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## **ANALYSIS OF SELECTED INDICATORS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM WITHIN THE PROJECT „EUROPEAN CITY OF SPORTS KOŠICE“**

## **ANALÝZA VYBRANÝCH UKAZOVATEĽOV A ICH VPLYV NA ROZVOJ CESTOVNÉHO RUCHU V RÁMCI PROJEKTU „EURÓPSKE MESTO ŠPORTU KOŠICE“**

**Abstract:** *Tourism has reached high level of development. It has become a part of consumption and the lifestyle of the population, especially in the economically advanced countries. Tourism currently forms a comprehensive system that has an interdisciplinary character and affects the national economy of the country. It is very important for the whole society, because it creates a high added value not only for the countryside and its inhabitants, but it creates values also for visitors. The main aim of the paper is to point out at the importance of tourism activities creation or activities in general and their linking with tourism sphere. At the example of the European City of Sports project, it shows the meaning of implementation the project to the city of Košice and the results of its application and activities into the practice. The results of the survey show that implementation of the project brought positive reaction of the tourism participants and the number of performances in individual areas has increased. The importance in concrete details of activities is seen not only for the city as mentioned, but for the Košice region as well. The paper represents one part of the survey held based on this project.*

**Keywords:** *Tourism development, European City of Sports, Košice region, sports centres, sport activities*

**Kľúčové slová:** *Rozvoj cestovného ruchu, Európske mesto športu, Košický kraj, športové centrá, športové aktivity*

**JEL Classification:** L 83

### **Introduction**

Tourism development has a great importance and plays an important role in the development of the national economy; therefore, there is an effort of each country to help to develop this industry effectively [15]. Tourism, as a phenomenon of the third millennium, is attributed to many components that merely emphasize the broad nature. It affects not only the economic aspects but also the social aspects of social life in general. Tourism makes travelling possible, it enables to gain new experiences, to travel without barriers, to escape from everyday stereotypes and to independently realize and disseminate the knowledge [13]. As the interest in knowing foreign countries, recreation, recreation and sport belong to indispensable parts of

the world; tourism is an important attribute of economic development in Slovakia as well as in the Košice region [16]. Its current level of 2.5% of Slovakia's GDP indicates its low performance compared to the European Union. On the other hand, its strong primary together with secondary potential also speaks of the development assumptions that can be achieved.

Among many benefits of tourism development ideas belong undoubtedly the project and the title of Košice - European Capital of Culture 2016. It is not only an important impetus in the development not only of culture, but also of tourism. Sport has evolved since time immemorial. It becomes standard and necessary part of the day. However, the trend of today's life is trying to put sport in the forefront. It is important to show people that the sports bring positive aspects into daily routine. For some people, it is a normal part of life, for somebody's fun and for some people just hobby. However, sport is nowadays a rapidly growing aspect, and it becomes more and more attractive to people.

### **Characteristics of Košice region**

For tourism development and specific purposes, the territory of the country can be divided into smaller geographical units that may or may not be identical to administrative divisions in the country. Such a division can have several advantages as for instance: easier systematic management, better transparency of the organizational structure, possibility of information databases application and statistics monitoring, better definition of the region's functionality and the development of its concept of development and, last but not least, more rational public resources investing [9]. For Košice region, the division is as follows: Košice region consists of 4 historical and tourist regions. These include Abov, Gemer, Spiš and Dolný Zemplín. This territory is characterized by a diversity of nations, cultures and languages. Each nationality that lives here, whether these are Slovaks, Czechs, Hungarians, Jews, Germans, Ukrainians, Ruthenians, or Roma, has the opportunity to represent their customs, traditions and habits.

The territory spreading in the south-eastern part of the country is bordering to: the Borsod-Abov- Zemplín region (Hungary), in the east with the Trans Carpathian region (Ukraine), in the north with the Prešov region and in the west with the Banská Bystrica region [15]. The Košice Region with its area of 6 755 km<sup>2</sup> is the fourth largest. With the number of inhabitants in total 794 756 is the second most populous region of the Slovak Republic. Košice Region has a slightly higher density than the average of Slovakia. The most enormous are the lowlands, the valleys and the valleys, at least the mountains. The territory of the region consisting of the historical regions of Abov and the parts of the historical regions of Spiš (South), Gemer (Upper) and Zemplín (Lower) can be seen in map 1.

