

## THE EFFECT OF THE FIRST WAVE OF THE COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC ON SUMMER HOLIDAY PLANS IN 2020 – CASE STUDY FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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**Abstract:** This study aims to determine the changes in summer holiday plans of the Czechs in 2020 as well as their preferences concerning summer holiday destinations and accommodation as a reaction to the first set of tough restrictions adopted by the Czech government during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020. The survey included a random sample of 637 respondents. The findings show the shift towards domestic tourism and might be helpful for destination management, accommodation facilities owners, as well as for researchers examining the impact of the coronavirus crisis on consumer decisions in the hospitality and tourism industry.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 pandemic; Hospitality and Tourism Industry; Destination; Accommodation Facilities; Marketing Mix; the Czech Republic.

### 1 Introduction

Tourism is a social, economic, and cultural phenomenon (Harrison, 2007) which has a considerable economic impact in a given geographic area affecting income, wealth, and employment of residents of such areas (Frechtling, 1994). A geographical unit visited by tourists forms a tourism destination (Burkart and Medlik, 1974). Moreover, tourism destinations can be perceived as a special kind of network where cooperation processes are essential for success as well as for gaining sustainable competitive advantage in the tourism market (Žemla, 2016), and the application of effective destination management is the key to sustain competitive advantage (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). Tourism might play a crucial role in the development and growth of a particular destination, but also of a country, especially in the case of the developing ones (Faladeobalade and Dubey, 2014). In some destinations, tourism represents the only means of economic growth (Pratt, 2015). In tourism destinations, economic growth is triggered by tourists' and visitors' expenses, and investments in tourism infrastructure (Navrátil et al., 2013).

With no doubt, tourism represents one of the catalysts of today's global economy. Travelling is a modern commodity with a growing demand that is constantly met by extended supply. During its development, travelling has turned from luxury goods into common goods. This change is connected not only with the transformation of the society, or the economic growth solely, but also with the technological progress which has enabled this change (Šauer and Repík, 2015). Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the modern world (Tuhin and Majumder, 2011), representing a strong economic sector of many countries with a significant share on national GDP due to its contribution to the balance of payment, production, employment, and strong links between tourism and other economic sectors (Proença and Soukiazis, 2008). Travelling and tourism is a human right incorporated in many key international documents (Higgins-Desbiolles and Russell-Mundine, 2008).

However, there are also negative consequences of tourism development, as tourism affects the rights of local people, with a possible conflict of rights, and contributes to global climate change, resulting in voices calling for a slowdown in tourism growth, or even its degrowth (Gascón, 2019). An unintended slowdown of tourism was caused by recent COVID-19 global pandemic. The first three cases in the Czech Republic were confirmed on 1 March, 2020. All of these infected people had returned from winter holidays in Italy (ČT24, 2020), and since 2nd March, first measures and restrictions concerning the free movement of people started to be introduced to reduce the risks of infected person crossing the borders and thus spreading the disease. These government restrictions were gradually strengthened, and resulted in cancelled and suspended flights, random border checks, quarantine for arrivals from high-risk areas, hospitality venues, restaurants, and similar facilities'

closures, border closures and the obligation to wear protective masks. At the end of May 2020, the borders were opened and the majority of restrictions concerning the tourism and hospitality industry were loosened: indoor spaces including cafes, restaurants as well as zoos, castles, and chateaux were opened for visitors.

The aim of the paper is (a) to determine the changes in the plans of the Czechs for the 2020 summer holiday in reaction to the first set of government tough restrictions introduced and applied during the first months (March-May 2020) of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Czech Republic, and (b) to identified specific preferences concerning the destinations and accommodation for summer holiday in 2020 of Czechs, who decide to spend their holiday in the Czech Republic because of the pandemic.

### 1.1 Tourism and crises

Tourism is not just an economic growth factor; it plays a significant role as a factor of convergence among countries as well. Tourism improves the standard of living, and generate welfare effects on both sides (the sending and the receiving countries) (Proença and Soukiazis, 2008). However, its development can be seriously affected by various events including economic crises, conflicts and wars, terrorist attacks, political instability, natural disasters, disease outbreaks, international boycotts, isolation, or massive changes in consumer behaviour (Smeral, 2009; Ioannides and Apostolopoulos, 1999; Wiedenhoft Murphy, 2010). Consumer cutbacks excessively have negative impact on the demand for luxury goods as well as tourism services, which can be labelled as non-essential goods (Smeral, 2009).

