

Linguistic Landscape Policy in the Eastern Slovakian/Hungarian borderland

Recommendation



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I. Macrodata

In recent decades and years, a great increase in tourism popularity was to be witnessed, which includes a boom in the number of tourists from all over the world, money spent altogether on tourism purposes as well as a great increase in the tourism industry-related services in most countries of the world. Though Asia with the Pacific region as well as the American continent can be considered to be a great beneficiary of these tendencies, Europe is still the absolute 1st tourism destination of the world with more than 600 million visitors annually, which is more than 50% of world tourism, which tripled in volumes compared to 1990 and already doubled in the first period of the 21st century. The tourism boom in previous decades has various reasons, from demographic changes (such as the appearance of Asian middle classes due to their economic liberalisation-shifts), through transportation infrastructure developments and cheap flights all over the world to a more delicate sense towards other cultures and places as a consequence of the information revolution and the internet.

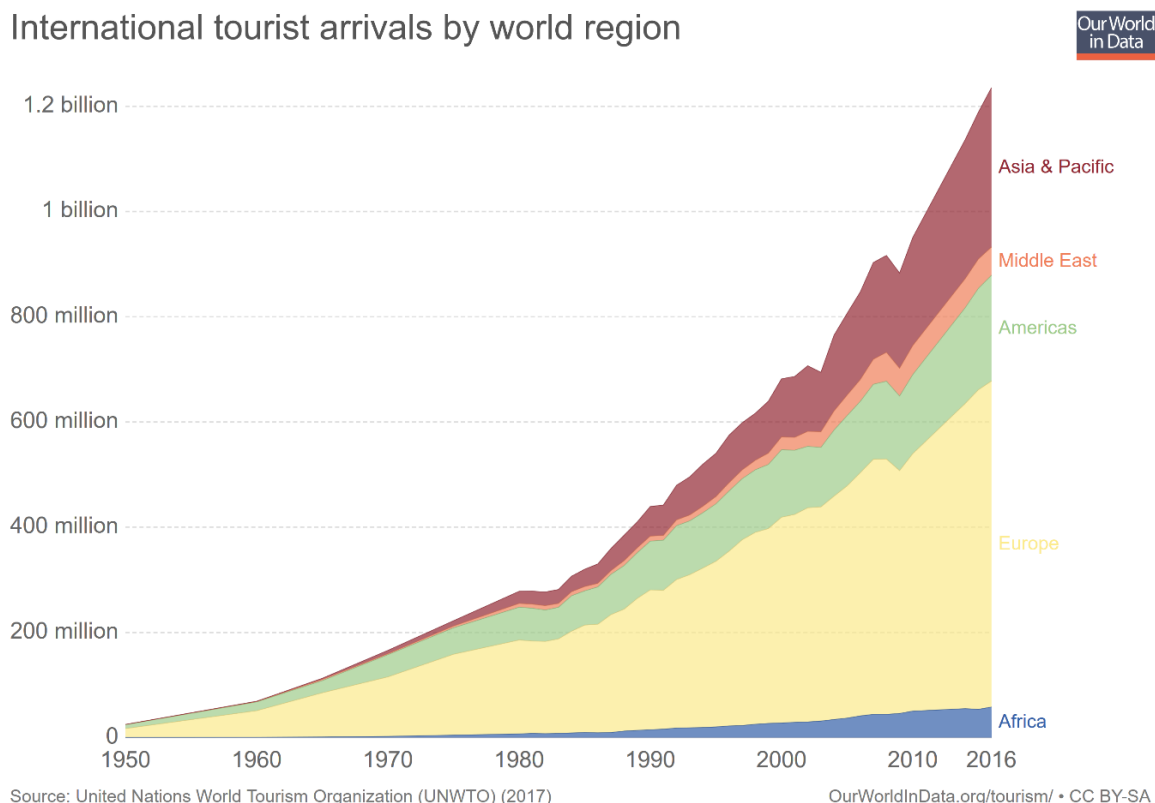
Based on these tendencies, it is clear that tourism has a great potential for any European region – especially for less developed regions as well. The newer phenomenon of overtourism and the unexploited cultural values of Europe, such as those in the Central-Eastern European region together urge a better distribution of tourism (and tourists) in Europe. With a better and more efficient exploitation of these capitals, currently disadvantageous parts of Europe may gain opportunity for another dimension of development. Tourism has a great spillover effect for any economies for at least three dimensions: 1) as a service, it can affect several aspects of economy; 2) it can be promising for economically less developed, less advantageous regions as it does not require a geographical concentration of capital 3) the volumes of tourism cyclically facilitates a progress of volume growth, thus, it has a recursive effect on itself.

Considering the importance of tourism in European countries, it is notable that the sector's share in European countries' GDP is 2 to 3 per cent on the average, even in great tourism destination countries, such as France or Italy. However, some countries with a less developed industry are more exposed to the necessity of a shift towards services and tourism. In the case of most countries on the Balkans, southern countries such as Spain, Portugal, Cyprus and Malta as well as Iceland and Estonia have a tourism GDP-share exceeding 4 per cent. This group also includes Austria with some of the most famous winter sport destinations of Europe as well as Hungary. The share of tourism is even higher among countries of the Balkans, with Montenegro on the top (with almost a quarter), followed by Croatia with almost 6000 kms of Mediterranean coastline and a 18 per cent of tourism share, followed by Albania, Greece and the Eastern European country of Bulgaria. These data show the importance of tourism for European economy as well as the potential in tourism for Central-Eastern countries.

Though the number tourists from other continents is on the rise in the past decades, it is worth mentioning that tourism also include vast volumens of inter-European and inland tourists.