*Picture 1. Map of Košice region tourism regions*



Source: <https://kosice8.webnode.sk/>

### **Basic geographical concentrations in Košice region**

In the territory of the Košice Region, 4 large-scale protected areas are declared, namely the National Park Slovenský raj and the National park of Slovenský Kras and the protected areas of Latorica and Vihorlat. Among the natural uniqueness of European importance belong the Dobšinská Ice Cave and the Herliansky geyser. Economic and recreational importance have the water reservoirs of Zemplínska šírava, Bukovec, Ružín and Palcmanská Maša. Forests cover two fifths of the surface of the territory, in the most wooded district of Slovakia - Gelnica up to three quarters. They are mainly located in the mountain and foothills of the county in the north and southwestern part of the county. In the south-eastern part of the territory there are floodplain forests, the eastern and southern part is lowland-hilly in nature.

The highest point of the region is 1 476 meters above sea level, the high Stolica in the Slovenské Rudohorie, the lowest one is situated is the place where the river Bodrog flows from the Slovak Republic near the village Klin nad Bodrogom, 94 metres above sea level. The watercourses belong to the lowland, highland and high-mountain rivers. The largest river is Bodrog, which, along with the rivers, drains the easternmost part of the region. Hornádska and Košice basin drain the Hornád River with tributaries, the western part of the Slaná River and the south-eastern part of the territory flows through the Tisa river. Water reservoirs are important for water and recreational use. More significant geothermal springs can be found in the Košice basin (Košice-surrounding district) and in the foothills of Vihorlat (Michalovce district). Kosice Basin is one of the most perspective areas for geothermal energy use. At a depth of 3,000 m, water with a temperature of 150 degrees Centigrade is assumed [14].

From tourism development point of view, 26 municipalities out of the 440 municipalities in the Košice region are associated in regional tourism organizations called "destination management organizations". Mentioned organizations cover the territory of the Košice region, the Dolný Zemplín region, the territory of Slovenský raj and the territory of Spiš region [2]. Košice as a city is the metropolis of Eastern Slovakia. The second largest city of the Slovak Republic, is the largest monument reservation of its kind in Slovakia. The popular place of the Košice inhabitants, whether visitors of the city have become relaxation zones in the park near Immaculate and in the park at the "singing" fountain. Bells and singing fountains are unique

attractions of the city. Fountain with the ability to react synchronously to own music, live music and the bell is another city pride [8].

Košice also has a rich cultural, social and sporting life. The best known are water skiing events or city celebrations in Košice, which take place in May each year. The rich cultural and social life and sports life or the rich hospitality of the inhabitants meet with positive reactions of the tourists [6].

Košice as one of the few places is characterized by a number of archaeological sites, proving the settlement of this territory. These include: Nižná Myšľa, Košice - Barca, Seňa, Milhost', Trstené pri Hornáde, Čaña, Košice - Poľov, Košice - Myslava, Kechnec, Košťany, Valaliky, Šebastovce, Šaca, Haniska, Rozhanovce, Čečejevce, Zádiel etc. The most abundant and the richest historical finds from Košice and the surrounding area come from the Bronze Age. They were gradually abandoned by the people of Koschtian, Ottoman and Pilin culture. The Koschtian one was born in the region of Kechnec - Košice. Gradual building of settlements in this area, (usually on terraces and elevations) was also affected by deposits of raw materials such as copper, gold, silver and iron [3].

### **Košice - EUROPEAN CITY OF SPORTS 2016**

The European Capital of Sports is the title that marks one of the European cities each year. Up to the example of the European Capital of Culture, ACES (European Capital of Sport Association) this title has been awarded since 2001. Every year, one European Capital of Sports (a city with more than 499 999 inhabitants) is selected, followed by several European cities of sports (with 25 000 to 499 999 inhabitants) as well as several European small-scale sports towns (up to 25 000 inhabitants). From 2013 onwards, the European best sports facility is also included into this idea [12].

