

# THE PERSPECTIVES OF DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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The theme of this thesis is the Development Prospects of International Airports in Slovakia. The text contains key facts and description of airport infrastructure, problem analysis, objectives and plans for the future airport and developed perspectives of international airports in 2010.

Keywords: Airport, perspective, development, analysis, transport

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Air transport is one of the fastest and most dynamically developing fields of transport. Since it officially started writing the history of aviation, aerospace and within the air transport showed a development that is unprecedented in other areas. Air transport gradually becomes for people a common transportation that provides comfort and speed. Air transport is currently the favourite way of getting from one place to another regardless of distance in the world. However Slovakia did not record any significant aviation expansion. The air is also related to an operation of airports. The functioning issues of airports in the Slovak Republic are analyzed in this work. Airports can be generally understood as a place where travellers meet in services entities that participate in the so-called aerospace process that takes place at the airport. It is the airport where the carriage of passengers, baggage, cargo etc. begins and ends.

The airport is nowadays to be understood as entities that have a significant economic impact on areas where they are located. The importance of the airport plays a major role. Airport is also there to ensure the availability of jobs in the region. It is possible to say that airports are currently in the necessary infrastructure to support growth in the region, whether in economic or social terms. In addition to an overview of economic, operational, geographical and political information is processed airport characteristics present problems that airports are struggling, survey plans, goals and objectives for the future.

The work is to summarize and classify data and facts on the basis of the analysis of the outlook of the development of the international airports in Slovakia and also to describe airports with international status and their structure of utilization and performance.

## 2 GENERAL INFORMATION ON AIRPORTS

Six major international airports were formerly part of the subsidized organization Bratislava Slovak Airports Administration. In 2004, in accordance with the Act.136/2004 Z.z. on airport companies made the transition allowance organization of joint stock companies which create Airport MR Stefanik - Airport Bratislava, OJSC (BTS) and Airport Kosice - Airport Kosice,

OJSC with 100% state owned. The assets of these joint-stock companies became so well. Invest their assets. The privatization of the ownership of the airports has changed the structure later. [1]

In 2005 the airport company's share ownership structure of a mixed state and local governments - Poprad - Tatry, Zilina Airport company, as Sliač Airport, as Airport and Piestany. [1]

The paper collected basic data on individual airports in Slovakia, with international status in 2010. These are the airports: Bratislava, Kosice, Poprad - Tatry, Zilina, Sliač and Piestany. Currently, the status of the international airport claim in Nitra and Prievidza too.

The thesis presents information on the ownership structure and organizational structure, description of the basic data for each airport, which include geographical, geometric and operational data. There is also a basic description of the infrastructure and portfolio of services that are provided by individual airports.

## 3 ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATE OF INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS IN SLOVAKIA

The text presents the current state of international airports in Slovakia. Each airport has its problems, which are in the same period of time to resolve, but it will take longer than generally assumed. Slovakia is currently in such economic and political position which may change the situation whether for better or worse any time.

Based on the foregoing it follows those smaller airports in Slovakia serve number of passengers which do not even come close to the numbers reported by the European Commission for the category of airports of regional significance. [1]

Also hampering the development of element technology is outdated and the state of airport infrastructure, which currently has continually rebuilding and modernizing, but this process will take place sometime during which a fact that may hinder the development. [1]

There are prepared plans and objectives which define the vision of modernization and expansion of airport infrastructure and conditions for cooperation with air carriers. Increasing the number of passengers and the use of all services provided by airports would lead to fulfilling the primary objective of any business entity which is a thriving business.

The text contains projected state subsidy which is the majority shareholder so it is the airports in Bratislava and Poprad Žilina accommodation and Sliač. [1]

The intensity of civil air traffic or number of the passengers does not give positive self-financing conditions for the airport. If the state would like to keep the status of the existing airports it would have to continue to finance them. Analysis assumes that the number of passengers in the coming years will not increase to the extent that state support would be able to completely stop and airports would be able to act completely independently without any interference. [1]

#### **4 FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS IN SLOVAKIA**

The future prospects for development of international airports in Slovakia are discussed in two ways. The first is a comparison of road and rail transport, the advantages and disadvantages of selected modes of transport. For comparison of modes and its competitive position in the transport market different analytical methods are used that allow comparisons between modes of transport based on selected criteria, which can be quantitatively expressed. [2]

Criteria used for assessing the status of modes of transport in the transport market are collected from different circuits so that the resulting assessment is the most complex. The most common criteria are a frequency of services, transport time, capacity, price, comfort and travel below. [2]

In terms of transport time air transport seems to be the most effective. But in terms of comfort air transport is roughly the same as rail or road transport. The big disadvantage compared to rail transport is the cost of the fare which automatically increases according to the shorter time between the purchase of tickets and the actual departure. The difference between these prices can sometimes be 100 to 400% and it is a significant influence on the choice of transport ever since. I think that people will opt for a longer total transport time which can save you money. It is different when the journey is to be required in the shortest possible time from one location to another. In that case the price is not important and the best alternative to travel is the air transport. Transport by car is also not the cheapest matter since its price ranges from 110 to 130 Euro. If more than one passenger is to travel the prices are still more acceptable than the price of a ticket. [4] [5]

Regarding the frequency of travel connections the best option is car traffic which is not limited. The frequency of the connection of the rail service is acceptable too as between Košice and Bratislava operates 17 train connections. Air transport is most the limited which has only two scheduled flights per day. These two scheduled flights operate only during working days. [4][5]

The result of this research was to find the best option which appears to be the train. Rail transport appears to be the longest in terms of time but offers sufficient comfort for a good price, high transport capacity and an acceptable level in frequency of services.