1. figure: International tourist arrivals by world region. Source: Our World in Data, based on UNWTO 2017

International tourist arrivals by world region



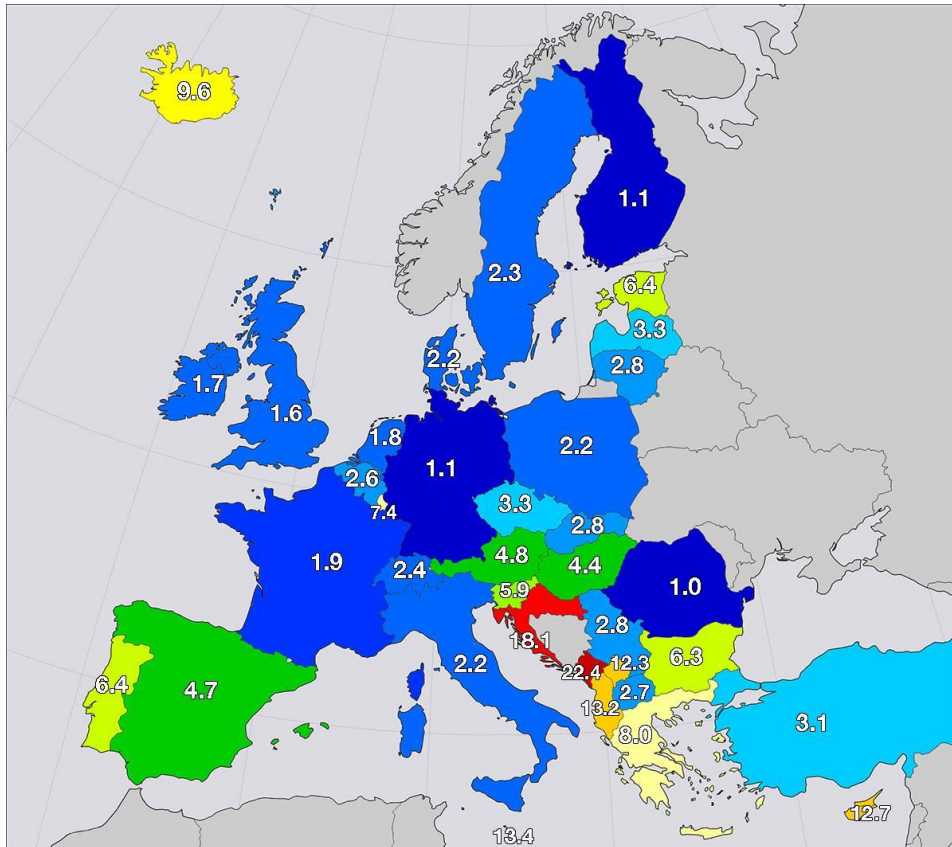
This is very much facilitated both by inland PR actions and inland tourism policies allover Europe that aim to maximise the ratio of tourists staying rather than travelling abroad, as well as is it facilitated by post-modern turism preferring experiences and sustainable way of life. This was also supplemented by effect of the latest financial crisis, that resulted in a higher ration of middle-class families to find an inland, rather than outward touristic destination as a place for their holidays. As a consequence, not only long-distance, but also inland tourism increased in the previous decades. The European map shown earlier includes both. Building on these tendencies in country border regions may cause mutually beneficial economic as well as socio-cultural outcomes for either parties.

An overall increase is to be witnessed in tourism considering not only tourism volumes, that is the number of tourists moving to a certain geographical area as holiday destination, but also the length of the stays. In Europe however the outbound tourism

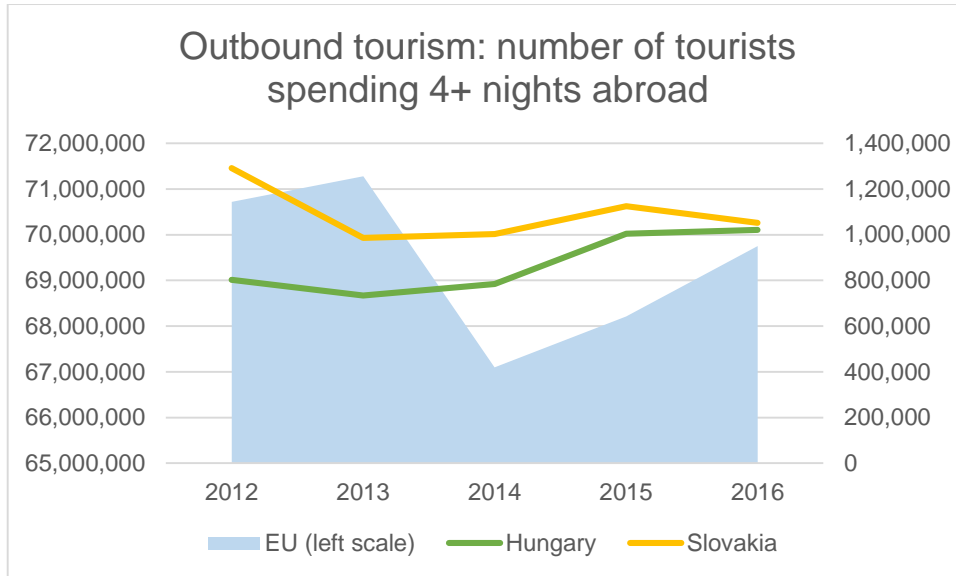
seems to have come to a saturated level in previous years. Outbound tourism, considering all 28 EU member states varies from 66 million to 71 million annual, more than 3-night moves in the previous years. This means that adding the number of those living in an EU-member state and moving abroad (let this be an EU-country, too) for any reasons for more than 3 nights takes a good 14 per cent of the European Union's population: every seventh EU citizen engages in longer tour trips annually. Though this still may not seem as a high number, this on the other hand means that it only takes 7 years on the average to have all EU citizens experiencing abroad tourism, whereas in just a few decades ago, even in most developed European countries, this was a one-

in-a-lifetime event: in the UK, every second citizen make an abroad tour trip annually, whereas in 1970, this ratio was 10, and in 1950 only 2 per cent.

2. figure: Tourism receipts in percentage of GDP, 2015. Data source: Eurostat. Figure by https://www.reddit.com/r/europe/comments/75ycxp/tourism_receipts_as_percentage_of_gdp_in_european/



3. figure: Number of tourist spending 4+ nights abroad by countries (only outbound tourism) Source: Own editing based on Eurostat