In 2016, as the European City of Sports was chosen Košice as the first city in Slovakia since the beginning of these titles. A year later, Banská Bystrica was chosen by this title. In 2018 it was followed by the town of Nitra.

Picture 2. Logo of Košice- European City of Sports 2016



Source: <http://www.emskosice.sk/o-projekte>

## **Project ECS fundamentals**

The distinction of the categories of "European City of Sports" (hereinafter only ECS) and "European Capital City of Sport" (hereinafter referred to as the ECCS) depends on the number of inhabitants. Košice was included in the European City of Sports, with a population of category up to 500 thousand. The European Capital City of Sports candidate must meet the condition of having over 500,000 inhabitants. The title of the European City of Sports in 2016 was won by Prague. While the ECCS is given only to one city for each year in, it is necessary to apply for the ECS title together with several cities across the Europe. Košice were awarded by the European City of Sports title on 4.6 2015. The statement was made directly by ACES President Gian Francesco Lupatelli [12].

Košice was forwarding this goal systematically since February 2014 after the visit of partner town Ostrava. Ostrava got the title in mentioned year and invited representatives of Košice as a partnering town to present sports activities at the international Conference of Sports. Preparation time meant a thorough analysis of all sporting events organized by sports organizations, clubs, including the involvement of private subjects and infrastructure used for all-round physical activities. In September 2014, Lukáš Vorel a project guarantor for selected Central European countries and member of the Evaluation Committee from the Czech Republic has visited Košice. Košice did several visits of selected sports facilities, participated in several sports competitions and non-competitive events, including mass events. During these visits, the city's genuine interest in engaging in the title fight was verified. At the press conference, during the Lukáš Vorela observation mission in Košice, the expression of support for the City of Košice ambition to apply for the ECS title in 2016 or 2017 was made.

## **Objective of European City of Sports project**

"Košice - The European City of Sports 2016 aimed to attract the largest number of people of all generations, but also its visitors, to sport and its presentation. By creation of interesting activities, the city wanted to address also the people who have not been doing sports yet or sported only sporadically. Handicapped people or seniors played also important role as well as socially disadvantaged people for who these project activities were free of charge. At the same time, the aim of this project was to make the city of Kosice visible both, in domestic conditions and abroad. By announcing the candidacy, the city received offers from federations and international associations to organize various sports events, what helped in particular to the economic effect, the sporting experience and the motivation of young people for various sports activities [12].

## **Methodology – European City of Sports project in numbers**

The main aim of the survey was to point out at the importance of tourism activities creation or activities in general and their linking with tourism sphere. At the example of the European City of Sports project, it was aim to show the meaning of implementation the project to the city of Košice and the results of its application and activities into the practice. The importance in concrete details of activities is seen not only for the city as mentioned, but for the Košice region as well. The paper represents one part of the survey held based on this project.

The survey was conducted by using several methods of research. The primary method needed for the purposes of this paper and the survey was desk research. It helped to analyse theoretical concept of the Košice city and Košice as the region together with fundamentals of the European City of Sports. The theoretical base was later forwarded by desk research of statistical data. For this purposes the method of synthesis was used. For the evaluation of the tourism performance statistics were used mathematical and statistical methods, using tables, graphs as well as methods of quadratic regression analysis. Statistical data were gained from the official sources of Statistical office of Slovak republic. The results of them can be seen in this chapter of the paper.

## Results of the survey

The project European City of Sports was funded on sports activities creation where the public is invited to participate. At the beginning, it is important to point out the results of the activities that were held up to the months of the year. The most activities were organised in months of May and June. September as a month was also strong for these activities. Concerning the division of activities, the seasonality played important role. This fact can influence the results of the activities. It is possible to say that concerning the number of events versus the days of the year, the number was almost the same. 364 activities or events were held during the year, which allowed wide public to be active.