During and after the global economic recession and crisis in the year 2009, although being hit, the impact of the crisis on international tourism was smaller than on foreign trade and industrial production. Anyway, tourism recovery process can be slower in tourism than in case of trade or production. Another problem is consumer budget, which would be spent primarily on necessary goods rather than on luxury or non-essential goods. The loss of wealth would depress consumer demand. However, domestic tourism was hit much less than international travel resulting in people travelling in own country instead of staying at home and saving (Smeral, 2010). Consumer behaviour of European tourists differs when it comes to saving. GDP and GDP growth play a key role when deciding on tourism expenditure cutback. Households which are trying to cut back on their expenses as well as households located in small towns and rural areas are more likely to spend their holidays closer to their home. Households located in regions with unfavorable climate are less likely to cut back on their tourism expenditures (Eugenio-Martin and Campos-Soria, 2014).

Due to global economic recession, there might be expected a boom in domestic tourism. The phenomenon of enjoying holidays and travel closer to home is called "staycation" (Papatheodorou et al., 2010). Another aspect important for tourism development, which usually shifts to more positive attitudes during economic crises, is the residents' perception of tourism. Local residents are a valuable asset of a tourist destination. Their perceptions of tourism are crucial for designing tourism development strategies considering sustainable development, as sustainable tourism may be implemented only through the involvement of those affected by tourism (Hateftabar and Chapuis, 2020; Sheldon and Abenoja, 2001). Residents are stakeholders in a given destination, and they co-create the tourism product, as well as affect the visitors' perception of the destination. Their involvement in the decision-making process and governance increases their satisfaction and positive perception of tourism development (Gajdošík, Gajdošíková and Stražanová, 2018). On the other hand, residents' negative perceptions of tourism impacts could serve as an indicator of a tourism destination decline, because the decline

might be not only the result of negative economic or environmental development, but also social changes (Diedrich and García-Buades, 2009). However, during economic crisis, the positive perception of tourism and its impact, as well as the willingness to support its development by residents increases even in the mass tourism destinations (Hateftabar and Chapuis, 2020; Garau-Vadell et al., 2018).

## 1.2 COVID-19 and tourism

The COVID-19 global pandemic has been recognized as one of the most impactful events of the 21st century (Zenker and Kock, 2020). It has caused significant changes in people's lives and economic activities, as a part of economy has been shut down in order to protect people against the virus (Bashir, Ma and Shahzad, 2020). The impact of the pandemic on tourism is tremendous, as borders have been closed, air fleets and cruise vessels have stayed grounded and docked, accommodation establishments and out-of-home dining have been shut down (Zenker and Kock, 2020). The right to travel and enjoy hospitality and tourism services has been restricted in a way which has been unprecedented since the two world wars (Baum and Hai, 2020). This situation has led to significant revenue loss for tourism industry due to the restrictions of movement (Williams, 2020), amplified by high risk and uncertainty influencing travel intentions (Golets et al., 2020).

The coronavirus pandemic alters image of destinations, and may harm especially those with high covid infection rates, while in contrast, it can be beneficial for some other destinations (Zenker and Kock, 2020). The COVID-19 has significantly affected international travel, tourism demand, and the whole hospitality industry (Chang, McAleer and Ramos, 2020). In the summer season of 2020, the desire to travel by air dropped by about 30 % in Europe and the Americas, by 50 % in Asia, while the intention to travel dropped by additional 10 - 20 % (Gallego and Font, 2020). The countries more dependent on tourism, as well as countries more dependent on international trade, will be more affected by the impacts of this event, and a decline in GDP can be expected (Fernandes, 2020). The restart of the international travel is expected to be dependent on the vaccination, and medical certificates which might be required for entering a country (Hall, Scott and Gössling, 2020), or boarding an international flight.