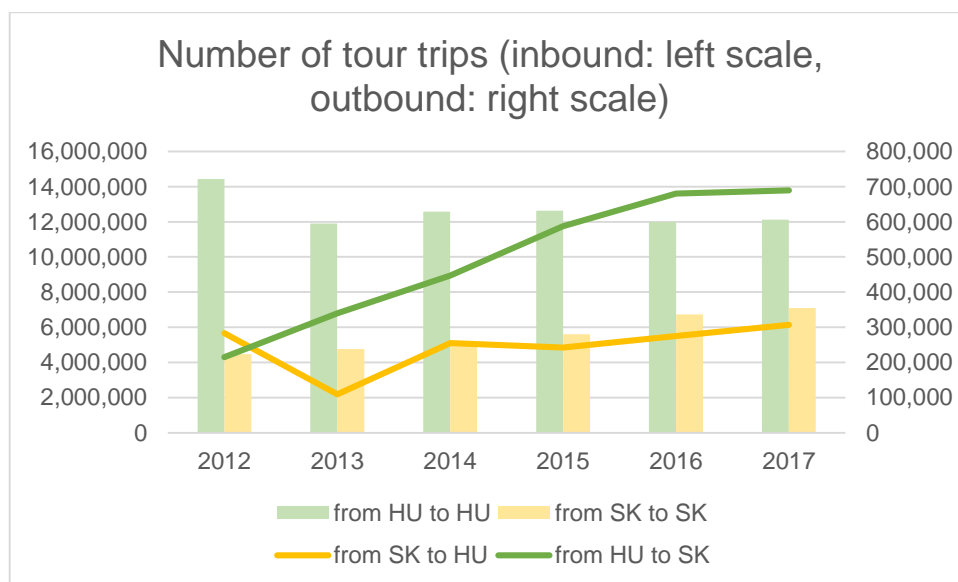
The case of Hungary and Slovakia suggests that a 9-10 per cent of the population makes a more-than 3 nights long tour trip to a foreign country annually: almost 1 million people each year. This includes various reasons for moving, such as business trips and family-related reasons as well as (and mostly) holiday trips. After the financial crisis, outward mobility seems to increase again. It is worth mentioning that besides this statistics for the time being do not include less-than 4-night long trips, tourism statistics generally in neither cases include one-day trips, which are hypothesized to not be either less common or generally less advantageous for receiving regions, having a given number of tourists. Of course, the more days a tourist spend in a region, the more likely the tourist spend on various additional services.

If we also include inbound tourism to the picture, and consider only the mutual tourism relations within and between these countries, we can see that inbound tourism in both the case of Hungary and Slovakia exceeds the number of outbound tourism-related mobility. Though this cannot be considered as a surprising outcome, the differences between the two countries in both inbound and outbound mobility can much more be. Internal tourism in Hungary in previous years has not change very much in previous years: it varies from 12 to 14 million trips annually, which is 1.2 – 1.5 times more than the population of the country. On the other hand, Slovak inbound tourism mobility, as low as it is compared to Hungary (around 5 million trips annually, which compared to its population is still lower than in Hungary) has increased in ratios a lot between year 2012 and 2017, from around 4 to around 7 million trips, so relatively speaking Slovak inbound tourism data has caught up with the Hungarian numbers. What is more, outbound tourism towards Hungary has also increased: annually more than 300.000 Slovak citizens choose to stay at least one night in Hungary. However, compared to this, the increase of Hungarian outward tourism towards Slovakia is shocking: the

numbers more than tripled in only the previous 5 years. Whereas in 2012 more people from Slovakia moved to Hungary than the other way around and only 200,000 people from Hungary visited Slovakia for at least two days, this number by 2016 and 2017 increased to almost 700,000 visits. This, compared to the Hungarian population, means that on the average, every 14th Hungarian citizen have visited their northern neighbours in both 2016 and 2017. To rephrase this to the Slovakian point of view, on the average, for every 8 Slovak citizen, there is one Hungarian visit every year. This is thus a new phenomenon to be exploited by the Slovakian tourism industry on its every level. The Slovak mobility towards Hungary is one to be built upon, too. The Slovak tourism make 2-3 per cent of the Hungarian tourist arrivals¹ in previous years.

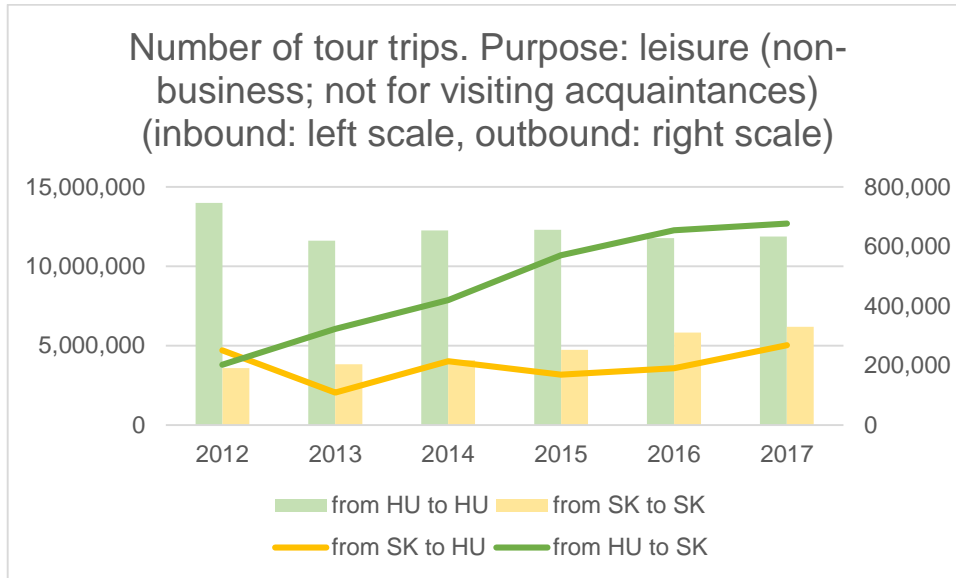
Of course, considering that neighbouring countries are analysed (with a high proportion of Hungarian minorities in Slovakia) it might be hypothesized that most visits are business trips or family visits. Based on the data provided by Eurostat, the contrary is true: almost all these visits are holiday visits in their nature. If we take into consideration the reasons for travelling (which data originates from respondents' own categorisation on the nature of their visit), it seems that numbers doesn't drop significantly: almost 700,000 Hungarian visits to Slovakia and almost 300,000 Slovakian visits to Hungary is to be recognised annually. Based on tendencies, a growing market is to be expected in following years, considering both directions.