Air transport appears to be the least preferred type of transport for the population of Slovakia.

It might be caused by the size of the country which is not enormous in the way that it will be unable to travel the country by car or train. People of Slovakia are accustomed to travel by train or road transport. The use of air transport in Slovak Republic is not much as common as in the other countries where air travel is preferred over the other types of above mentioned transports.

SWOT analysis is regarded as a means of strategic planning used to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a situation where there is an organization with the aim of achieving certain targets. [3]

The work includes a SWOT analysis of international airports in Slovakia which contains a description of the strengths and weaknesses so data that can positively or negatively affect its operation and further development.

The strength of the airports in Bratislava, Piešťany and Žilina is their good geographical position. The location enables these airports to be economically more stable, to increase the standard of living in the region and also good accessibility and connectivity of the airports.

This positively affects the demands for travel and the air transport itself.

In the case of Košice Airport the considered strengths of the company are the foreign investment into the airport which enabled the airport to achieve long-term positive result. Among the strengths of Poprad - Tatry belong mainly its location with its excellent conditions for development of tourism in the country. Sliač airport has the advantage of proximity to the spa and the presence of the army.

The weaknesses of all the airports are the current state of airport infrastructure which is gradually renovated and modernized but it is still below the standard that should be obvious to the airport with international airport status.

Another problem that hinders the possible development of airports and causes the absence of a permanent and stable air carrier is creating more attractive schedules. [1]

Factors that negatively affect the development of the air transport are various. These factors can be whether ecological or geographical. For example Sliač Airport is located in a protected zone and in addition in between two cities. Airport Košice and so Bratislava Airport is again built near residential areas. The SWOT analyses opportunities as well as threats.

As an opportunity in this sense we consider the opportunities that airports can use to their advantage and

thus enhance their employability in the future. Such opportunities are, e.g. negotiations with various carriers to open the lines, various programs - air shows, festivals that could attract potential customers and passengers.

The risks can include factors that adversely affect the "life" to the airport. For instance there is still an enormous lack of funds, absence or lack of interest of investors, the adverse effects of economic crisis, and the competition on the market.

On the basis of SWOT analysis can be stated that the Slovak international airports fell far from what is generally expected from the airport with such a statute.

The reality is that these airports such as Kosice airport after privatization rather will not profit. It is not meant to be the technical or infrastructural status of the airport which causes it rather than actual control of management, its behaviour, conduct, support, and hence offer flights and services that are not able to attract customers. If this attitude does not change the airport Košice Airport in the future will not be able to prosper despite the current financial profit the airport has gained.

Airports as Poprad - High Tatras, Piestany and Zilina have more perspective to develop charter traffic which could provide a route from place to place in services such as flight-schools, sightseeing flights, and flights by private aircrafts exc.

Introduction of scheduled air service to these airports in the future seems to be very unlikely as these airports are located in sub regions. These sub regions are dominated by other major airports.

E.g. Piestany Airport falls within an area that "belongs" not only to Bratislava Airport but especially to the Viennese airport. These airports are small regional airports that are already long in debt and without financial aids would not be able to provide any services. The interest of investors about these airports is also very low. [1]

Airport Sliač is seen as a military airport which mainly serves the needs of the Army of the SR therefore operations of civil aviation or cargo will not carry out in such an extent that the airport would experience positives in growth.

Bratislava Airport has got in spite of adverse situations the chance for further operation in the position of a sort of secondary airport which would serve as Vienna's „reserve“ airport in case of full occupancy in diverting minor flights.

Despite the fact that Bratislava Airport is the main airport of the Slovak Republic with high amount of investments, the airport will not be able to compete with the Vienna in the future.

## 5 CONCLUSION

Processing the collected information related to this theme should offer an overview about the real state of international airports in Slovakia. The main sources of information were the official websites of airports, articles

related to the topic of the thesis, various forums and material developed by MDVRR SR.

Airports have a significant economic and social importance. This significance goes beyond the main function of the airport which is the provision of air transport accessibility. Airports also represent the basic infrastructure to support regional, economic and social development.

The current state of international airports in Slovakia does not meet the standard that airports with the status of international airport should have.

Inhibiting factors which negatively affect the development are mainly the lack of investment, high costs and very competitive air transport.

Despite all the negatives the effort of individual operators and the state is to increase the competitiveness of the airports by modernization and reconstruction of the airport's layout, facilities and equipment, but also through the expansion of service offerings and quality improvements. Internal or better said national air travel will not form a major part of the operation of airports. This is mainly caused by the geographical characteristics of Slovakia. The use of road and rail transport is more preferred by people of Slovakia. By using road and rail transport we can achieve the same distance as by air transport at significantly lower cost although for a longer duration of time.

The opportunities for the development of airports are in carrying out regular international services although the flight offers are currently very weak. The most likely development in the implementation of scheduled international air links, freight and non-scheduled services from among the airports mentioned above have only Bratislava Airport. This development is based on cooperation with Vienna's Schwechat airport. There are opportunities for the rest of the airports for the implementation of the charter and sightseeing flights, flights with private aircrafts, educational flights and training

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