sup> ]	population [2008]	no. of all the tourist arrivals at public accommodation establishments (capita)	% of foreign tourists	<b>SUBINDEX A</b> cultural resources	<b>SUBINDEX B</b> ranking in the international sources of tourist information	<b>SUBINDEX C</b> transport accessibility	<b>SUBINDEX D</b> accommodation establishments	<b>TOURISM ATTRACTIVENESS INDEX</b>
1	CZ	Praha	496,03	1233211	4 587 483	88,31	3,96	5,00	4,41	5,00	<b>4,59</b>
3	HU	Budapest	525,13	1707253	2 576 869	84,36	3,29	5,00	3,53	2,86	<b>3,67</b>
2	PL	Kraków	326,80	756441	1 287 223	53,14	4,77	5,00	2,39	2,39	<b>3,64</b>
4	PL	Warszawa	517,24	1707981	2 022 164	37,81	3,12	5,00	2,35	2,02	<b>3,12</b>
5	SL	Bratislava	367,66	428791	759 813	65,90	2,45	2,33	4,27	1,43	<b>2,62</b>
6	PL	Wrocław	292,82	632803	709 931	32,14	2,50	4,67	1,99	1,32	<b>2,62</b>
7	CZ	Brno	230,19	370592	483 797	52,93	1,80	3,33	3,51	1,61	<b>2,57</b>
8	PL	Gdańsk	261,62	455717	387 329	30,78	1,84	2,67	2,84	1,43	<b>2,19</b>
9	PL	Poznań	261,85	559458	532 704	29,94	2,46	2,00	2,39	1,43	<b>2,07</b>
10	PL	Szczecin	300,53	407260	369 600	38,17	1,02	1,00	2,02	1,08	<b>1,28</b>
11	PL	Łódź	293,25	750125	329433	19,34	1,72	1,00	1,06	1,00	<b>1,19</b>

Source: own elaboration and elaboration based on: Tourism, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/tourism/data/database>, accessed: 19/04/2011.

### Tourist arrivals to Central European metropolises

There is very strong positive correlation between TAI and number of tourist arrivals (0,86). Praha is both the highest-ranked metropolis and the main destination which attracts tourists in Central Europe. Moreover it is definitely the leading attraction in the Czech Republic. From the overall number of approximately seven million foreign tourists, 61% visit only Praha. This is an unbalanced situation and cannot be seen in any western country [14].

Budapest is second frequent visited Central-European metropolis with over 2,5 mill tourists' arrivals in 2008. ¼ of international tourists decide to visit Hungarian capital city as their main destination during they stay in the country.

Situation in Poland is much more balanced. However Warszawa and Kraków are the most popular tourist destinations other metropolises like Wrocław or Poznań are not so much behind.

The weakest tourist interest among researched capital cities has Bratislava, which in 2008 was visited by approximately 760 thousands of tourists.