4. figure: Number of tour trips, inbound and outbound by countries. Source: Own editing based on Eurostat



¹ 11.6 million arrivals to Hungary in 2016. Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/413238/number-of-arrivals-spent-in-short-stay-accommodation-in-hungary/>

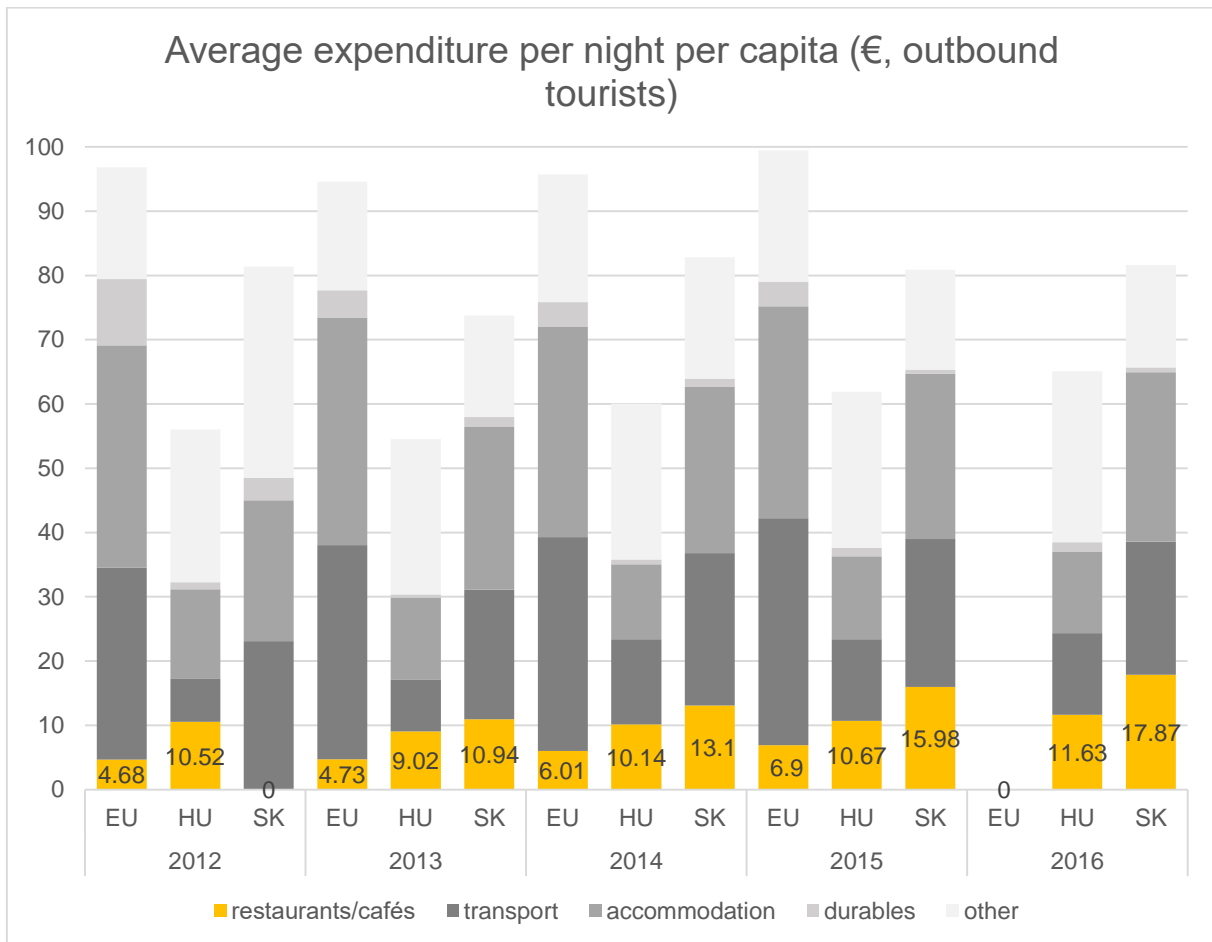
5. figure: Number of tour trips with leisure purpose; inbound and outbound by countries. Source: Own editing based on Eurostat



For tourism developments, an adequate analysis should consider not only the volumes of private and mass tourism, but also the proportion of financial resources spent on different purposes: services and material goods by tourists. Depending on the travel distance and travel length, it is obvious that the most finance-demanding goals are travel and accommodation. Tourists coming from different countries provide a great variety of tastes, styles and opportunities considering what they pay for and how they share their money between different services and goods. An average EU tourist (that is, the average tourist traveling from a member state) spends around € 100 per day for her holiday. This average value seems to increase too year by year. Compared to this amount, lower are the expenditures of both the average Hungarian and average Slovak tourist. Between-country comparisons suggest that on the average, Slovaks spend 20 per cent less, and Hungarians 30 per cent less money on their visits to a foreign country: the daily per capita value is € 80 in the former and € 70 in the latter country. This would suggest a different choice of destination, which is very much supported by the between-country comparison of relative ratios of funds spent on different tourism-related services. An average EU-citizen spend almost three times as much money on transportation than an average Hungarian citizen. This suggests that Hungarians tend to choose either nearer travel destinations and/or cheaper and lower-quality ways of transport. So is the case considering Slovak tourists, though compared to Hungary, on the average they seem to act more spending when it comes to traveling. Both Hungarians and Slovaks seem to act sparingly, when taking into account the money spent on accommodation: this can both mean different, cheaper tourist destination and lower-quality ways of accommodation.

There is only one aspect of tourism in which both Hungarian and Slovak tourists seem to overcome EU average, namely the dining-related services: restaurants and cafés. Whereas an average European spend only 5-7 Euros daily on food and beverages, Hungarians overpay this by 4 and Slovaks by 8 Euros, which thus more than doubles EU average. These data suggest that visitors from both countries are to be favoured with higher quality services when it comes to catering.

6. figure: Average per capita tourism expenditures by nationality; only outbound tourism. Source: Own editing based on Eurostat. 0 values: missing data

