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## **TOURIST BORDER CROSSING POINTS AS ELEMENTS OF TRANS BORDER COOPERATION IN THE POLISH CARPATHIANS**

*Abstract:* In the following thesis there was concisely described various ways of the border crossing in the Polish Carpathians. There were presented the possibilities of the border classification. Particular attention was paid to so called places of the border crossing points on the tourist route, the boarder infrastructure, which in assumption is to serve especially people, who practice qualified tourism. There was also paid attention to necessity of development the Carpathian trans border cooperation and the role of the tourist border crossing points in this undertaking.

*Key words:* the tourist border crossing points, places of the border crossing points on the tourist route

### **Introduction**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1993 in consequence of the Czech-Slovakia separation, there came into existence two new countries – the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Polish-Slovakian border on the whole runs through the one of the most attractive European tourist region – the Carpathians. Poland and Slovakia are countries with the longest border (539 kilometers) and among our seven neighboring countries, Slovakia takes a second place if length of the border is taken into account. In western part of the Carpathians, Poland has also dozens of kilometers' fragment of the border with the Czech Republic and in eastern part twice longer fragment of the border with Ukraine (from 1991). These geo politician facilities are excellent base to mutual promoting process and tourism development in the near – border areas.

On 18<sup>th</sup> August 1994 in Warsaw, between governments of the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Slovakia there was signed trans border cooperation's agreement. Nearly two years later Polish – Slovakian Intergovernmental Commission Trans border Cooperation came into existence. Specified activity of Slovakian commission's members are notified from 1999 since its chairman became a Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Slovakia – Jan Figel (Nemcok 2000).

The main purpose of the following thesis in support with actual legal acts and information concerning the border infrastructure is to approach towards the possibilities of near the border and trans border tourism practice in southern part of Poland, with particular attention consideration taken to eastern part of the Polish Carpathians.

The Carpathian Mountains range within the territory of many countries. The Western Carpathians are situated on the territory of Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria. The Eastern Carpathians spread out over Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania, whereas the Southern Carpathians are situated in Romania. They are cut across by many borders, which make separated historic-geographical regions with the same or similar nature, culture and even history.

For years, within a framework of the trans border cooperation, there exists activity management, which the main goal is a development and strengthening neighbor's relations between societies, which live across two parts of the border. Unquestionable fact is that the border must be indispensably connected with extension, modernization and adjustment according to tourists, who are interested in the border infrastructure, with a particular attention to the border crossing points (including the tourist border crossing points and places of the border crossing on the tourist route).

### **Types of the border crossing points in the Polish Carpathians**

For the last a few years a lot of new border crossing points and places of border crossing came into existence to enable swift border crossing.

According to sorts of the border movement, the border crossing points in the Polish Carpathians can be divided in the following way:

- generally available (Ukraine, Slovakia, the Czech Republic),
- destined exclusively for the small border movement (Slovakia, the Czech Republic),
- destined exclusively for the simplified border movement (Ukraine),
- places of the crossing border on the tourist route (Slovakia),
- tourist (Slovakia, the Czech Republic).

According to sorts of the border crossing points they can be divided in the following way:

- road,
- railway,
- tourist.

Particular procedure for crossing of the country border is a small border movement. On the Carpathian area it refers to citizens of Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. According to bilateral agreements among those countries, inhabitants and people registered in belt of a small border movement can cross the border with easy procedure (Dz.U. z 1997 r., Nr 127, poz. 827).

The belt of a small border movement (concerns border with Slovakia and the Czech Republic) has about 30 km of width. This includes both sides of the border areas – each one 15 km of width. This contains provinces adjacent to the country border and (on the whole) those provinces, which were divided by 15 kilometers of belt. Bearing in mind development of mutual cooperation between

societies living on the opposite sides of the border, in particular situations there can be included to the belt of a small border movement provinces, which are situated in distance more than 15 km (Dz.U. z 1996 r., Nr 46, poz. 207; Dz.U. z 1997 r., Nr 127, poz. 827).

According to Agreement, made in Moscow on 14<sup>th</sup> May in 1985, between Government of the Republic of Poland Country and Government of the Social Union Republic of Russia concerning simplified procedure of the border crossing by citizens inhabited in near the border areas, polish and Ukrainian citizens can cross the border in simplified border crossing procedure.

This form of the border crossing is notified especially on the Late Holiday and on the day after. The Border Guard correlates each time with appropriate Ukrainian service concerning detailed rules of the border crossing during those special days.