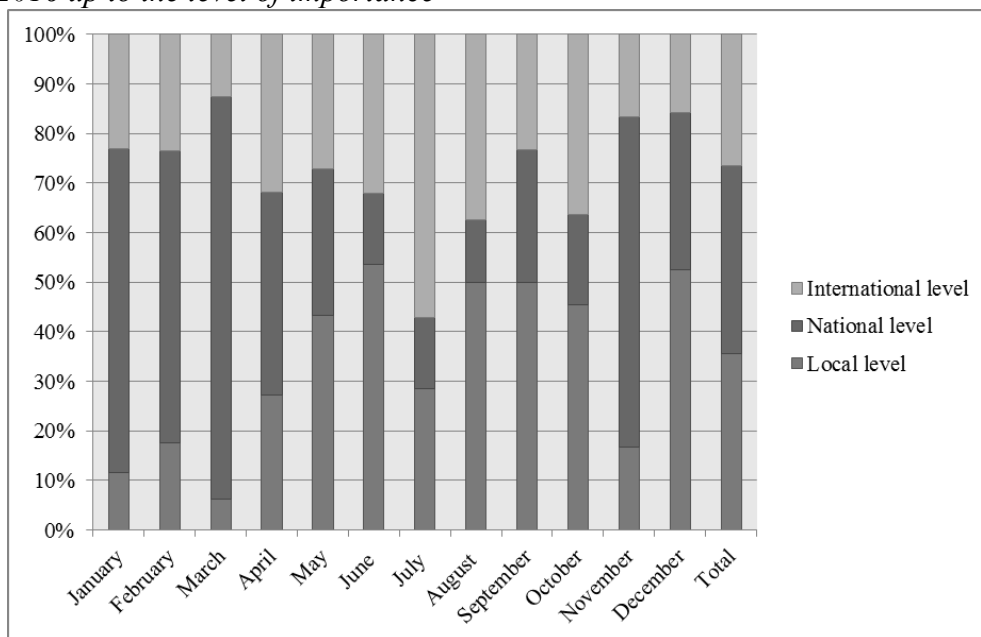
*Table 1. Most attractive sport activities of European City of Sports 2016 project within each month*

<b>Month</b>	<b>Number of events</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Volunteers</b>
January	21	4 162	12	3 540	406
February	18	8 454	12	6 020	140
March	20	5 394	16	4 120	206
April	25	6 485	22	4 440	312
May	49	116 985	38	9 200	472
June	49	7 340	40	6 200	510
July	47	52 990	39	11 320	606
August	33	5 122	26	10 600	412
September	46	28 699	37	20 612	860
October	22	25 230	28	35 350	1820
November	18	3018	12	5126	123
December	16	2 699	12	3 612	102
<b>Total</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>149 593</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>120 140</b>	<b>5969</b>

Source: own processing up to emskosice.sk

Among the most interesting sports activities during Košice- European City of Sports 2016 were included activities such as: the Runway run, the Spartan race in the centre of Košice, Know your town by running, Sports Sundays in the park, Sports Friday on the Main street, Summer and Winter Seniors' Olympic Games (with more than 300 participants of seniors with average age of 72 years), Football joins, Tournament of Roma (gypsies) and homeless people, students and representatives of the city, Sport without barriers, handicapped people and disabled people on wheelchairs, Quadrille - Quadruple, „Retrospartakiáda“, Jumps in the city centre (jumping on bikes, skis and snowboards). The highest number of participants was reached in May, when 116 985 people were active.

*Graph 1. Activities of sports organizations of each month during the European City of Sports project 2016 up to the level of importance*