Yet, this global pandemic brings about a new hope as it creates an opportunity and impulse to reshape tourism into a more sustainable, inclusive and caring form (Cheer, 2020). Especially the transition to more sustainable tourism would be a win-win situation both for the travelers and host communities. The mobility restrictions adopted have already forced many people to embrace hyperlocal approaches to travel into nearby nature, local spots, forgotten and overlooked corners of the country, rural and peripheral areas of own region. Such behaviour can be referred to as low-carbon and human-scaled travelling providing many kinds of social, economic, and environmental benefits (Mackenzie and Goodnow, 2020; Korstanje, 2020; Ianioglo and Rissanen, 2020). Fennel (2020) argues that there are several disruptive influences important for a shift of tourism towards more sustainable practices in the new age of travel and tourism. These key factors include health and safety concerns, such as in the case of COVID-19 global pandemic, as well as environmental crisis, or periodic chaos in markets and economies, and new technologies. COVID-19 has the role of a challenger or even game-changer for tourism industry and it seems that rapid recovery after this crisis could oppose the efforts to transform tourism sector into more ethical, responsible and sustainable, making this struggle critical for the future development of tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020a).

## 2 Materials and Methods

An extensive survey was carried out in order to determine the preferences and intentions of inhabitants of the Czech Republic concerning travelling in the summer of 2020 during the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic and related government restrictions that started in the middle of March 2020 and ended

on 26 May. The survey was conducted in April 2020 (in a period of general uncertainty if the borders and accommodation facilities will be opened before summer) on a random sample of 637 respondents a total of 637 respondents aged 18 years and older. The classification of respondents is described in Tab. 1 below. The questionnaire survey consisted of 24 mostly closed-ended questions dealing with different aspects of travel desires, intentions, preferences, and attitudes for the summer of 2020, which was expected to be very unusual. Excel and Statistica, version 13 were used to evaluate the data, and QGIS software was used to create a map of preferred regions based on the collected data. Pearson chi-square statistical test was applied to compare different groups of respondents based on their gender, age, education, status and income with the significance level of 0.01.

Tab. 1: Socio-demographic charact. of the sample (n=637)

Gender	Male (n=306)		Female (n=331)	
Age	19-26 (n=191)	27-40 (n=204)	41-55 (n=193)	56-65 (n=49)
Education	Primary (n=19)		Secondary (n=376)	Tertiary (n=242)

Source: Authors

Chapters 4.2 and 4.3 are focused only on the analysis of the data from the respondents who decided to spend their paid summer holiday in 2020 at least partly in the Czech accommodation facilities, mainly as a result of the implemented restrictions on the movement, with a risk that the restrictions such as closed borders will be still valid in the summer (339 respondents out of 637). The data from the respondents who intended (a) to stay in the Czech Republic, but planned to spend their holiday without the need to book and pay for accommodation (domestic one-day trips, own cottage, etc.) or (b) to spend the whole holiday abroad, although this possibility was uncertain at the time of data collection, was not included in the analysis in the aforementioned chapters. So although having random sample of respondents, the selective sample of 339 respondents was used. This selective sample was not representative as shown in Tab.2, which shows socio-demographic characteristics of the sample.

Tab. 2: Socio-demographic characteristics of the selective sample (n=339)

Gender	Male (n=83)		Female (n=256)		
Age	19-26 (n=191)	27-40 (n=84)	41-55 (n=54)		56-65 (n=10)
Education	Secondary (n=227)		Tertiary (n=112)		
Status	Student (n=137)	Employed (n=172)	Self-employed (n=14)	Maternity leave (n=14)	Ret. (n=2)
Income*	Below average (n=46)		Average (n=232)	Above average (n=56)	Undefined (n=5)

Source: Authors (\*income stands for household income)

## 3 Results

### 3.1 Changes in summer holiday intentions

The obtained data show a significant shift in the preferences and travel intentions for the summer season of 2020, which have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 global pandemic and the related tough Czech government restrictions on free movement adopted in the period of mid-March - the end of May 2020 (closed borders, closed non-food shops, and all services including accommodation facilities, restaurants, bars, and pubs). The results show a noticeable decline in the Czechs' wishes to spend summer holiday abroad. That means an increase in plans for domestic holiday, as well as an increase in the preferences for just one-day trips, staying at own cottages or staying home. Nearly 67 % of respondents had originally planned to enjoy their summer at least partially abroad. Most of them had intended to combine domestic and abroad summer travelling, but more than 21 % had desired to enjoy their whole summer holiday abroad before the pandemic hit the world (see Figure 1). The respondents, who still planned to spend the summer abroad

even during the pandemic, believed that the restrictions would be loosened before the beginning of the summer season.

