



Journal of Geography, Politics and Society

2016, 6(4), 39–44

DOI 10.4467/24512249JG.16.026.5813

CHANGES IN TOURIST TRAFFIC FROM POLAND TO TURKEY ON THE BACKGROUND OF OTHER MAJOR DIRECTIONS OF TRAVEL

Emin Atasoy (1), Jan A. Wendt (2)

(1) Faculty of Education, Uludağ Üniversitesi, 16059 Nilüfer, Bursa, Turkey,
e-mail: geograf1969@gmail.com (corresponding author)

(2) Institute of Geography, University of Gdańsk, Bażyńskiego 4, 80-309 Gdańsk, Poland,
e-mail: jan.wendt@ug.edu.pl

Citation

Atasoy E., Wendt J.A., 2016, Changes in tourist traffic from Poland to Turkey on the background of other major directions of travel, *Journal of Geography, Politics and Society*, 6(4), 39–44.

Abstract

The development of outbound tourism from Poland to Turkey after 2010 can be divided into three periods. The first one is connected with a stable increase in the number of departures. The second period includes the growth in the number of trips which served as a replacement for vacations in Greece, Egypt or Tunisia. The last period started in 2014, when the number of visitors rapidly declined as the result of terrorist attacks and the military coup in Turkey. Due to concerns about the security after numerous terrorist attacks, the traditional destinations of Polish tourism such as France and Morocco lost their popularity. There was the inexorable decline in trust toward countries such as Egypt and in particular Turkey, where the numbers of tourists fell by 63% after the terrorist attacks and military coup. In first half of 2015 we have about 209.2 thous. Polish tourists in Turkey, and in 2016, the same time, only 82.7 thous. what gives decrease of nearly 60.5%. Undoubtedly, the tightening of internal policies after the unsuccessful military coup will deepen the decline in interest in Turkey by Polish visitors.

Key words

Tourism, Polish tourists, Turkey, tourist destination, destabilization, terrorist.

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest developing services sector nowadays. Its size and the directions of travelling of tourists are dependent mainly on two factors, the economic situation in Poland and the destination country as well as tourist assets and the security of tourism destinations. In the years 2005–2015 all these factors experienced and still keep experiencing significant changes that affect the decisions of Polish tourists. During this period the major events

which had an impact on tourist behaviour and changes in the chosen destinations were the global economic crisis in 2008–2010 and events of the Arab Spring which affected among others countries such as Egypt and Tunisia – two important tourism destinations from the Polish tourist industry's point of view. Other external factors determining the directions of Polish tourist movement were the economic crisis in Greece and Spain as well as the accession to

the European Union by Poland in 2004 and in subsequent years by countries such as Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia. An increase in the number of terrorist attacks in Europe, which took place in Belgium, France, Germany or the UK, is also worth mentioning since it caused a decline in the number of tourists visiting these countries to some extent.

The development of outbound tourism from Poland to Turkey after 2010 can be divided into three periods. The first one is connected with a stable increase in the number of departures. The second period includes the growth in the number of trips which served as a replacement for vacations in Greece, Egypt or Tunisia. The last period started in 2014, when the number of visitors rapidly declined as the result of terrorist attacks and the military coup in Turkey.

Due to the nature of tourism research, it faces a number of problems. One of the most serious problems is related to the definition of tourism. This is not only theoretical but also methodological issue. Depending on the accepted definition, we can estimate the size of tourism in a broader or narrower terms. The broad definition describes tourism as all forms of movement that are not related to work or the change of the place of residence, in home country and abroad. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) states that tourism includes all activities of people who travel and live outside their everyday environment for leisure, business or other purposes for no longer than a year without a break. So we can consider a tourist as a person who stays in a given place at least one day and uses at least one night's accommodation.

The definition of the UNWTO from 1993 (Wendt, 2011) was useful for research of economists and common use by politicians and tour operators, and was designed primarily for statistical purposes. While working on the issue of tourism, the UNWTO's aim was to create a definition that can be used across the world. It had to be simple, clear and consistent with applicable international standards. Over the years many definitions of tourism have been created by representatives of various scientific disciplines, resulting in a number of established definitions of this term coming from different research approaches (Zhakupov et al., 2015).

The research uses the classical research methods in the study of tourist movement. The work is based on the statistical analysis of the size of tourist movement and analysis of the impact of political events on tourism in Greece and Turkey. The analysis uses data presenting tourist traffic from the „Turystyka” for the years 2014–2015 and data presenting the

Polish charter flights to Turkey released in October 2016 by the Civil Aviation Authority in Poland (CAA).