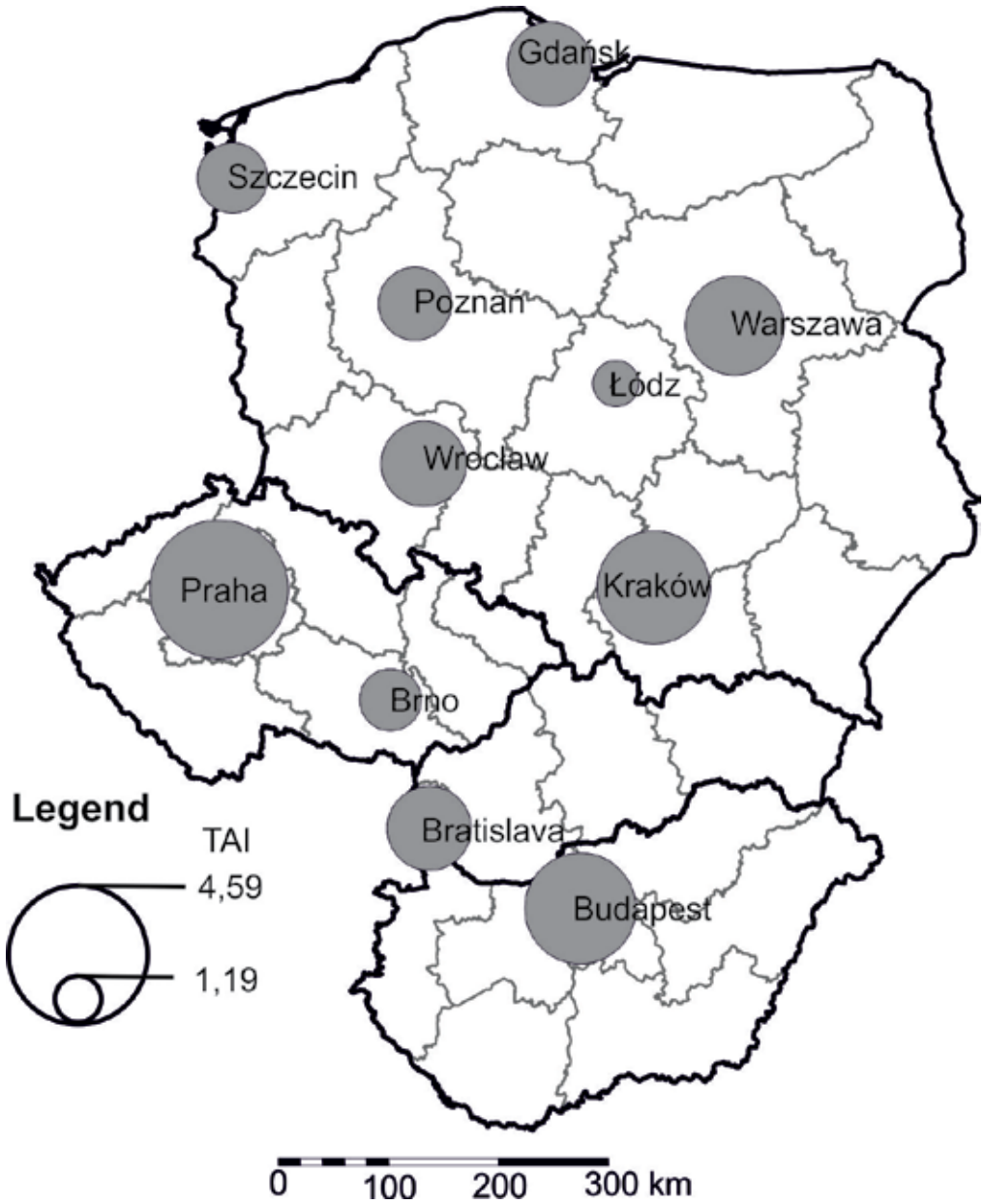


Fig.2. Tourism Attractiveness Index in the Central-European metropolises.  
Source: own elaboration.

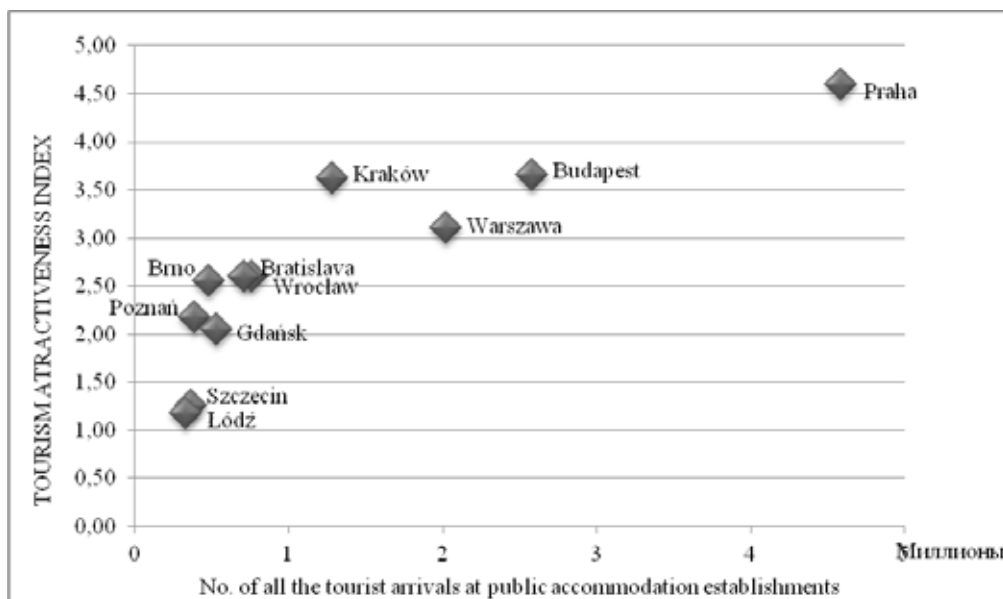


Fig.3. Tourism Attractiveness Index and tourist arrivals at public accommodation establishments

Source: own elaboration.

### Conclusion

Central-European metropolises are rich in cultural resources, which are confirmed in rankings in the international sources of tourist information such as tourist guides or UNESCO World Heritage List. However, their attractiveness would be strengthened by upgrading both transport and tourism infrastructure, especially in Poland. Moreover, despite growing number of tourists arrivals and their interest in Central Europe, gap between post-socialistic metropolises and top tourist destinations is still clearly noticeable, e.g. Paris and London are visited by around 15 millions of foreign tourists yearly.

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## **ТУРИСТИЧНА ПРИВАБЛИВІСТЬ ЦЕНТРАЛЬНО-ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОЇ МЕТРОПОЛІЇ**

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Для ретельного аналізу були обрані одинадцять мегаполісів з Польщі, Чехії, Словаччини та Угорщини. Описано такі міста як: Варшава, Щецин, Гданськ, Познань, Лодзь, Вроцлав, Краків, Братислава, Будапешт, Прага та Брно. У роботі обраховано індекс туристичної привабливості (ТАІ), при чому ставилися бали від 1 до 5 стосовно чотирьох субіндексів: культурні ресурси, джерела інформації для туристів, транспортна доступність, розміщення закладів. Прага є безперечним лідером з усіх центрально-європейських метрополій у ТАІ, а потім – Будапешт та Краків.

*Ключові слова:* туристична привабливість, Центральна Європа, столиця.

## **ТУРИСТИЧЕСКАЯ ПРИВЛЕКАТЕЛЬНОСТЬ ЦЕНТРАЛЬНО- ЕВРОПЕЙСКОЙ МЕТРОПОЛИИ**

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Для тщательного анализа были выбраны одиннадцать мегаполисов из Польши, Чехии, Словакии и Венгрии. Описаны такие города как: Варшава, Щецин, Гданьск, Познань, Лодзь, Вроцлав, Краков, Братислава, Будапешт, Прага и Брно. В работе рассчитан индекс туристической привлекательности (ТАІ), причем относились баллы от 1 до 5 в отношении четырех субиндексов: культурные ресурсы, источники информации для туристов, транспортная доступность, размещение заведений. Прага является бесспорным лидером из всех центрально-европейских метрополій в ТАІ, а затем - Будапешт и Краков.

*Ключевые слова:* туристическая привлекательность, Центральная Европа, столица.