As for the respondents who intended to enjoy domestic travel due to the global pandemic, there were no statistically significant differences in preferences between men and women, different age groups, education, social status nor household income. Although household income appeared to be a more significant factor than the others, it does not reach the level of statistical significance (Pearson chi-square=3.32; p=0.19). Considering the occurrence of changes in travel intentions before and during the pandemic, there were no statistically significant differences between men and women, different education, social status nor the household income; however, the differences between different age groups appeared to be slightly more significant (Pearson chi-square=5.40; p=0.14).

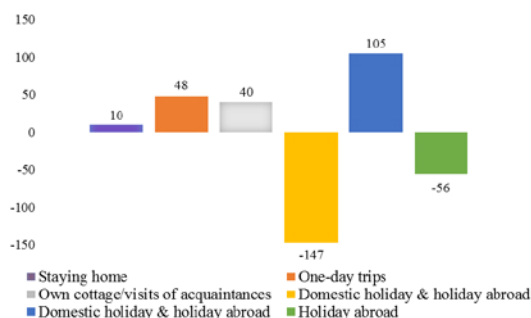
Figure 1: Respondents' 2020 summer holiday intentions before and during pandemic (n=637)



Source: Authors

However, the number of respondents who decided to change their intentions as a result of the pandemic was significantly higher (Pearson chi-square=15.39; p=0.00088). The changes in the intentions expressed as an absolute difference of the intentions before and after the pandemic outbreak as a reaction to the first restrictions imposed by the government on free movement and general uncertainty are presented in Figure 2. It shows the shift of decisions towards domestic tourism, one-day trips, staying at own cottage or just being home and the decline of plans to travel abroad as well as the combination of spending holiday both in the Czech Republic and abroad (a total decrease of 203 respondents).

Figure 2: The changes in intentions after the COVID-19 outbreak (n=637)



Source: Authors

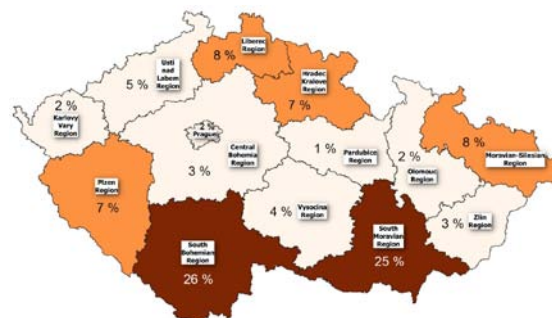
### 3.2 Preferred domestic destinations

Most respondents expressed the intention to enjoy their domestic summer holiday at one location only where they would be accommodated and make the best of their holiday time with activities such as trekking, biking, swimming, and other kinds of relaxation or make short trips with car within that tourism destination and visiting historical and cultural sites. Mainly due to COVID-19 pandemic, the respondents planned to spend their summer holiday preferably at natural sites (41 %) or in smaller towns with historical centers, castles, and other cultural

or nearby nature attractions (56 %). As expected, bigger towns and cities offering social and cultural events or shopping were preferred by a very small number of respondents (3 %) at the time of the survey.

In the process of choosing the right Czech destination for the summer of 2020, the following factors were taken into the account by respondents: natural attractions in a given area, accommodation price, existence of footpaths and cycle paths, historical and cultural attractions, and positive internet reviews. As seen in the map of the Czech Republic (see Figure 3), which shows most preferred regions/destinations for first summer holiday in the COVID-19 pandemic as planned in spring 2020, the most preferred region are the South Bohemian Region and South Moravian Region.

Figure 3: Most attractive Czech regions for the summer holiday planned in the spring of 2020 (n=339)



Source: Authors

Both southern regions are rather of a rural character with a specific type of landscape. In the case of South Bohemia, the landscape differs from other parts of the state by numerous ponds, while South Moravia is well-known for its vineyards, and plenty of picturesque villages are located in both regions. In South Bohemia, especially the Bohemian Forest National Park (Šumava in Czech) and the Šumava Protected Landscape Area (CHKO Šumava in Czech) are the most popular. The attractions in this southern part of Bohemia include popular Lipno Reservoir and tourism destinations such as Šumavsko, Lipensko, Třeboňsko and Českobudějovicko-Hlubocko were commonly selected as preferred summer destinations by the respondents. The majority of respondents did not specify any exact destinations they were planning to visit during their stay in the South Moravian region; instead, they mentioned the whole region as a location preferred for the summer holiday. However, South Moravian wine cellars, protected areas within the region, such as landscape area of Pálava or UNESCO Lednice-Valtice Area were noted in many cases by the respondents who specified their plans in the questionnaire.