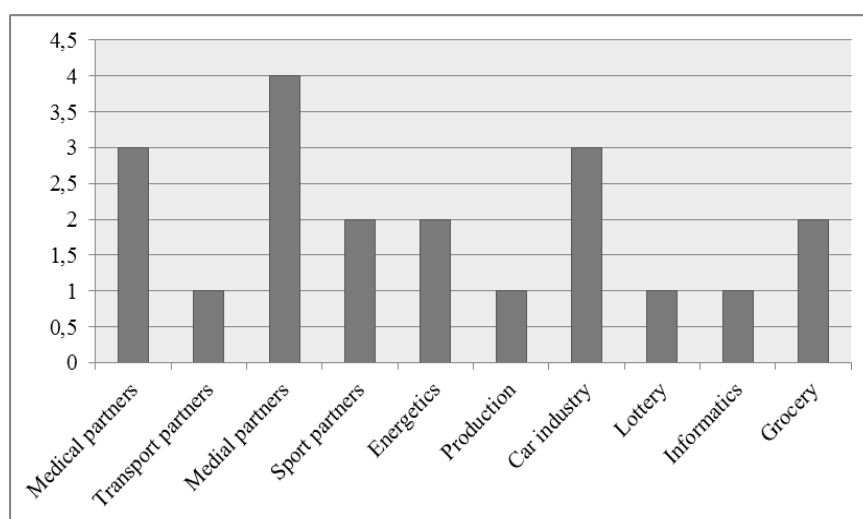


Source: own processing up to emskosice.sk

### **Project partners**

The project Košice- European City of Sports 2016 could be realized thanks to several partners from different spheres. All the partners supported the idea with financial amount in form of sponsorship contributions in total of 460 thousand euro. The structure of partners up to spheres of their origin can be seen in graph 2.

Graph 2. Project partners of European City of Sports 2016



Source: own processing up to emskosice.sk

The implementation of the project has had many positive aspects, not only from the point of view of tourism. Thanks to its realization many sports points and facilities were reconstructed or built (Kolcun 2016). Among the most significant elements of sports possibilities development that can serve as well for tourism development in the city or region can be mentioned:

- Reconstruction of the school oval at Belehradská Elementary School
- Reconstruction of the Red Star Pool
- Reconstruction of school oval at Trebišovská Elementary School
- Construction of 3 workouts
- Construction of IN line oval at Bukovecká Elementary School
- Newly built outdoor fitness park Barca
- Fitness Centre Luník IX for Roma
- Workout playground in Šaca.

The city of Košice financed other sport facilities where 213 000 euros were donated for the reconstruction of these sports facilities:

- Football field in Krásna
- Inline pavement KVP
- Multifunctional playground in Lorinčík
- Table tennis game room in Myslava
- The sports complex in Poľov
- Šebastovce Sports Center
- Football field in Ťahanovce
- Workout playground, petanque field and fencing of Olympia sports complex in Ťahanovce.



During the construction of sports facilities, the city also donated the prizes for the competition "The best urban part of the European City of Sports". The amount was 110,000€.

1. Place -> Ťahanovce - athletic oval
2. Place -> Nad Jazerom - outdoor fit park
3. Place -> West Beach Plaza and street football in front of Shopping Centre Galéria
4. Place -> Dargovských hrdinov – workout field (processed by MU Košice)

Thanks to year 2016 and the European City of Sports project, Košice was perceived as one of the most active places in terms of sport. Based on this finding, Košice has great potential for further development of sport in the city in the upcoming years.

### Statistical perception of tourism performance

From the latest statistics from 2017, Košice region in comparison with other Slovak regions was ranked 5th in the number of visitors in accommodation establishments from the point of view of tourism performance (Tab. 2).

Table 2. Number of visitors in accommodation establishments up to regions within Slovakia

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Bratislava region	939 328	1 073 854	954 888	1 194 479	606 153	1 097 333
Žilina region	756 621	819 016	735 470	846 508	447 606	831 732
Prešov region	664 863	700 248	642 706	740 698	394 046	709 026
Banská Bystrica region	401 869	400 251	384 801	448 568	245 904	447 144
Košice region	283 180	314 651	260 494	266 361	347 014	366 142
Trnava region	266 216	263 709	228 359	297 693	145 910	285 789
Nitra region	219 952	238 440	236 875	261 582	128 252	263 264
Trenčín region	244 033	238 336	244 114	274 36	139 818	291 737