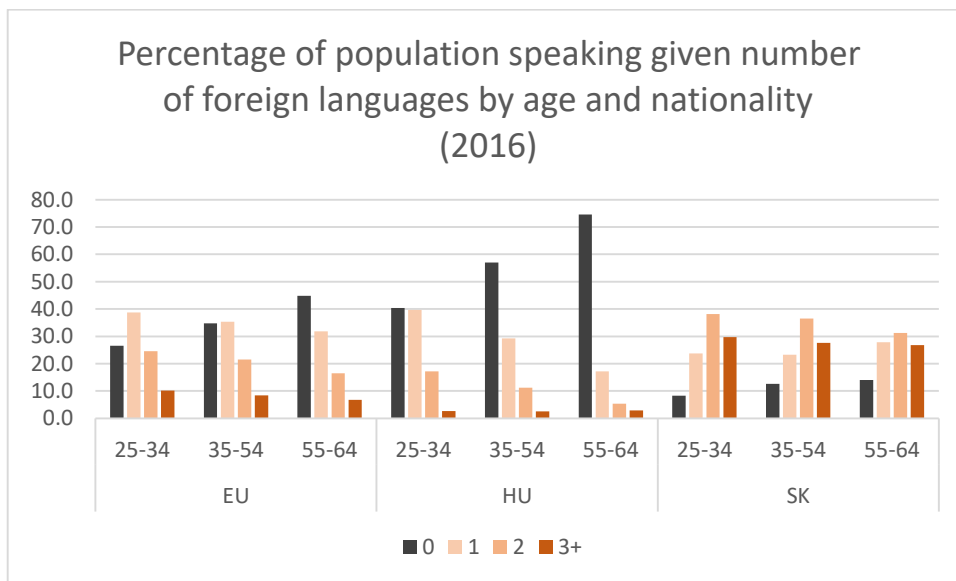


A good catering service is depending on the attention a tourist receives, which – especially in the international context – include lingual aspects. These are factors in which there is great differences between Slovaks and Hungarians. As a basis for comparison, it can be seen that a two-third of EU citizens speak at least one foreign language. This ratio somewhat decreases by age (younger generations know more languages on the average than their parents' and grandparents' generations). Almost every tenth among young generations (between 25-34 years of age) speak 3 or more foreign languages, altogether every third know more than one. On the other hand,

almost 50% of the oldest generation of Eurostat's statistic does not know any other than their native language.

Slovakia greatly outruns the ratios of multilingualism, whereas in comparison, Hungarians are much less expected to talk in other than Hungarian. Almost a third of both generations in Slovakia speaks 3 or more foreign languages. Though this might be a consequence of both the type of language (namely, Slavic) based on which it is easier to speak Czech or learn Polish as well as a great foreign-language minority (the native language of every tenth Slovak citizen is Hungarian), these altogether wouldn't serve as a complete explanation of these differences in comparison with EU averages, and especially wouldn't compared to Hungarian data: Here, even among young generations, non-speakers ratio is doubling EU averages, and almost the 80% of those above 55 years of age does not speak any language than Hungarian. A successful cross-national tourism development should necessarily be based on a higher promotion of multilingualism, which is a dimension Slovakia is way ahead of Hungary.

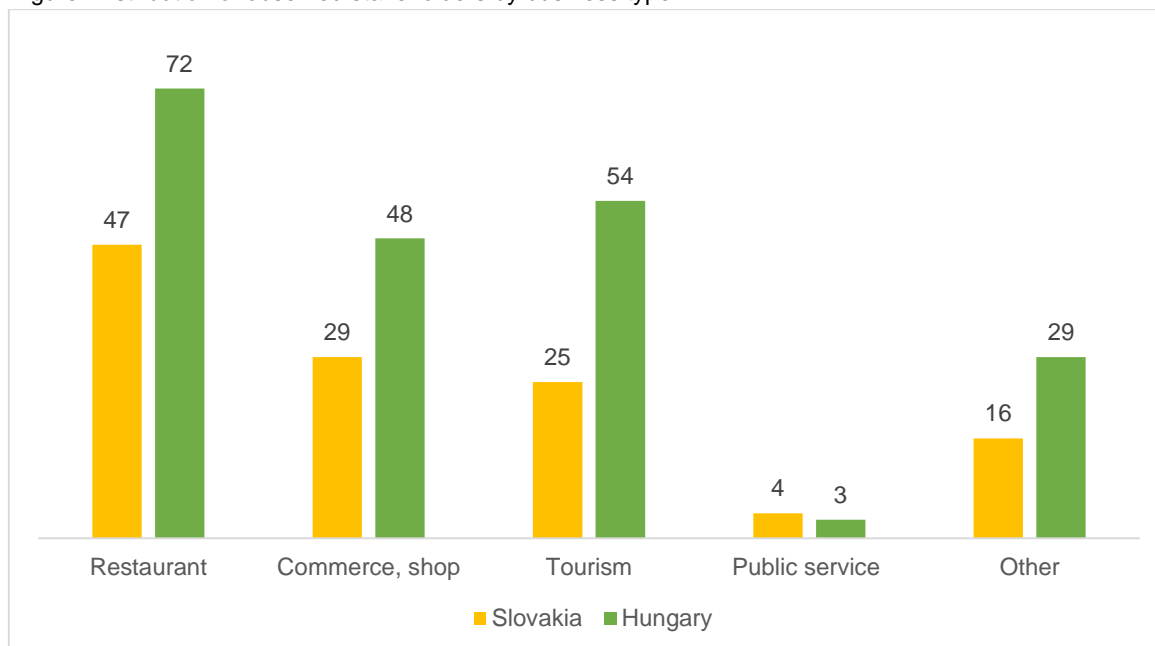
7. figure: Foreign language knowledge by nationality and age groups. Source: Own editing based on Eurostat



II. Microdata

To answer questions of multilingualism among economic stakeholders in the crossborder region of Hungary and Slovakia, we conducted an empirical qualitative fieldwork-based research among colleagues (owners) of local enterprises. The enterprises themselves were chosen among companies in either the tourist sector (let them be ones offering hospitality services - accomodation, or food services, as well as retail or related public services as long they might attract tourists). As the research was a qualitative fieldwork, we could not aim for a representative sample of all tourism-related service providers in the region. Despite of this limitation, our plan was to get data from settlements of different locations and of different sizes. Therefore, our sampling method was based on a previous structuring of regions and settlements of the area. The Hungarian-Slovakian border region however was limited to the less developed Eastern parts of the countries including the following regions (NUTS-4): HUNGARY: Putnoki, Edelényi, Szikszói, Encsi, Gömrői, Sátoraljaújhelyi, Sárospataki, Tokaji, Szerencsi. SLOVAKIA: Gelnica, Spišská Nová Ves, Rožňava, Michalovce, Sobrance, Trebišov. We also set the required size of towns to be targeted during fieldworks: we aimed for having enough data from settlements between the size of 100-999, 1000-4999 and 5000-14.999 of population. These were then complemented by cities of the region: Ózd, Kazincbarcika, Sátoraljaújhely, Miskolc, Nyíregyháza, Michalovce, Spišská Nová Ves, Košice. From these settlements, data of altogether 233 enterprises were collected during June 2018 (91 from the Slovakian and 142 from the Hungarian part) The size of this database (considering also its quality guaranteed by the qualitative methods we used) therefore was giving us the opportunity to reach reliable results during the analysis.