The desire to visit various types of protected areas of the Czech Republic is very noticeable within the sample. In addition, the respondents intended to visit especially national parks (the most preferred ones were NP Bohemia Forest, Czech Krkonoše NP, and NP Bohemia Switzerland), protected landscape areas (mainly CHKO Šumava, CHKO Beskydy, CHKO Pálava), national nature preserves (NPR Adržpašsko-teplické skály and NPR Králický Sněžník), national natural monuments (NPP Swamp and NPP Rudické propadání), Czech UNESCO sites (Lednice-Valtice Area, Český Krumlov), or natural monuments and preserves. Only a small percentage of respondents were planning to visit spa towns, or other urban sites except those included on UNESCO's world heritage list, such as Český Krumlov, a beautiful historical town in the South Bohemian Region. However, the situation of Český Krumlov is very contradictory: although it is one of the Czech UNESCO sites and often mentioned by the respondents as one of the places they wanted to visit during the summer of 2020, many respondents stated that they really appreciated its historical and architectural values, but they would not spend summer holiday there. They perceive Český Krumlov as too expensive and usually overcrowded with foreign tourists.

### 3.3 Marketing mix update suggestions for accommodation facilities

Considering the marketing mix (4P - product, price, place, and promotion) part of the survey, the results can be seen as relevant recommendations for accommodation facilities for the summer of 2021, which will probably be still affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the key findings is that there is a great demand for the expansion of the supply of "product" typically offered by accommodation facilities with services and tourism packages included in the price of accommodation. More than 80 % of the respondents declared that these kinds of packages with additional "free" services would influence the choice of a particular destination or accommodation facility in a very positive way. The respondents would appreciate accommodation facilities to offer e.g. lending equipment for sport activities for free, free tickets to museums, castles, or other sites of cultural importance, horse rides, wellness and massages, degustation of wine or other popular local products. The respondents also specified the minimal requirements for a room or accommodation facility equipment: own bathroom, a TV, free Wi-Fi connection, and at least a small fridge; parking lot situated near the accommodation facility; a swimming pool and wellness would be an advantage, but it is not essential if the price of the accommodation is not high. If the restaurant is not a part of the accommodation facility, the possibility of using the fully-equipped kitchen to prepare own meals is very important for typical Czech tourists, because self-catering holiday is a preferred option for 24 % of the respondents. In terms of food, half board would be the right option for 40 % of respondents, while 28 % of them would prefer accommodation with breakfast and 8 % selected "all inclusive" in the questionnaire. As for the length of the stays in the domestic accommodation facilities during the summer 2020, the highest number of the respondents planned to spend there two weeks (33 %) or one week (26.5 %).

As for the "price", the mode was 22-45 USD per night (49 % of the respondents), but more than a quarter (26 %) of the respondents planned to book the accommodation for less than 22 USD per night. The price above 69 USD per night was acceptable for 5 % of respondents only. In terms of the "place", it could refer to the locations (in a broader context, the aforementioned destinations), or accommodation facilities equipment (referred to as the respondents' requirements), but also the most preferred type of accommodation facility. The results show that 50 % of the respondents intended to stay in small guesthouses with a capacity of up to 10 guests. Other types of accommodation were less preferred: large-capacity guesthouses – 18 %, 3 or 4-star hotels – 13 %, camping sites – 5 %, 1 or 2-star hotels – 4 %, spa resorts – 2 %.

The last P stands for "promotion", which refers to different types and channels of marketing communication with potential customers. In this case, the majority of the respondents rely especially on on-line reviews on destinations and accommodation facilities as well as the on-line presence represented by quality websites or social media profiles. When choosing accommodation, nearly all respondents claimed to use the internet as a basic source of information and for making reservations. The most frequently used source for choosing accommodation is Booking.com (54 %). They also frequently book a room directly on the accommodation facilities' web sites (after they had checked on-line reviews on Google) or on discount portals that are offering services, such as Slevomat.cz.