2. Polish tourist movement in 2010–2015

Because of the difficulties in finding out the motives for tourist departures, the analysis of changes in the size of Polish leisure tourist movements leads to a problem of naming their main destinations. Among over ten million Polish citizens who spent the 2010–2015 period abroad, many of them travelled for professional reasons, to work or to visit relatives and friends (Tab. 1). However, as already stated above, it is difficult to separate a stay with the family from a traditional tourist trip, which is understood as departures for leisure purposes in a rented accommodation that has to be paid for. Therefore, to determine the main directions it has been assumed that they are the ones which include over 57% stays (average for travel motivation in 2015) which are motivated by reasons described in the research as “holidays, leisure, recreation”. Data was collected with use of the survey research methods, which leads to large differences in assessment of the size of tourist movements. Practically, it is impossible to fully estimate this size in the cases of countries like Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, which can be easily accessed by a private car without any border control that would allow to find out the exact number of travellers crossing the border. However, these numbers are easily attainable in the case of air transport, especially charter flights, which naturally include mainly outbound tourism.

In the second group of countries there are the destinations serving as a traditional labour market for Poles after the accession of Poland to the European Union. These are mainly the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Benelux and the Scandinavian countries. The third group consists of Polish neighbours. Countries which share their borders with Poland can be further divided into two additional categories if the difficulty in crossing the border is taken into consideration. The first one includes countries of the Schengen area, in which it is difficult to obtain data on the cross-border movement size as well as on the motives for travelling, some of which are shopping trips. Lithuania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Germany share this trait. In the research concerning changes in the tourist movement size in Germany and Lithuania the additional problem is related to the large number of Poles visiting their relatives and friends (Tab. 1). In the case of Germany, it is also the number of people who work in the local market. Countries belonging to the second group of Polish

Tab. 1. Foreign trips of Poles (aged over 14) in thousand in 2015

Countries	Total	Holidays, leisure, recreation	Business	Visiting friends, relatives	Other	Holidays / Total (%)
Total	10 906.4	6 239.2	800.5	3 338.0	528.6	57
Main tourists destination – over 57% travels for holidays, leisure and recreation						
Italy	879.0	666.7	22.9	103.4	86.0	76
Croatia	632.3	604.6	4.5	11.4	11.8	96
Greece	545.6	522.3	6.5	10.6	6.2	96
Spain	499.5	410.4	16.7	57.1	15.4	82
Austria	375.0	244.1	30.4	82.5	18.1	65
Turkey	369.8	355.7	5.2	2.6	6.2	96
France	356.9	209.4	53.4	68.2	25.9	59
Hungary	243.3	220.4	11.3	5.7	5.9	91
Egypt	240.1	239.4	0.8	0	0	100
Bulgaria	184.0	172.5	8.3	1.5	1.6	94
Portugal	88.0	71.4	3.9	5.5	7.3	81
Tunisia	79.3	78.7	0	0.6	0	99
Travel for all other purpose – less than 57% travels for holidays, leisure and recreation						
United Kingdom	855.5	115.5	47.8	671.0	21.2	14
Sweden	248.5	105.4	21.2	115.0	6.8	42
Norway	243.3	97.6	22.3	118.5	5.0	40
Netherlands	177.9	49.1	27.7	93.3	7.9	28
Ireland	152.2	16.1	4.6	130.4	1.1	11
United States	123.3	32.2	17.8	56.1	17.3	26
Belgium	109.1	20.8	31.2	53.1	4.1	19
Denmark	95.0	35.7	17.0	37.2	5.2	38
Switzerland	69.1	23.1	7.5	37.7	0.8	33
Poland neighbouring countries, travels for shopping, work, visit relatives and others						
Germany	2 198.7	451.7	278.3	1 357.0	111.8	21
Czech Republic	584.7	487.4	39.9	39.9	17.6	83
Slovakia	354.1	296.0	8.5	27.4	22.3	84
Lithuania	150.1	94.8	13.0	16.8	25.5	63
Ukraine	145.5	30.2	9.5	90.9	14.8	21
Belarus	72.0	24.5	4.8	36.8	5.9	34
Russia	69.3	23.2	14.7	24.9	6.5	33

Source: Own elaboration based on: Turystyka... (2015, 2016).

neighbours are Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. It is also impossible to precisely determine the size of tourist movement in these countries because of the difficulties in division between the trips aimed to visit family (Polish in Ukraine, Belarus), to do shopping or even those related to the illegal transport of items having high excise tax in Poland (cigarettes, alcohol, fuel).

