

Tokaj Wine Region Historic Cultural Landscape: the challenge to gather territorial actors for a sustainable development and to increase awareness of their role in tourism

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Abstract

The Tokaj Wine Region Historic Cultural Landscape was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2002. The World Heritage property and its buffer zone cover 27 municipalities. The question of the representation and the coordination of the actors was always an important matter in the last 50 years. Since the site's inscription on the World Heritage list, the concepts of heritage, development and tourism step by step became a priority approach. This paper shows how important to position and to study the inhabitant-worker-tourist triangulation in a living and evolving cultural landscape as the Tokaj Wine Region. The failure due to a lack of communication among actors especially the local population, demonstrates the objectives and the system-level of the management. The attributes of the site illustrate the rich and diverse cultural and natural heritage created by human interaction. The conservation, the promotion and the use of the cultural and natural values pose the question concerning the sustainable development of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The article presents the actual strategies and the management to achieve greater balance and sustainable development between stakeholders and local population in tourism and heritage projects.

Keywords: *historic cultural landscape, tourism, sustainability, local population, wine production, territorial actors*

Short Description of the Site

The cultural landscape of Tokaj is located in the North-East of Hungary along Bodrog river and at the confluence of Bodrog and Tisza Rivers. The Tokaj Wine Region was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2002 and since 2012 it is the only Historic Cultural Landscape in the country. The World Heritage property (13.245 hectare) and its buffer zone (74.869 hectare) cover 27 municipalities with a population of 72,5 thousand people, entrepreneurs, manufacturers and wine-growers. The Region represents a living history of viticulture since 1561, when the first documentation reported the production of the "aszú" wine in the area surrounded by three Sátor-hegy, the three main delimitation point of the

World Heritage property. The legal base of delimitation of the wine region is one of the first in the world which dates back to 1737, when Charles VI established the area as a closed wine region. [UNESCO-WHC, 2002] The combination of topographic, environmental and climatic conditions of Tokaj Wine Region with its volcanic rocks, wetlands is creating a unique microclimate that helps out the creation of the “noble rote” (*Botrytis cinerea*), which is one of the element, that makes so special the taste of the “Tokaj wine”. The oak-woods in the area is extremely favourable for grape cultivation and specialized wine production. The region has a unique network of cellars, with more than 3000 cellars where we can observe the creation of the “cladosprium cellare” fungus living thanks to the wine and alcohol vapour. The symbiosis creates an ideal microclimate to stock and produce wine. These mentioned features create an extremely unique form of coexistence with traditional land as well as human interactions, cultural, historical, spirituality expressions.

10% of the World Heritage Site is covered by vineyards, more than 8000 ha is under natural protection and almost the whole area is under the protection of the Natura 2000 network.

Sustainability and role in tourism

Today the Tokaj Wine Region Nonprofit LLC is in charge of the management of the World Heritage Site, which is the operative body of the Tokaj Wine Region Development Council. The Development Council is assigned by the Law for Regional Development to initiate, coordinate and develop activities in the Tokaj Wine Region.

The management plan of Tokaj Wine Region Historic Cultural Landscape concentrate on the following three key words in order to boost the sustainable development in the region: restitution, maintenance and utilization. 27 municipalities, 7500 wine growers, 400 wine cellars, 17000 parcels, stakeholders and other actors are located on the World Heritage Site. The coordination of these actors is a real challenge. The appropriate way to involve the institutions located in Tokaj Wine Region is a very important work, one of the priorities of the management. It is necessary to create a mechanism which integrates and cooperates among all actors in the region. The institutional structure in Hungary is getting more centralised, therefore, the local municipalities has less and less power which make more difficult for the operative organizations and stakeholders to take actions in the region. The museums, who are taking a big part in the mediation of the Outstanding Universal Values are getting more divided and centralised. In consequence, it is important to focus on the World Heritage Site and on the Historic Landscape itself and to create an efficient mechanism among actors. The World Heritage Site, as a living cultural landscape “express a long and intimate relationship between peoples and their natural environment”, for this reason, taking into consideration the point of view of local people is necessary. World

heritage experts have the role to open their eyes and to raise awareness about Tokaj Wine Region's World Heritage status. It is important to engage inhabitants to act for the universal values. The Tokaj Wine Region Development Council encourages locals to share local stories and anecdotes about their home so that they can feel, that they count for the management of the site.

The Council, this year, updates the values in the frame of an Inventory research of the World Heritage Site to see the evolution of the cultural, natural, architectural aspects with the objective to develop projects based on the rich values of the region. The distinction between national and regional level depending on the governance structure. The inventory in the Tokaj Wine Region, at a local level appear to be less completed. In order to start up the project, the Council plan to involve local people and students in the identification, protection who are enthusiast about collecting and making researches about historical, natural and cultural values in the region. The collected values will be used in projects in order to protect cultural heritage and to promote sustainable development based on world heritage values and to create added value for the sites and for the tourist. The council will work with schools and colleges and teach children of the Universal Values of the site. In the elementary school in Tokaj children can choose World Heritage lesson, where they learn and exchange about cultural and natural values in school or in the frame of an excursion. The next generation could be defined as communicators of important key messages of the World Heritage Site. In 2015 in Tokaj, a World Heritage Museum has been inaugurated, which exhibit the World Heritage Wine Regions. The museum tries to involve schools in the activity to show the unique area for inhabitants as well as for tourists.