### 4 Discussion

Although the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on travelling and tourism have not been evaluated yet, recession, economic depression, and many different macroeconomic shocks including e.g. demand, supply, trade, investment, price level, financial stability, international cooperation, and economic growth as a result of the pandemic outbreak and temporary shutdown of factories and businesses can be expected as well as some changes caused by restrictions, border closures,

lockdowns, and health concerns, but also higher costs of transport and logistics services (Barua, 2020).

Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the change of travel intentions and preferences is significant, and the shift towards domestic tourism shall be highlighted. The desire to visit natural sites, small towns with historical centers, and rural sites situated in various protected areas was observed. The southern part of the Czech Republic can be considered the most attractive region in the process of planning summer holidays in 2020 with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. The most preferred protected areas mentioned by the respondents were the Bohemian Forest National Park, the Šumava Protected Landscape Area, and the Czech Krkonoše National Park. In the case of the Czech Republic, a change in tourism demand can be seen, as well as a shift towards domestic tourism. Similarly, the positive effect of the pandemic on domestic tourism was observed also in Ukraine and Azerbaijan (Rahmanov et al., 2020). Basically, strong domestic tourism is reported in the USA and China. In the case of the EU, domestic tourism is not so strong, although some EU countries like Italy, Spain, Germany, France, and UK would suffer economic losses resulting from the tourism collapse due to COVID-19 outbreak unless promoting domestic tourism, which is less income-elastic. This effort should be supported by combined and comprehensive policies that could save and revive the tourism sector (Islam and Fatema, 2020). For instance, the government of Jordan encouraged domestic tourism to reduce the impact on this sector by digital marketing and moderating the role of price, and the role of a mediator with a visible effect between digital marketing and domestic tourism intentions and realization as it may affect not only pre-visit decision, but also post-visit behaviour to establish an effective domestic tourism (Nofal et al., 2020). The Czech Republic experienced releasing of restrictions during the summer, but also restrictions, lockdowns, and closures of hospitality services and facilities and some tourism attractions imposed during the spring, autumn and winter season of 2020; the period for the Czech tourism sector recovery was thus quite short to include not only the demand, but also the supply.

Coronavirus global pandemic may provide an opportunity to transform tourism into a more socialized form, where the rights and interests of local communities are important, thus creating an impulse to set social and ecological justice for tourism after COVID-19 with respect to the social and ecological limits of the planet (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020b). Although social distancing, closures, and lockdowns were introduced, spending time in the nature was suggested as a path to overcome negative impacts of isolation. In this context, protected areas and their importance for enabling the adaptation to the pandemic were highlighted (Ma et al., 2020). The desire for visiting rural areas, natural sites, and protected areas by Czech citizens has also been mentioned in this paper. Natural features such as landscape, weather conditions, and natural monuments are significant indicators of tourists' high satisfaction with the destination (Štumpf, Vojtko and Valtrová, 2018). However, higher demand, if realized, might become a challenge, a threat as well as an opportunity, for destination management and protected areas management, as it creates pressure on the destination and the environment. As for the possible environmentally positive effects, this global pandemic and the lockdown experience may lead people to appreciate environmental assets, and therefore it might play a role in tackling the climate change and biodiversity loss issues (Helm, 2020). On the other hand, protected areas naturally play a key role in halting biodiversity loss and buffering novel disease outbreaks through ecosystem integrity, but this ability might be negatively affected by increasing human pressure intensified by COVID-19 pandemic (Terraube and Fernández-Llamazares, 2020).

There are places where travel restrictions and protected areas closures have reduced the stress and pressure on these places, but in the places that remained opened, increase in both is visible and would probably occur in the closed areas once the restrictions are loosened (Corlett et al., 2020). Heavier traffic in

the protected areas, especially in national parks with little human impact and well-preserved and barely altered nature, shall result in monitoring of the state of environment, tourist traffic volume and trends, and impact of tourism on these location in order to develop and implement efficient management to conserve the values of the natural sites, modify conservation plans, and enable sustainable tourism (Olesiewicz et al., 2020). While some consider the effect of restricted movement and reduced economic activity beneficial for biodiversity conservation and nature protection, in Africa, Lindsey et al. (2020) foresee strongly negative net conservation impacts of COVID-19 due to the reduced funding, restrictions concerning the Operation Agencies, and increased human threats to nature including poaching. Anyway, increased visitor attraction and density in protecting well-known valuable areas might represent a threat not only for the environment, but also reduce locals' acceptance of tourism (Ryan and Silvanto, 2009), as well as deteriorate the quality of tourist experience, once the destination becomes overcrowded (Bushell, Staiff and Eagles, 2007). This is also the case of Český Krumlov, which is included in the UNESCO list, as stated by the respondents.