8. Figure: Distribution of observed stakeholders by business type



The fieldwork was conducted as follows: altogether 18 touristic destinations were visited (12 in Hungary and 6 in Slovakia). Prior to the visit, we collected all relevant locations to be

presented in the database (based on visitor frequencies). This included all sorts of touristic destinations from restaurants and cafés, hotels and shops to castles, zoos, baths and museums. This mapping process was followed by the actual fieldwork. We documented each individual location's (that is, enterprises') approach on language matters by observation (photo documentation) and short interviews with the owners or other crew members, employees. Related to the 233 locations observed, altogether 114 interviews were made (including survey data gathering, too).

It is clear from the figure, that most common organisation visited were restaurants. There were many among companies of this kind at both sides of the border, and most of them were connected to hospitality services (that is, hotels, hostels, apartments). Small shops, that can be hypothesized to attract tourists, made the second largest groups in Slovakia. Differences not necessarily indicate sampling errors, instead, they are the consequence of differences of the tourism sector between regions of the two sides of the border. However, this was not the case in Hungary, where other tourist services were the ones following restaurants considering their appearance in the sample. Other services (such as the not so directly tourism-industry, but cultural services attracting tourists: castles, museums, etc.) this latter category was the fourth in line considering their numbers in our database. A few public services were also included in the sample (transport hubs).

The linguistic landscape was therefore analysed applying both explorative methods (observation) and interviews with the organisation leaders or colleagues. A 87 percent of the 114 respondents happily accepted to join our programme targeting multilingualism in the Hungarian-Slovakian border region. Results of our research can be summarized by the following statements:

- **Low level of given foreign language speaking among tourists:** Respondents argued that though they witness a rise in tourist numbers in previous years and decades, only a very small proportion – virtually none do speak their language – that is, tourists are usually coming from abroad, and foreign tourists traveling to Slovakia do not speak Slovak whereas people traveling to Hungary does not speak Hungarian. This is maybe not a shocking finding, but it indicates that respondents are very well aware of the multilingualism problem in general.
- **Multilingualism of tourists:** However, according to respondents, annually more and more people seem to speak foreign languages in general, which are mostly English and German. Despite of this, in a very few cases did we find even English or German-language product naming. Exceptions are larger tourist destinations (castle, museum, bath, zoo), and not small local enterprises. It is of importance to note that according to responding enterprise owners or workers, a huge proportion of tourists are coming from just across the border, which means that either Slovak and Hungarian language is very much spoken by a vast number of tourists coming to this region.
- **Multilingualism of some boards:** On the exterior side of shops, restaurants and other organisations visited, it is frequent to see multilingual signs with a huge variation regarding their usage and setting (size, colour, information elements). In more than three fourth (76%) of the cases could we identify more than one use language present

regarding the exterior of these organisations. It is therefore can be said that companies realised the importance of multilingualism regarding PR and getting the visitors' attention in several cases. A strong correlation between company size and multilingual solutions could be seen too, regarding each form of shops visited.

- **Single-language documents:** Whereas exteriors in several cases did apply multilingual solutions of some kinds, this was changing when getting inside the observed organisation. In the interior side, only a very few cases were found, in which multilingual solutions were used. Regarding the simple presence of multilingualism of any kind, only a third of all organisations can said to be multilingual, and even this does not mean that multiulnguality is related to all provided services, only some signs in several cases. This shows that exterior mtilinguality is misleading and is only the façade: a tourist can have major problems finding the services that suit him or her the best.
- **Single-language staff:** Whereas the two third of all organisations, and almost half of those having exterior multilingualism, does not use any foreign language in the inside, the languages spoken by the staff members is even lower in proportions. Though xenophobia was not to be witnessed among them in relation to visitors from the other side of the border, respondents argued that it is really not usual that an employee speak different languages, let them be even only world languages, such as the English.

III. Lessons

Based on both the macro and micro level analysis, a clear picture of multilingualism in the cross-border region can be developed and an adequate planning can be taken in order to help mobilising resources for making the regional linguistic landscape more colourful and in parallel, help developing regional economy through the fostering of regional tourism. Overall outcomes of the research can be summarised as follows:

- Success trails multilingualism (or vice versa?): The more successful a company is, the more likely it is that it applies more multilingual solutions in its everyday business and in its marketing activities. This firstly indicates that those dealing with more tourists are very much aware of how important it could be to address their customers on languages they understand in preferably most aspects of service. But second, this can show an effect of the opposite direction: those enterprises that more frequently use multilingualism, may become more popular among tourists, too.
- Greater companies try not only to address guests using English, but using common visitor-sending countries' language: It is also more frequent among bigger enterprises and organisations of other kinds that they not only use national language along with English, but they also use languages of either the neighbouring countries or countries from which they expect guests. This is incredibly important from at least two reasons. First, this is the solution that make guests really feel comfortable, therefore having an effect on their wellbeing which directly trail business success for the firm. Secondly, this is important on the macro level as well, as by this, companies contribute to the crossborder connections and the subsistence of these languages as spoken foreign language among the youth besides or instead of English for instance.
- Multilingualism is used not primarily for information provision but also to raise attention: Multilingualism is rather crucial to make guests well informed about local services, rules in order for them to be able to choose services that most appeal to them, therefore, with which they'll become more satisfied. But - and this is very well practiced among service providers in the sample - multilingualism is also an efficient tool for public relations and marketing. As tourists would prefer places in which they are welcomed on their native languages, this practice in itself is a very good tool for raising potential customers' attention.
- Multilingualism is a wellbeing-increasing service: Even though it is not their native language, customers may feel welcomed and what is more, at home, if addressed on languages they speak, possibly on their native language. Not only do this raise their level of information: most services are very well ordered socially, so talking in several cases are not even necessary (for instance, considering a restaurant, entrance, finding place, ordering and paying does not require much functional communication in several cases beyond phrases of politeness). Multilingualism is not necessarily functional in this sense. Instead, welcoming guests on their native language is much more effective through its effects on customers' wellbeing.
- Young employees are scarce: From the qualitative and quantitative (survey) data gathered at throughout the fieldwork, it is clear that enterprise owners have major

troubles lately by acquiring employees, especially among young age groups. This is due to several economy-related problems, and causes a scarcity in the ratios of language-speaking staff. Therefore, we cannot expect to reach for people fluent in English, German or Spanish, not to mention Hungarian or Slovak - besides people belonging to minority groups. On the other hand, sufficient language knowledge that may come handy in everyday situations is easier to be developed building on human capacities already in place.