From 28<sup>th</sup> October till 4<sup>th</sup> November citizens of Poland and Ukraine can cross the border to visit relatives' graves. The border movement is possible then on the base of documents, which enable to cross the border and certificates, which confirm graves' possession on the territory of neighboring country. They are issued by Polish Red Cross or Red Half Moon (Dz.U. z 1986 r., Nr 24, poz. 114; <http://www.biosg.z.pl>).

### The tourist border crossing points

Tourists, who wander in mountains, can cross the Slovakian and the Czech Republic border in specified places and on the base of specified rules. On the Slovakian border this procedure takes place on generally available border crossing points in Szczawnica or so called places of the border crossing points on the tourist route, also called international tourist border crossing points, whereas on the Czech Republic border this procedure takes place on the road border crossing points destined for the tourism movement.

All those places can be assigned to the group of the tourist border crossing points in dependence on sort of the border movement, which is a consequence of their mediation. In this way they were classified by polish Border Guard (<http://www.sg.gov.pl>). Concept *the tourist border crossing points*, which occurs in the thesis ought to be understood in the above way.

Very important feature of the tourist border crossing points is their various availability during the year. In most cases (73%)<sup>1</sup> points are open through the whole year, and open hours depend on season of the year and length of the day. Only seven of them serves seasonably (only during the summer time).

Nearly 84.6% of all tourist border crossing points are places of the border crossing points on the tourist route (Tab.1). Particular attention should be paid to this form because of the fact that this method of the border crossing is particularly attractive to people, who practice different forms of qualified tourism (for example foot, bicycle or ski tourism).

One should bear in mind that in this case a definition "the border crossing point" often refers to the only specified number of border sign, where one have permission

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<sup>1</sup> Own calculations on the base of: <http://sg.gov.pl>.

Tab.1. The tourist border crossing points<sup>2</sup> in the Polish Carpathians according to meso-regions and administrative division in 2001

R.n.	Mountain group	Crossing point	Province	District	Community
At the Slovakian border					
1.	The Bieszczady Mts.	Roztoki Górne-Ruske Sedlo	podkarpackie	leski	Cisna
2.		Balnica-Osadne	podkarpackie	sanocki	Komańcza
3.	The Low. Beskid Mts	Czeremcha-Certizne	podkarpackie	krośnieński	Dukla
4.		Ożenna-Nizna Polianka	podkarpackie	jasielski	Krempna
5.		Wysowa Zdrój-Regetovka	małopolskie	gorlicki	Uście Gorlickie
6.	The Beskid Sądecki Mts.	Leluchów-Circ	małopolskie	nowosądecki	Muszyna
7.	The Pieniny Mts.	Jaworki-Litmanova	małopolskie	nowotarski	Szczawnica
8.		Jaworki-Stranany	małopolskie	nowotarski	Szczawnica
9.		Szlachtowa-Velky Lipnik	małopolskie	nowotarski	Szczawnica
10.		Szczawnica-Lesnica	małopolskie	nowotarski	Szczawnica
11.		Szczawnica-Lesnica	małopolskie	nowotarski	Szczawnica
12.		Sromowce Niżne-Cerweny Klastor	małopolskie	nowotarski	Czorsztyn
13.	The Spisko-Gubałowskie Foothills	Kacwin-Velka Frankowa	małopolskie	nowotarski	Łapsze Niżne
14.	The Tatras	Rysy-Rysy	małopolskie	Tatra	Bukowina Tatrzańska
15.	The Beskid Żywiecki Mts.	Przywarówka-Oravska Polhora	małopolskie	nowotarski	Lipnica
16.		Babia Góra-Babia Hora	małopolskie	nowotarski	Lipnica
17.		Zawoja-Czatoża-Oravska Polhora	małopolskie	suski	Zawoja
18.		Głuchaczki-Przeł. Jałowiecka	Silesia	żywiecki	Koszarawa
19.		Pilsko-Pilsko	Silesia	żywiecki	Jeleśnia
20.		Przeł. Przysłop-Stara Bystrica	Silesia	żywiecki	Ujsoły
21.		Wielka Racza-Velka Raca	Silesia	żywiecki	Rajcza
22.		Górka Gomułka-Skalite Serafinov	Silesia	żywiecki	Rajcza
23.	The Silesian Beskid Mts.	Jaworzynka-Cerne	Silesia	cieszyński	Istebna
At the Czech Republic border					
24.		Jaworzynka-Hrcava	Silesia	cieszyński	Istebna
25.		Stożek-Velky Stożek	Silesia	cieszyński	Vistula
26.		Wielka Czantoria-Nydek	Silesia	cieszyński	Vistula

Source: Own calculations on the base of Border Guard's data

<sup>2</sup> According to list of border crossing points, sort of movement permitted by crossing points and time of its open, which is enclosure to announcement of the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration from 15th November 1999 in the matter of border crossing point's declaration, sort of movement permitted through those crossing points and their open time: pos. 11 they are generally available

to cross the border. That kind of points exist on Polish-Slovakian border on base of the border crossing's agreement between the Government of Poland and Government of the Slovakia Republic on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1999 in Trsten. Above agreement also regards to the border crossing on the tourist route, which cuts country border and the rules of the country border crossing excluding border crossing points.