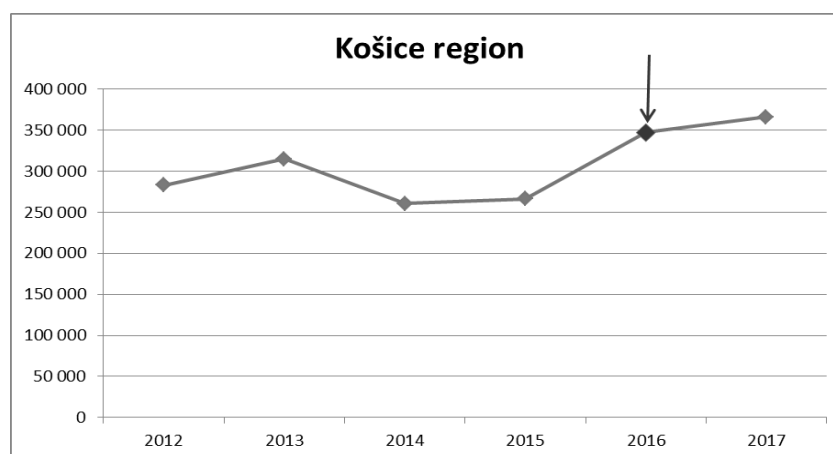
Source: Own processing up to Statistical Office of Slovak republic 2018

As can be seen from the Table 2, the highest number of accommodation establishment visitors up to regions within Slovak regions was recorded in Bratislava region. The number is rational while Bratislava is the capital and centre of business of the country. Global tourism statistics show that usually the region disposing by capital has the highest number of visitors in general. This might be caused by different reasons as business, city tourism sightseeing, localization of the city as a strategic point and many others. In contrary, the lowest number up to regions within

Slovak regions was recorded in Nitra region. For the purposes of this paper Košice region is important. The result can be seen in Graph 2.

As stated on the web pages of Košice region, year 2016 registered a huge year-on-year jump in this region, so it was important to capture this trend for next year. Greta increase of tourism statistics (number of visitors) was achieved, which caused increase also in accommodation revenues, which grew year-on-year by more than 1 million euro to nearly 21 million. It is the result of the efforts of all subjects involved in tourism and especially positive fact for the economy of the region in general. Tourism activities can play important role in development of the region that's why it is more than need to pay attention to it.

Graph 2 Visitors' increase of accommodation establishments in Košice region

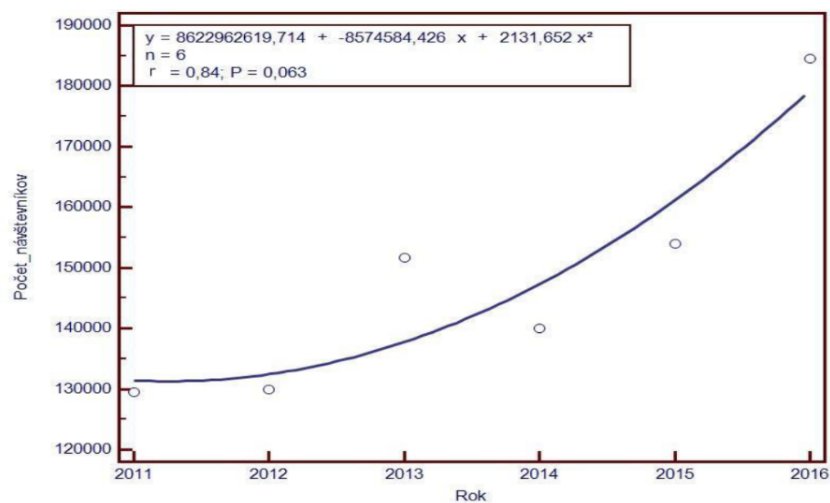


Source: Own processing up to Statistical Office of Slovak republic 2018

From the databases available from Statistical Office of Slovak Republic, it is clear that number of visitors in accommodation establishments increased in the year of European City of Sports. For the evaluation purposes, quadratic regression analysis was used. For better overview of the data flow over time more years were included into this analysis, in concrete 2011-2016.

Year 2016 is the final because European City of Sports is held only for one year. The results can be seen in graph 3 a and graph 4. Because the number of tourists in the city increased, the results concerning number of overnights increased as well. Year 2016 represented successful year with significant tourism performance. This trend was kept for next year and there is an assumption that it was not only general interest that led tourist to the city and the region but also these sport activities that have a great and high quality conditions for public since mentioned year.