Table 1: Number of tourist arrivals [KSH, 2014]

Year	Nb of domestic tourist arrivals	Nb of foreign tourist arrivals	Nb of domestic overnight stays	Nb of foreign overnight stays
2012	49 767	16 170	116 224	34 738
2013	50 700	16 494	109 536	36 674
2014	65 357	24 571	146 063	54 998

Concerning the question of tourism, the Tokaj Wine Region is popular of the wine tourism, become a destination for wine lovers. In 2014, 65 357 domestic tourists and 24 671 foreign tourists arrived in the region. The statistics shows us, that the majority of tourists stays for 1-3 days in the department of the World Heritage Site. Comparing the figures from 2012 the trips has been decreased by 6% each year, although the number of overnight stays and

tourist arrivals in tourist accommodation increased each year by 1%-2%. Following these statistics, it is important to note, that in the region mainly domestic tourism dominate.

The perception of the World Heritage label is different from the point of view of the inhabitants and from the tourists, they are not in the same logic as a result it is important to make them aware of their "role" in the development of (sustainable) tourism. In this process, the future generation is one of the most important target group in a long-term, it has a strong influence on the tourism and identity of the site in the future. In the Tokaj Wine Region the population has been decreased by 20% from 1980. Previous developments show the incoherence between innovations, which increased the competitiveness of the region in various sectors, but block the long term projects. In consequence, it is more difficult to envisage the future.

Tokaj Wine Region is an attractive area for the wine, cultural and active-tourism. Understanding tourism and communicating with visitors strengthen the strategies of the preservation and development of the local and universal values. The relationship between tourism and heritage, tourism and development question must be considered in further actions. The study of the Competitive marketing strategy produced by The Tokaj Region Convention and Visitors Bureau in 2011, emphasised their objectives on the wine tourism, as a main "product" of the region. [TDM, 2011] The study highlight that tourists stay 2,1 days in the region, although 2,6 days in the country. As a consequence, in order to extend the duration of the stay, the marketing strategy finds it important to create attractions and product packages to a wide range of target tourist groups. These packages must involve gastronomical, cultural and sport activities. The purpose is also to create cohesion between tourism and the progressive replacement, evolution of the vineyard technique which could be an important influence on the sustainable tourism. Tokaj association of the Wine Routes promotes the wine and the gastronomy of the region by involving wine makers, local growers, artisan and handcrafting associations. Four main routes are existing: Harslevelu, Furmint, Yellow Muscat, Zeta (variety of the grapes).

In Hungary, concerning the main aspects and motivation of the domestic tourists, 1,4%-1,6% of tourists, though only 0,6% of foreign tourist travel for wine and culinary tourism. The statistics concludes that the wine and culinary reasons are not part of the primary decision of tourists to travel, but it is part of the traveling "experience" and holidays attractions. For example: culinary festival, cellar visit, wine tasting. The focus on creating attractions involving activities in connection with wine and gastronomy is an important point of view in the wine region. [TDM, 2011]

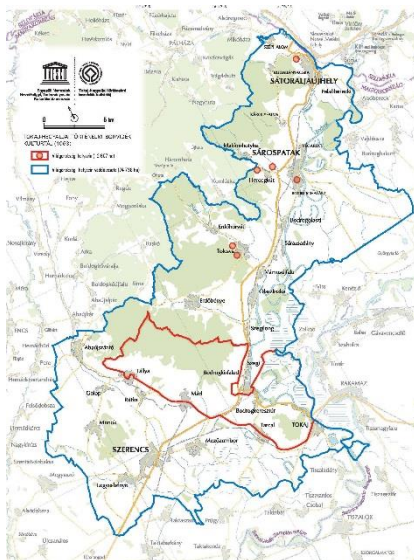


Figure 1 : World Heritage property and its buffer zone

Summary

The issue around the "inhabitant - tourist - worker" triangulation in the Tokaj Wine Region historic cultural landscape is an everyday question. Raising awareness between the numerous actors towards a sustainable approach is a challenge. The three main actors of the World Heritage Site tend to act together for the (sustainable) development of tourism even though their requirements are often different and contrary in regard to the preservation of common values. The tourism appears to be quite seasonal in the area, starts from May and lasts until November. The period presents an important resource for the rest of the year for numerous tourism structures. The research on the notion of cultural landscape is by definition shows a conceptual and interdisciplinary approach interrogating the interconnection of cultural, natural, social, economic and political context of the everyday life in the UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Literature

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