Data presented in table 1, concerning 10 141.1 thousand tourists, presents 93% of the whole foreign tourist movement of Poles. Other tourism destinations popular among Polish tourists such as Kenya, Morocco, Thailand or Balkans make up to 7% of

tourist flow, which estimates 765.3 thousand departures. This data shows that twelve countries were the main destinations chosen by Polish tourists in 2015. Ten the most visited countries were chosen as the holiday destinations by 180 thousand Poles. Countries which reached these top ranks were Italy, Croatia, Greece, Spain, Austria, Turkey, France, Hungary, Egypt and Bulgaria. In the other two destinations, Portugal and Tunisia, the number of visits reached respectively 90 and 80 thousand in 2015.

In the years 2010–2015 the number of foreign departures from Poland increased by 53%, but this growth was even higher when the period

2011–2015 was taken into account. During that time an increase of 73% was achieved. In the group of countries chosen for analysis of the changes in the size of tourist movement, the biggest growth was experienced by Hungary. This is mainly due to the relatively small number of tourists in 2011, and an increase of 143 thousand people in 2015 compared to 2011 accounted for more than two-fold increase in the number of visitors. The second and third positions in terms of the highest percentage growth were reached respectively by France (238%) and Italy (220%), traditional travel destinations of Polish tourists. Such a high position is due to a well-known cultural and historical attractiveness. Additionally, Italy is also a popular pilgrimage destination of Poles. The next spot in this ranking was taken by Bulgaria, a new destination in Polish tourism, known by many Polish citizens from the period before 1989, when holiday trips to Bulgaria were one of the most popular within communist states of the Eastern Bloc. The fifth spot was reached by Greece, which despite the economic crisis, or possibly because of it, experienced a return of Polish tourists. The economic situation of Greece was the main factor determining a decrease in hotel prices.

An unchanging high position in terms of percentage increase in the number of Polish tourists was taken by Croatia (181%). It is the country with fantastic environmental attractions located by a warm sea, which can be reached from southern Poland even within one day. Croatia has relatively low prices, a language easy to understand and is close to Poland in terms of its religion and culture. The next four countries are a classic winter tourism destination – Austria, summer destinations – Spain and Turkey, as well as a year-round popular country – Egypt. However, the last one, as the only one out of the top ten tourism destinations in Polish outbound tourism, reported a 20% decrease in the number of Polish visitors (Tab. 2).

3. Charter flights from Poland

Different data for the size of tourist movement from Poland is supplied by the Civil Aviation Authority (UCL), which offers detailed statistics of flights, including charter flights – the most interesting information in the research concerning changes in tourist movement, what makes this data the most reliable. As it can be clearly seen (Tab. 3) charter flights are served by the airports in Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Egypt, and Spain – the main directions of Polish tourist movement.

Despite excellent natural conditions, rich cultural heritage as well as well-developed marketing, which plays a crucial role in conquering the tourist market (Herman, Wendt, 2011), in the years of 2010–2015 there is a clearly visible significant decline in the number of charter flight passengers at the airports in Egypt and Monastir in Tunisia, in contrast to a dynamic growth in the Canary Islands and Turkey. Among the Spanish airports a decrease was recorded only in Palma de Mallorca (Wendt et al., 2016). An increase in tourist flow from Poland also took place in Israel, Bulgaria, Morocco and Greece. A similar growth of Polish tourist movement was in Croatia (Wendt, 2012), however in their case car transport played a significantly more important role (Wiskulski, 2013; Wendt, Wiskulski, 2015).

Airports that served the charter traffic smaller than 50 thousand were Gran Canarias, Funchal, Malaga and Barcelona. In the years 2010–2015 passenger charter traffic from Poland increased from 3.108 million (2010) to 3.663 million (2014), despite the economic crisis in Europe. However, it experienced a slight decrease to a level of 3.657 million in 2015. Data of the Civil Aviation Authority (UCL) concerning the information about air transport of Polish tourists using charter flights clearly shows (Tab. 4) that Greece takes the first place, followed up by Turkey and Spain. Egypt takes the fourth place despite a fall in the numbers of tourists. The top fifth rank belongs to Bulgaria.