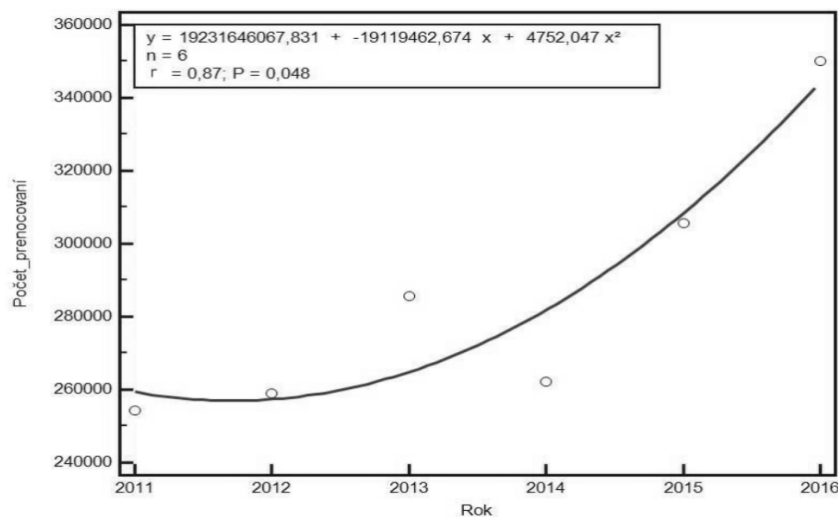
Graph 3 Quadratic regression analysis of the number of visitors in the timeframe from 2011 to 2016



Source: own processing

In case of the year 2016, it can be evident that activities of European City of Sports helped the city to increase in the number of visitors as well as overnights as can be seen in next graph. On the other hand, it is necessary to mention that year 2016 was strong in tourism performance overall the country.

Graph 4 Quadratic regression analysis of overnights in the timeframe from 2011 to 2016



Source: own processing

## Conclusion

The results of the survey show that implementation of the project brought positive reaction of the tourism participants and the number of performances in individual areas has increased. The importance in concrete details of activities is seen not only for the city as mentioned, but for the Košice region as well. These results are important for new activities as a theoretical base for next project plans in the future. Sports always played important role also in tourism sector

and this project confirms it by the results. The added value of this project for the city as well as for the region is the sustainable development and preservation of these events for the future.

The character of events can be changed and the periodicity can be adapted up to the need of the city. As the results show, in mentioned year the material as well as technical base of tourism sphere has improved a lot. The number of accommodation establishment and facilities increased. These accommodation establishment based on this fact could host more tourists. This was confirmed by evidently higher number of visitors together with the higher number of overnight spent in Košice city. Even the fact and statistics of tourism income weren't included for the purposes of this paper, but it is to possible just to mention that this increased tourism performance brought also Košice as a second largest town (city) in Slovakia has several activities that form the motives of visitors to come.

One of the important facts is that the business sphere in Košice encourages the arrival of foreign visitors the most. Motives of all tourists that visited Košice are not recorded, but from the partial statistics we know, that many tourists took part in them. Evidence of such projects and activities is important for the future. On the example of them of good practices, it is possible to adapt aims and focuses for the future plans.

The project continues and seeing, pointing out and sharing experience, result, performance but as well as threats and weaknesses might be very helpful for other cities that are willing to apply for this title of the European city of Sports in upcoming years. Based on activities of the project many cities start new era and try to keep and develop more events. As we see, the situation in the world warns that the population reduces the amount of healthy rate of movement and doing the exercise daily. By developing places, facilities, possibilities and keeping them in good conditions, we can keep at minimum local inhabitants of the city active. The interest of taking part in sports activities depends also on the sporting potential and facilities. If the city disposes by them, there is a strong assumption that people will use these possibilities at the present but also in the future. Košice fulfilled this idea. By the implementation of the European City of Sports project, it created wide scale of Sports establishments that can serve also for the purposes of the tourism sphere in the context of sport tourism.

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