- Small enterprises don't recognise very well the opportunities lying in multilingualism: A major problem that turned out during the fieldwork was that owners of smaller companies does not really realise the importance lying in multilingualism. This may be due to a sort of dissociation from customers precisely because they think they cannot afford to employ multilingual solutions in their businesses and therefore, find the application of multilingualism hard and expensive to achieve. The fact that these company owners greeted happily the opportunity to be given multilingual tools for application show that we are not facing a cultural dissociation, only a low level of awareness of the possibilities.
- Visitors tend not to speak many languages except their mothertongue: Based on the interviews and observations, it became clear that a vast amount of customers does not speak the local language, so altogether, crossborder movements are really became more frequent. Besides this, it turned out that visitors mostly do not speak any foreign languages at all. The application of multilingual tools in business therefore really might have great potentials in throughout the border region, just as much in Hungary as in Slovakia.
- Tourist destinations are less frequent on the Slovak side of the region visited: The difference in the tourism sector between the Hungarian and Slovak side is notable, this is due to the differences in the surroundings, as in Slovakia, there is much less built or environmental points of interest than in the Hungarian part - as regarding the North-Eastern part of Hungary, there are some internationally notable attractions and well developed international infrastructure, too, the most frequented parts of Slovakia is not this region. Therefore, there are differences in how and what sorts of multilingual tools might be beneficial to be used on the different sides of the border.
- Partly due to previous reason, multilingualism is less frequent on the Slovak side: Multilingualism is trailed by tourism frequencies; therefore, based on the previous observation, multilingualism in general may have higher potentials on the Hungarian side - this is strengthened by the fact, that the proportions of Slovaks in the Hungarian side is much less than the ration of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia. Speaking Hungarian have thus some cultural basis on the Slovak side, but the contrary is the case in Hungary. However, it is crucial to state, that among youngsters, spoken Hungarian is very low in the Slovak side, too.

Based on the previous conclusions, lessons learnt from the empirical research can be summarised as follows:

1. Micro enterprises are those most in the need of various sources of help. A major outcome of the research was that most companies in the tourism sector were micro enterprises. Small and medium enterprises (small are ones having 10-49 employees and medium enterprises are ones having 50-249 employees) are almost non-existent in the sector, but the few ones one can find have much less problems with the language barriers. An overall finding can be put as the bigger (and in most cases, the more successful) a company is, the more it seems to deal with multilingualism. Of course, the connection between these two factors (that is, size or success and language status) can point to the opposite direction, too: a company that can duly address tourists from different countries (mostly from Hungary in Slovakia and vice versa) may expect higher level of visitor satisfaction and as a result, higher number of guests. Based on these outcomes, a better targeting of micro enterprises in the tourism industry might be necessary – on the average, the smaller the enterprise is, the better the level of contribution to multilingualism.
2. Larger companies are to be supported by the improvement of human capacities: Larger companies (we discuss so called small enterprises here, that is those having 10-49 employees) have better leverage for lingual developments (besides all sorts of development) and they are better informed considering the opportunities lying in the elimination of language barriers. Besides they are more capable of investing in translating their signs, boards, brochures and other guest-related business material, they are also better in getting information regarding the socio-economic surroundings and are better informed about the status of the market. Therefore, they are more aware of the necessary interventions needed to be taken in order for the best market performance. As we have seen however, even though they do invest in multilingual solutions, their human capacities - mainly because of external reasons, such as the language knowledge and average cultural status of the population - are much more limited. It is necessary to emphasize that most of these companies are not in the need of employees speaking different language of a very high standard. On the contrary, a relatively high guest satisfaction can be reached by knowing only a bunch of the most necessary phrases in the sector and to be able to roughly understand the guests' actual personal needs. By knowing one another's language on a basic level, guest satisfaction might be raised significantly, and thus, a more profitable business maintenance is to be expected even on the short run.
3. The improvement of service providers' understanding of the market is a core issue: Even though during the fieldwork, we did not witness xenophobia of any kinds in the border region, the lack of the historical revulsions does not mean that service providers and customers would understand one another in a great extent. This is a great problem as without a clear view on market demands, it is impossible to provide adequate services. What we could see during the fieldwork was, especially among the smallest service providers (shops, restaurants, cafés, hostels), an inadequate targeting of the target group considering both the concrete services and their marketing solutions. This, in a somewhat lower extent was to be seen at larger organisations (and in this case again, we are still talking about what is called in the literature as small enterprises).

Inadequate targeting and inadequate services may be based on cultural differences, not cultural oppositions, and therefore, a need for a better understanding of at least the target groups, but broadly speaking, the other culture as well could clearly be seen. Based on these findings, it should be stressed that the application of multilingual solutions should be based on or supplemented by a cultural connection between members of service providers and guests throughout the border region of Hungary and Slovakia.

IV. To go further

As we have seen, the importance of multilingualism in business is recognised by several business owners all over the region, however, this realisation is not yet widespread. This is why based on our findings, additional steps are necessary. On the political level, bilingualism is provided by minority laws and these laws are usually kept. Therefore, settlements with a higher proportion of specific minorities (such as Hungarians in Slovakia) apply bilingual boards on streets, public buildings, and private buildings, too. Though there might still be some differences between majorities and minorities, the importance of bilingual solutions are usually not the matter of questions. What we, based on our research would like to rise awareness about however is not a political, but a serious economic question. Providing information about private institutions on the one hand help minorities in their tasks of administration, but it furthermore can be interpreted as a gesture of the majorities to their minorities. Our point is however not the matter of gestures, but the matter of economic benefits, profits that focuses on actual and potential tourists within a region rather than the provided rights of national minorities. Therefore, we need to discuss how further steps in the application of multilingual tools in commerce and tourism can be taken regarding different aspects, senses of life.