Tab. 2. Main destinations of Polish tourist movement in 2010–2015 in thousand

Countries	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015 / 2010 (%)
Bulgaria	100	100	200	150	162.2	184.0	184
Greece	300	300	250	550	470.7	545.6	182
Croatia	300	350	350	800	570.3	632.3	211
Turkey	250	350	300	400	360.4	369.8	148
Egypt	300	300	350	200	236.4	240.1	80
Total	7 100	6 300	10 000	12 950	10 243.0	10 906.0	154

Source: own elaboration based on: Janczak, Patelak (2014); Turystyka... (2015, 2016); Ilieş, Wendt (2015).

Tab. 3. Changes in the charter traffic from Poland to chosen tourism destinations in the years of 2010–2015

Destination (airport)	Country	2010 [thous.]	2015 [thous.]	2015 / 2010 (%)
Antalya	Turkey	444.3	458.5	103
Heraklion	Greece	144.6	215.5	149
Rodos	Greece	110.2	185.9	169
Burges	Bulgaria	67.0	183.0	273
Hurghada	Egypt	558.6	167.9	30
Zakinthos	Greece	40.0	156.6	392
Bodrum	Turkey	86.2	138.6	161
Kos	Greece	40.4	137.0	339
Fuerteventura	Spain	47.2	134.1	284
Corfu	Greece	39.9	130.8	328
Tenerife	Spain	61.8	120.4	195
Sharm El Sheikh	Egypt	408.9	108.9	27
Marsa Alam	Egypt	38.4	91.5	238
Chania	Greece	53.7	89.4	166
Warne	Bulgaria	58.1	75.5	130
Dalaman	Turkey	70.7	72.2	102
Palma de Mallorca	Spain	72.0	71.7	100

Source: own elaboration based on data of the ULC (2016).

Tab. 4. Number of passengers using charter flights from Poland in 2015

Country	Number of passengers	Share in the total air passenger traffic
Greece	1 056 794	28.89%
Turkey	712 125	19.47%
Spain	567 471	15.52%
Egypt	369 413	10.10%
Bulgaria	258 755	7.07%

Source: own elaboration based on data of the ULC (2016).

As online tourism portals inform, in 2016 Poles preferred the domestic travel rather than foreign trips, which was influenced by information about the numerous terrorist attacks taking place in Europe. The countries which returned to being the most frequently declared tourist destinations of Polish tourists were Poland (+146%), the Czech Republic (+131%), Austria (+122%) and Croatia (+94%). Halfway through 2016, Greece also experienced an increase in interest on the Polish tourism market (Bednarz, 2016) and was declared to be the holiday destination of 5% more tourists than in 2015. Increases were also experienced by Bulgaria (41%), Spain (41%) and Italy (47%).

Due to concerns about the security after numerous terrorist attacks, the traditional destinations of Polish tourism such as France (-28%) and Morocco (-46%) lost their popularity. There was the inexorable

decline in trust toward countries such as Egypt (decrease of 73%) and in particular Turkey, where the numbers of tourists fell by 63% after the terrorist attacks and military coup (Tab. 5). Comparison 1Q 2015 to 1Q 2016 we can observe degree from 3.7% to 0.7% and in 2Q 2016 from 21.2% to 9.8%. In first half of 2015 we have about 209.2 thous. Polish tourists in Turkey, and in 2016, the same time, only 82.7 thous. what gives decrease of nearly 60.5% (Tab. 5). Undoubtedly, the tightening of internal policies after the unsuccessful military coup will deepen the decline in interest in Turkey by Polish visitors.

Tab. 5. Charter flights from Poland to Turkey in 2010–2016

Year	Number of passengers	Share in the total air passenger traffic
2010	598 294	19.25%
2011	681 688	21.00%
2012	586 752	18.53%
2013	583 981	19.62%
2014	702 752	19.19%
2015	712 125	19.47%
2015*	13 807	3.70%
2015**	195 391	21.18%
2016*	2 221	0.74%
2016**	80 534	9.78%

*1Q **2Q

Source: Bednarz (2016).

In 2010 the most desirable destinations of Polish tourists were Italy, France and Spain, with the number of visitors reaching 400-500 thousand. They were followed by Egypt, Croatia and Greece with 300 thousand tourists and Turkey with 250 thousand people. The economic and political crisis in Greece led to Turkey taking over part of the tourist flow, advancing the country to the top three Polish tourist destinations. However, the 2015 terrorist attacks in Turkey and the military coup in 2016 may greatly decrease the size of Polish tourist traffic in this country.