Information concerning the possibilities of the border crossing one can find from the numbers of border signs, which list is included in appropriate announcement (M.P. z 1999 r., Nr 37, poz. 568) and also from appropriate boards, which are located in both sides of the border, and additionally information boards located by suitable tourist organizations (from polish side PTTK). Roads and paths, which direct to border crossing point are usually indicated with colors appropriate to approach route.

During the border crossing time, boundary briefing (which requires valid passport) and shorten custom briefing is realized by functionaries of Border Guard. It is important that border can be crossed even if during indicated hours functionary is absent. One should bear in mind that the border control can start later on the territory visited by tourists. There are no time limitations regarding return to territory of given country, and one can return throughout each international border crossing points (one is not able to return throughout border crossing points with small or easy border movement).

Places of the border crossing points on the tourist routes are intended for international movement, and list of countries, which citizens can move there, was inserted in appropriate announcement (M.P.z 1999 r., Nr 37, poz. 568). In this way border crossing in specific places was possible to make for people, who have no visa obligation in Poland and Slovakia.

This kind of liberal way of the border crossing brings some warnings. On the territory of foreign country one can have only personal effects and the tourist equipment, which ought to be taken in return way. It is strictly forbidden to bring on the territory of foreign country excise merchandises (alcohol, cigarettes) except for some personal effects.

At present, in the Polish Carpathians there exist 26 tourist border crossing points (including 23 on Slovakian border and 3 on the Czech Republic border). Half of them is situated on the territory of Małopolska district, over one third (34.6%) on the territory of Silesia province and barely 15.4% in Podkarpackie province. Among eleven districts, where the tourist border crossing points came into existence, particular attention should be paid to nowotarski province (34.6% of the tourist border crossing points) and also żywiecki (19.2%) and cieszyński (15.4%). In the rest of districts there exist only one border crossing point. There should be remarked that on the territory of those three districts there exist 69.2% of all tourist border crossing points in the Polish Carpathians. Taking into consideration more specified administrative division, among eighteen districts, on the first place there is situated Szczawnica, where five tourist border crossing points exist (19.2%). On the territory of Lipnica, Rajcza, Istebna and Wisła there exist

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tourist border crossing points, pos. 13,14 and 15 they are road border crossing points destined for tourism movement, and the rest of them are border crossing points on tourist route (M.P. z 1999 r., Nr 37, poz. 568).

two tourist border crossing points (each for 7.7%) and in the rest of districts there exist one tourist border crossing point (Tab.1).

According to the fact that tourists do not use in practice administrative division, but names of selected mountain groups, it is more suitably to present the tourist border crossing points in the sphere of physic-geographical mezzo regions. The accumulation this kind of places is situated in the Beskid Żywiecki Mts. (8) and the Pieniny Mts. (6), somewhat less in the Silesian Beskid Mts. (4), the Low Beskid Mts. (3) and the Bieszczady Mts. (2), and the least of all in the Beskid Sądecki Mts. (1), the Tatras (1) and the Spisko-Gubałowskie Foothills (1) (Tab. 1). Percent share of above regions in reference to general amount of tourist border crossing points in the Polish Carpathians presents the following graph (Fig. 1).

Taking into consideration sort of the tourist movement, at present in the Polish Carpathians one can select six types of the tourist border crossing points:

– for pedestrians, cyclists and skiers,

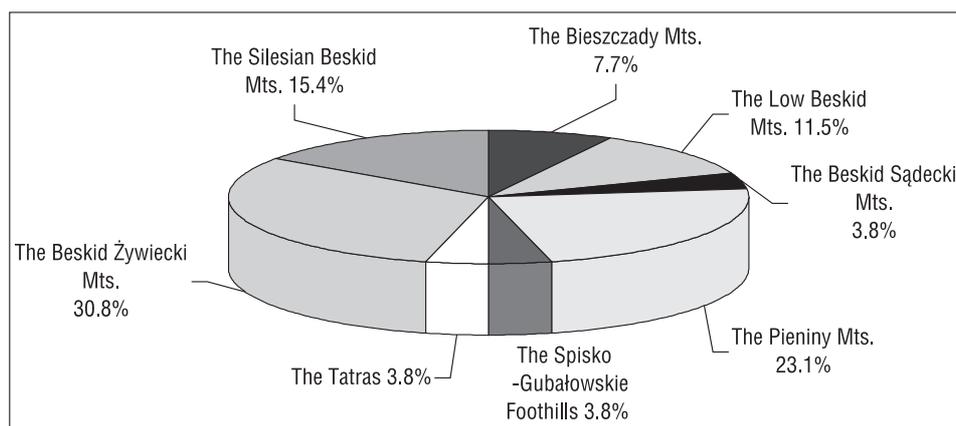


Fig. 1 Tourist border crossing points in individual mezzo regions of the Polish Carpathians

Source: Own calculations on the base of Border Guard's data

- for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled tourists,
- for pedestrians, cyclists, disabled tourists and skiers,
- for pedestrians and skiers,
- for pedestrians and cyclists,
- for pedestrians.

The highest number of the tourist border crossing points is destined for pedestrians, cyclists and skiers (26.9%) and for pedestrians, cyclists, disabled tourists and skiers (23.1%). Somewhat less number of the tourist border crossing points is destined for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled tourists (15.4%) and also for pedestrians and

skiers (15.4%). The least of all tourist border crossing points is destined for pedestrians and cyclists (11.5%) and destined for pedestrians (7.7%) (Fig. 3).

All tourist border crossing points are open to pedestrians, 77% for cyclists, 65% for skiers and 38% for disabled tourists (Fig. 2). Access to specified crossing points for individual tourist groups presents the following table (Tab. 2).

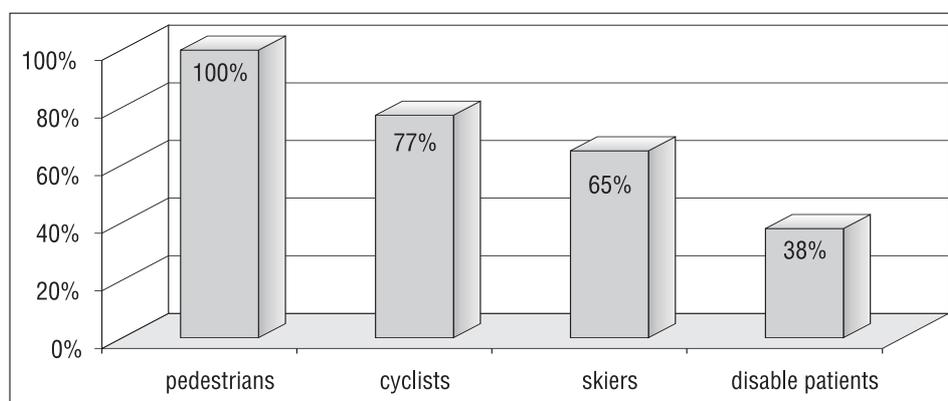


Fig. 2 Access of the tourist border crossing points for individual tourist groups in the Polish Carpathians in 2001

Source: Own calculations on the base of Border Guard's data

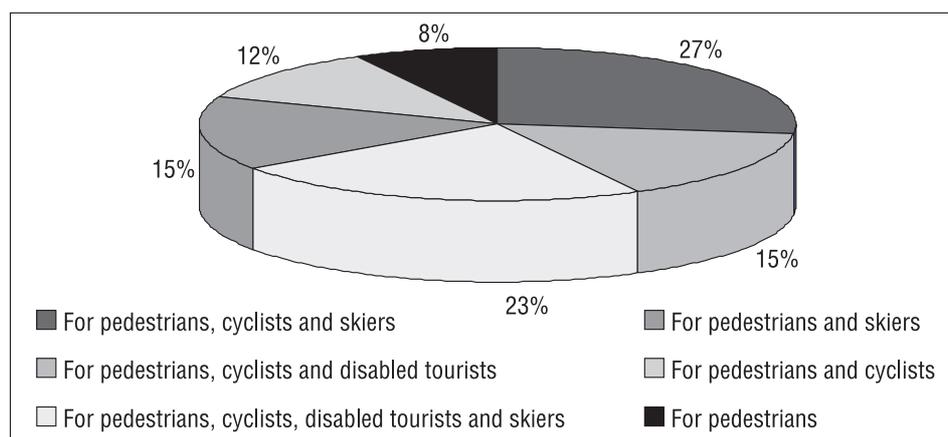


Fig. 3 Sorts of the tourist movement allowed on the tourist border crossing points in the Polish Carpathians in 2001