- **Economic sense:** How could the application of multilingual solution be regarded as taking further steps towards economic benefits? This question should be split into local(regional) and national economies' dimensions. Considering the given companies' benefits, as we argued earlier, the welcoming of international tourists using their own native language highly increase their wellbeing and thus, indirectly, the frequencies of visitors/buyers/guests, as well as the amounts spent at the given shop. The service they receive both means an opportunity for them to receive more adequate information (e.g. through descriptions of food in restaurants, own currencies indicated, etc.), and both means a rise in how welcomed they feel themselves at the given place. On the other hand, this can be extrapolated to a local or regional level: having more and more companies prepared for the arrival of international tourists may increase a touristically less advantageous regions' opportunities within the service sector. Considering the national level, as a shift towards the service industry is to be witnessed in the past decades, these altogether may well trail a spillover effect (e.g. by people speaking languages, the appearance of different locations on mental maps of tourists) and contribute to arrivals of tourists in general as well.
- **Social sense:** The region we discuss can considered to be one of the socially less advantageous regions of the European Union. The crossborder partnership in the field of languages can be regarded as a common act of decreasing language barriers and make local stakeholders more prepared, therefore, more resilient for economic changes. An economic development might cause the decreasing levels of social problems, but does only if social connections are being built in parallel. By empowering local people to become more concerned about how regional tourism is working, what laws move demand and how development in the sector should be imagined, the adaptation of multilingual solutions contributes in a notable amount to the decreasing of local social problems, and in parallel, contribute largely to the building of internal and

external social connections in the region. As in the short and medium run, further increases in volumes of tourism is expected in the region regardless of multilingualism, too, the adaptation of these language-related solutions prepares local societies to a higher quality welcoming of visitors and contribute to not only service providers' wealth, but through its spillover effect, also for those in connection with them.

- **Cultural sense:** In the cultural sense, these further steps are meant to educate local people directly and indirectly as well. In the European Union, knowing various foreign language has major outcomes for one's economic and social status. Europe is multicultural and multilingual, the cultural preparedness for the ability of communication to one another is crucial. The once fighting nations of the Union should know and understand one another in order to be able to guarantee the precious peace that was achieved after centuries of warfare. Education and cultural development comes in this progress with a high level of importance. This is especially due to nations once being in opposition with one another. The application of multilingual solutions in economic organisation, such as those in tourism would allow neighbours to learn a few phrases or more in one another's language, build connections with one another, get to know each other's culture better. By having such effects, multilingualism is very precious for peace in the region of focus as well.
- **Geopolitical sense:** A shocking outcome of the research was not only the average low level of spoken foreign languages in the region, but also the fact, that young cohorts, who do speak foreign languages, and are open to one another, tend to address one another in English or German rather than trying to use those few or more phrases that they know in the other's native language. Though formerly several Hungarian people knew Slovak in the region and vice versa, nowadays spoken Slovak among Hungarians and spoken Hungarian among Slovaks are diminishing. If we look the bigger picture, at the end, both Slovak and Hungarian is spoken by less people, and English takes their places. It is very important message, especially for the disadvantageous region in focus that the more we maintain each others' culture, the more we maintain ours as well.

V. Goals

Based on the research findings regarding both macro and micro analysis (qualitative as well as quantitative), three major goals for local tourism entrepreneurs in relation to the topic of focus can be circumscribed.

1. **Rising level of awareness on tourists' demands across the crossborder region:** The first goal, built on the research outcomes would be to increase the awareness of entrepreneurs - especially among owners of micro tourist-related enterprises - regarding the various demands of actual and potential tourists all over the crossborder region. As we have seen, especially in some parts of the region, tourism services are scarce and those existing are not at all well prepared for the rising level of mass tourism. This way, entrepreneurs may not be able to exploit benefits from it as tourism can develop weakly. By rising the level of entrepreneurs' awareness on market needs, they

will be able to more adequately target their potential customers' needs. A lot of development is to be witnessed all over the region in the tourism industry, but without the entrepreneurs being fully prepared for the welcoming of the tourists, they would not be able to realise benefits from these development projects.

2. Rising levels of multilingualism: Rise in numbers of usage of Slovakian language in Hungary; Rise in numbers of usage in Hungarian language in Slovakia, ENG, GER, etc. We aim to increase the number of those applying multilingual solutions in their businesses. The outcomes of our research was shocking in the sense that enterprises which applied multilingual solutions were performing much better in literally every aspects that were analysed during the research. Multilingual companies had higher ratios of foreign visitors, more income, they provided higher quality services in general, and a higher prestige could be estimated for these shops. Of course, causation ties between multilingualism and service quality may point to both directions, but this does not cast shadow on the fact that multilingual places are generally significantly higher in quality in its every visited aspect and in both countries. We have seen that a two third of the visited shops (considering exterior) can be called monolingual. Our aim is to decrease this level to at least 50 per cent in the medium term and with more in the long. This, as indicated below should not only concern exterior.
 - a. boards: One of the most important element of attracting customers is the facade of the shops, restaurants, and other, tourism-related services. However, as we have noticed, 64 percent of analysed enterprises in Hungary and 69 percent of analysed enterprises in Slovakia only use exterior boards with info indicated only using one language. This means that not only English-language information is provided for visitors. The shop facade and shop windows should indicate that visitors from abroad is very much welcomed in the given shop, and it is a goal to raise the number of the multilingual shop facades.
 - b. service info: It turned out during the research, that even in some of those cases with multilingual shop facades, interior multilingualism is missing. From the functional perspective, it would be requirable to inform visitors from different countries regarding services of the given shop. Therefore, we would like to contribute to this, most functional aspect of multilingualism by providing online tools for the translation of different services. By raising the number of those shops, restaurants, hotels and other organisations welcoming tourists, these solutions contribute largely to guests' wellbeing and overall tourism service quality all over the region.
 - c. staff: Though multilingual exterior signs' ratio is very low on both sides of the border in the region, and the application of interior multilingual solutions is even less, the less developed aspect of multilingualism concerns the spoken languages of staff. It is to be emphasized that what is required here is not a fluent speaking of various European languages, rather, a basic knowledge of the staff of languages spoken by actual and potential international guests of theirs. With a few expressions and phrases, and a basic level understanding of neighbouring language, along with the will of using visitors' language instead of

international languages such as English, visitors' wellbeing can be raised in a great extent

3. Rising economic benefits for the crossborder region (increasing tourism). As a result of these interventions, the goal is to make local and regional tourism-related service providers (shop owners, restaurants, guesthouses, tourist attraction owners) better prepared for the welcoming of ever-increasing numbers of international visitors. By these interventions, the goal is on the macro level to increase the prosperity of the regions' economic, and to develop a more interconnected social life across the border. The economic changes may very well trail development in the cultural and social world of both Slovakia and Hungary.

Linguistic Landscape Policy in the Eastern Slovakian/Hungarian borderland

Recommendation

Made by the Interreg V-A Slovakia Hungary Cross Border Cooperation Programme in the “Linguistic Landscape: innovative methodologies strengthening bilingualism in the Hungarian-Slovakian border region” project



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