According to the respondents, the most attractive destinations include the South Bohemian and South Moravian regions. Bohemian Forest National Park and Šumava, as well as the Czech Krkonoše – Giant Mountains NP were also significantly represented in the sample; CHKO Beskydy, Bohemia Schwitzerland NP, CHKO Pálava, and UNESCO Lednicko-Valtický areal became other most preferred destinations. These results are similar to the results of the survey conducted by Soukup (2014) in the Ústecký region, where the respondents from the Czech Republic (sample of 1000 respondents aged 18-65 years) stated that South Bohemia, South Moravia, Bohemian Forest, Giant Mountains, Jeseníky, Beskydy, and Český ráj are the most attractive summer holiday destinations. The percentage of the responses mentioning South Bohemia (45 %), South Moravia (40 %), Bohemian Forest (37 %), and Giant Mountains (30 %) was significant, while Jeseníky, Beskydy, and Český ráj were attractive for 16 % of the respondents, and the share of other destinations in the sample was lower (0.4 % - 10 %). The South Bohemian region might be considered a key domestic tourism destination compared to the regions visited by Czech citizens, as in the years of 2012 - 2019, the South Bohemian region was the second most visited destination for longer domestic trips, and the most visited one in 2018. In most years, the most visited region was the Central Bohemian region. As for the shorter trips, the preferences change over time, and so does the position of the South Bohemian region. In 2019, longer domestic trips were usually made mainly to the Central Bohemian region, South Bohemian region, Hradec Králové region, Liberec region, South Moravian region, and Vysočina region, while the shorter ones were mostly to the Central Bohemian region, South Bohemian region, South Moravian region, Vysočina region, Plzeň region, and Moravian-Silesian region (ČSÚ, 2020). However, the share of Central Bohemian region is notably marginalized in our findings in comparison with the usual performance of the regions reported by the Czech Statistical Office, while the results of other regions are similar, with higher significance of the Moravian-Silesian region only. Monitoring of these areas and measuring the impact of tourism is suggested not only for the purpose of the biodiversity conservation and protected areas development and protection, but it can be also future direction of our research in the post-pandemic times.

## 5 Conclusion

The aim of the paper is to determine the changes in the plans of the Czechs for the 2020 summer holiday in reaction to the first set of government tough restrictions, such as closed borders or closed accommodation facilities introduced in the Czech Republic during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020. The next step was to identify specific preferences concerning the destinations and accommodation for summer holiday in 2020 of Czech inhabitants, who decide to spend their holiday in the Czech Republic because of the pandemic. The

data obtained from 637 respondents showed a significant shift in the summer holiday preferences and intentions due to the global pandemic and the related restrictions and uncertainty. The results showed a noticeable decline in the Czechs' intentions to spend summer holiday abroad. That meant an increase in planned domestic holiday, as well as the increase in preferences of one-day domestic trips, staying at own cottages, or staying home.

As for the preferences concerning the summer of 2020 in the Czech Republic, most respondents intended to spend their holiday mainly at natural sites and enjoy activities such as hiking, biking, swimming, and other forms of relaxation. The results showed that 50 % of the respondents intended to stay in small and cheaper guesthouses with a capacity of up to 10 guests rather than in 3- or 4-star hotels. In terms of the domestic destinations when planning the summer holiday in the spring of 2020, the most desired ones were the South Moravian region, which is well-known for its vineyards, and the South Bohemian region, especially the areas such as the Bohemian Forest National Park and the Šumava Protected Landscape Area with its popular water reservoir Lipno.

Considering the findings related to marketing mix of accommodation facilities, it can be concluded that there is a great demand for the expansion of the typically offered accommodation by additional free services that would be included in the price of accommodation, e.g. wellness, degustation of wine or local products, equipment for sport activities, or free tickets for sights and attractions in a particular destination. The majority of respondents agreed that these kind of packages with additional "free" services would motivate them to choose a particular accommodation facility or even destination, so this can be seen as relevant recommendations for hospitality and tourism industry for the summer of 2021, which is very likely to be still affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in some way.

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**Primary Paper Section: A**

**Secondary Paper Section: AE, AH**