4. Summary

In 2015 Italy, Croatia and Greece were the most popular destinations. Greece gained the tourists' attention and interests on visiting it as the average price of hotel rooms fell in comparison to last years, despite rising rates in many parts of the world. The decreased holiday costs were also observed. What is more, the worsen security situation of other countries located by the Mediterranean Sea and the growing threat of tourists contributed to the rising popularity of Greece as a Polish tourism destination. Austria has also high position as one of the commonly declared travel destinations due to its relatively cheap and well-prepared resorts and many facilities like e.g. ski trails. However, similarly to Turkey, which has become less popular since the beginning of 2016, Austria is not being visited by Polish tourists as frequently as it used to be. Despite the low levels of security, but relatively low prices, Egypt still retained much of its popularity, even though it reported a 20% fall in interest in staying there. In 2015 Bulgaria and Hungary became the leaders in the growth of interest and the number of Polish tourist arrivals.

Trips to the countries neighbouring with Poland enjoy persisting popularity, among which Germany remains the leader. The high level of participation of countries such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia results from cross-border tourism as well as winter ski holidays. Many trips to Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine are related to visits to relatives, as in each of these countries a large Polish diasporas exists. The second, equally important reason for visiting these countries, primarily Ukraine, Belarus but also Russia, is shopping tourism. Foreign trips to Germany, which is a leader of every ranking can be explained by numerous reasons. The large Polish of nearly one million people residing in Germany encourages many travellers to visit their relatives and friends. These reasons include also travel for work purposes and cross-border tourism. All these motives do not allow for recognition of Germany as a typical destination for Polish leisure tourism. Similarly, the large number of trips to the United Kingdom,

Ireland, Sweden and Norway indicates that they are places of Polish labour migration, and they do not serve as holiday destinations. The situation of Italy is different. On the one hand, the state has outstanding cultural values and develops pilgrimage tourism, but on the other hand, Italy remains a traditional destination for Polish labour migration. However, because of the relatively high percentage of visitors justifying their trips to this country using typical tourist motives, similarly to France, Italy can be recognized as the tourism destination.

References

- Bednarz P., 2016, *Polska turystyka zagraniczna odporna na zamachy?* <http://biznes.onet.pl/wiadomosci/turystyka/polska-turystyka-zagraniczna-odporna-na-zamachy/j0lr77> [19.07.2016].
- Herman G.V., Wendt J., 2011, Development and Promotion of Tourism, an Extra Chance in Maintaining and Asserting the Identity and Specificity of Oaș Land, *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 1(7), 87–95.
- Ilieș A., Wendt J.A., 2015, *Geografia turystyczna. Podstawy teorii i zagadnienia aplikacyjne*, Wydawnictwo AWFIS, Gdańsk.
- Janczak K., Patelak K., 2014, *Uczestnictwo Polaków w wyjazdach turystycznych w 2013 roku*, Łódź, czerwiec 2014, <http://www.msport.gov.pl/statystyka-turystyka/uczestnictwo-polakow-w-wyjazdach-turystycznych-w-2013-roku> [15.10.2016].
- Turystyka w 2014*, 2015, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa.
- Turystyka w 2015*, 2016, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa.
- ULC (Urząd Lotnictwa Cywilnego), 2016, <http://www.ulc.gov.pl/pl/publikacje/statystyki-i-analazy> [20.10.2016].
- Wendt J.A., 2011, *Zarys geografii turystycznej*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk.
- Wendt J.A., 2012, Changes of Polish tourist flows to the Eastern Adriatic, [in:] P. Jordan (ed.), *Regional development and regionalization in the Adriatic space*, Verlag Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, 159–165.
- Wendt J.A., Chroń M., Jaźwiecka M., Wiskulski T., 2016, Differences in the perception and evaluation of tourists attractions of Menorca by its residents and tourists, *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 1(17), 21–31.
- Wendt J.A., Wiskulski T., 2015, Dostępność komunikacyjna wybrzeża Chorwacji, *Ekonomiczne Problemy Turystyki*, 2(30), 217–231.
- Wiskulski T., 2013, Dostępność transportowa centrów turystycznych Chorwacji na przykładzie transportu lotniczego, [in:] T. Wiskulski, M. Pilarski (eds.), *Współczesne zagadnienia, problemy i wyzwania w badaniach geograficznych, tom II*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Gdańsk, 165–172.
- Zhakupov A.A., Saporov K.T., Mazbaev O.B., Dzhanaaleeva G.M., Musabaeva, M.N., Yeginbayeva A.E., Atasoy E., 2015, Fundamentals of recreation-geographic assessment for tourism development, *Oxidation Communications. Series: Ecology – remediation of water and soils*, 38(3), 1530–1539.