Source: Own calculations on the base of Border Guard's data

Tab.2. The tourist border crossing points in the Polish Carpathians according to meso-regions and their access for individual tourist groups in 2000

R.n.	Mountain group	Crossing point	Access for:			
			Pedestrians	Skiers	Cyclists	Disabled tourists
At the Slovakian border						
1.	The Bieszczady Mts.	Roztoki Górne-Ruske Sedlo	1		1	1
2.		Balnica-Osadne	1		1	
3.	The Low. Beskid Mts	Czeremcha-Certizne	1		1	1
4.		Ożenna-Nizna Polianka	1		1	1
5.		Wysowa Zdrój-Regetovka	1	1	1	
6.	The Beskid Sądecki Mts.	Leluchów-Circ	1	1	1	1
7.	The Pieniny Mts.	Jaworki-Litmanova	1	1	1	1
8.		Jaworki-Stranany	1	1		
9.		Szlachtowa-Velky Lipnik	1	1	1	
10.		Szczawnica-Lesnica	1	1	1	1
11.		Szczawnica-Lesnica	1	1	1	1
12.		Sromowce Niżne-Cerweny Klastor	1		1	1
13.	The Spisko -Gubałowskie Foothills	Kacwin-Velka Frankowa	1		1	
14.	The Tatra Mts.	Rysy-Rysy	1			
15.	The Beskid Żywiecki Mts.	Przywarówka-Oravska Polhora	1	1	1	1
16.		Babia Góra-Babia Hora	1	1		
17.		Zawoja-Czatoża-Oravska Polhora	1	1	1	
18.		Głuchaczki-Przeł Jałowiecka	1		1	
19.		Piłsko-Piłsko	1	1	1	
20.		Przeł. Przysłop-Stara Bystrica	1	1		
21.		Wielka Racza-Velka Raca	1	1	1	
22.		Górka Gomułka-Skalite Serafinov	1	1	1	
23.	The Beskid Śląski Mts.	Jaworzynka-Cerne	1			
At the Czech Republic border						
24.		Jaworzynka-Hrcava	1	1	1	1
25.		Stożek-Velky Stożek	1	1	1	
26.		Wielka Czantoria-Nydek	1	1		
			26	17	20	10
			100%	65%	77%	38%

Source: Own calculations on the base of Border Guard's data

## Summary

Tourist border crossing points filled a very significant gap within the possibilities of the border crossing in the Polish Carpathians. "Forever" tourists have always fascinated picturesque areas of neighboring countries. At first thought it seemed to be at hand reaching, just close abroad, but in reality the way was long and tiresome, often one was forced to walk through additional ways wasting altitude and time, what could have been spent in the mountains.

People, who practiced qualified tourism (walk, cycle, ski) received a great facilitation if movement across the border zone is taken into account, because from 1999 on the Polish – Slovakian border tourist routes' crossing points came to existence. This facilitation enables citizens of 35 countries to cross the border (where technical possibility exists) and disabled tourists too. They are open through the whole year or during the tourist season and they are very attractive because of the fact that they give the possibility to legal border crossing even if officer of the Border Guard's is absent.

There should be emphasized the fact that they play a significant role in development of the trans border cooperation. Improvement of availability to chosen mountain groups situated on the both border sides will enlarge tourist area and tourist attraction of the regions. They also contribute to popularization tourist regions of neighboring countries and in consequence to building better mutual acceptance and trust among societies from different nations. Satisfactory knowledge about various societies in respect of ethnical and religious issues, which inhabit Carpathians, contribute to building the positive neighbor – relations.

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*Umowa między Rzeczpospolitą Polską a Republiką Słowacką o małym ruchu granicznym, sporządzona w Zakopanem dnia 6 grudnia 1996 r., Dz. U. Nr 127, poz. 827.*

## **Turystyczne przejścia graniczne jako element współpracy transgranicznej w Karpatach Polskich**

### **Streszczenie**

W opracowaniu krótko scharakteryzowano różne tryby przekraczania granicy Polski w Karpatach. Przedstawiono możliwości klasyfikowania przejść granicznych. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na tzw. miejsca przekraczania granicy na szlaku turystycznym, jako infrastrukturę graniczną, która w założeniu ma służyć szczególnie osobom uprawiającym turystykę kwalifikowaną. Zwrócono również uwagę na potrzebę rozwijania współpracy transgranicznej w Karpatach oraz na rolę, jaką w tym przedsięwzięciu mogą odgrywać turystyczne przejścia graniczne.

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