

---

**Miroslav Rončák**

Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic

**Vladimír Hobza**

Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic

---

**The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry in the Czech Republic**

The coronavirus pandemic had a devastating impact on the tourism industry worldwide. The present work analyses the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Czech Republic. This paper also discusses the stimulus packages offered by the Czech government and initiatives undertaken by Czech regions. The results indicate that despite intensive economic support and a large number of regional campaigns, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profoundly negative effect on the tourism industry in the Czech Republic. The drop in tourism expenditure reached more than 50%, from 308 billion to 136 billion CZK. The number of foreign tourists arriving in the Czech Republic has fallen dramatically. In 2021, foreign tourism reached only 24% of the pre-pandemic numbers. Around 10% of businesses did not survive the COVID-19 crisis. Many employees moved to other sectors. Available analyses of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Czech Republic suggest that it will take at least three years to recover from the decrease in performance.

---

Keywords: Tourism; COVID-19; pandemics; recovery strategy; stimulus packages; response measures

Mgr. Miroslav Rončák

Senior lecturer & Researcher

Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, Palacky University

Olomouc, Czech Republic

Phone: +420 775 154 057

Email: miroslav.roncak@upol.cz

Ing. Vladimír Hobza

Lecturer & Research Assistant

Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, Palacky University

Olomouc, Czech Republic

Phone: +420 728 132 098

Email: v.hobza@upol.cz

**Miroslav Rončák** is an international expert on sustainable tourism development. He has more than 25 years of experience in international tourism. Miroslav spent 12 years as a director of the Czech Tourist Authority-CzechTourism abroad. Currently, he works as a senior tourism lecturer and researcher in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the Palacký University in Olomouc.

**Vladimír Hobza** is a researcher and lecturer in Economics and Sport finance at the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, Faculty of Physical Culture at Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic. Vladimir has previous knowledge and work experience in financial audit, banking, and finance.

## **Introduction**

The beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic dates to 31 December 2019, when the first cases were reported in the city of Wuhan in Hubei Province in the People's Republic of China. COVID-19 is caused by a novel type of coronavirus, referred to as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). This highly infectious disease is mainly manifested by fever, respiratory difficulties (coughing, dyspnoea), muscle pain, and fatigue (Komenda et al., 2020). In early 2020, a pandemic of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) started to spread worldwide, leading to a significant reduction in almost all global tourism (Estrada et al., 2020). In early March 2020, there were already more than 1,400,000 cases of COVID-19 around the world (Worldometer, 2020). The Czech Republic was no exception. In the Czech Republic, the first three cases of infection with novel COVID-19 were confirmed on 1 March 2020 (Komenda et al., 2020). In terms of healthcare, the Czech Republic successfully managed the COVID-19 pandemic during its first wave. However, the subsequent waves have struck the population of the Czech Republic very hard. Table 1 below shows the total number of COVID-19 in the Czech Republic. Out of a total population of 10 million, on June 26, 2022, the Czech Republic reported 3,904,424 COVID-19 cases, with 40318 deaths (Ministry of Health, 2022).

*Table 1. COVID-19 cases.*

Date reported	Cumulative cases	Deaths	Recovered
1 March 2020	3	0	0
26 March 2020	2 022	10	27
26 June 2020	11 067	345	8 940
26 September 2020	63 296	611	38 034
26 December 2020	670 623	11 142	575 932
26 March 2021	1 499 087	26 324	1 369 352
26 June 2021	1 654 214	30 460	1 634 139
26 September 2021	1 676 292	30 544	1 651 517
26 December 2021	2 431 230	36 038	2 304 889
26 March 2022	3 764 417	39 611	3 678 990
26 June 2022	3 904 424	40 318	3 885 476

Source: Ministry of Health (2022).

Like other countries worldwide, the Czech Republic experienced a negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on life, the economy, and tourism. Due to many restrictions (Table 2), the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly changed the positive development of tourism in the Czech Republic.

*Table 2. COVID-19 key restrictions.*

Restrictions	First wave	Following waves
State of emergency	March 12 – May 17	October 5 – March 28 (2021) November 26 – December 25 (2021)
Restaurants closed (interior spaces)	March 14 – May 25	October 14 – December 3 December 19 – May 17 (2021)
Accommodation services prohibited/limited	March 16 – May 25	October 5 – December 3 December 19 – May 24 (2021)
Borders closed	March 16 – June 15 (all EU citizens)	
Ban on leaving the district		March 1 – March 22 (2021)

Source: Government of the Czech Republic (2022).

This paper will present a brief overview of the COVID-19 pandemic and discusses the impacts on the Czech Republic's tourism industry, the economic stimulus package and results of domestic travel support, including regional initiatives.

## **Findings - Impact on the tourism industry**

Tourism is an important sector in the economy of the Czech Republic. In 2019, it contributed to 2.9% of the total gross domestic product (GDP) (Ministry for Regional Development, 2021). Tourism provided greater prosperity and economic growth. The COVID-19 pandemic hit travel and tourism hard. The tourism sector was in the middle of March 2020 in an unprecedented situation. After the borders had been closed, tourism virtually ceased to exist. Such restrictions on movement had not been imposed since the end of the Second World War (ICOT.cz, 2020I). There were not just more than 230,000 employees in tourism who were affected, but around 370,000 Czech citizens working in tourism-related sectors (TTG.cz, 2020). The main problem was not to minimize the loss but to survive the unexpected situation. Many employees and entrepreneurs in tourism, including tour operators, travel agencies, hotels, mountain resorts, restaurants, and guides, found their job threatened. Despite many national economic incentives and intensive regional campaigns that have helped maintain employment and support domestic tourism, the results indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly and negatively affected the tourism industry in the Czech Republic. In 2020, tourism in the Czech Republic became one of the industries most affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Its share in the gross domestic product fell from 2.76% to 1.48%, representing CZK 84.3 billion in financial terms. Employment in the sector decreased by 7.3% year on year (Czech Statistical Office, 2022a). Around ten% of businesses did not survive the COVID-19 crisis (Ulrych, 2021b). Many employees moved to other sectors.

Although the crisis has affected the entire sector in the Czech Republic, the most vulnerable group includes small, medium, and family businesses with the owner's personal involvement. Generally, small and medium businesses have greater difficulty accessing external financing. Hotel owners and entrepreneurs in the accommodation sector tried to resolve the situation,

especially by limiting the scope of services provided, temporary closure, or reducing costs, which had a direct impact on both employment and upstream suppliers of services and raw materials (The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants, 2021c). According to professionals, the return to the pre-pandemic figures will not last months but years. Available analyses of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Czech Republic suggest that it will take at least three years to recover from the decrease in performance (Ministry for Regional Development, 2021).

### **Impact on tourist arrivals**

The COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions dramatically affected the number of foreign tourist arrivals (Table 3).

*Table 3. Arrivals of tourists in collective tourist accommodation facilities*

Year	Residents	Non-residents
2018	10 634 756	10 611 394
2019	11 107 866	10 890 500
2020	8 052 274	2 784 170
2021	8 822 161	2 573 595

Source: Czech Statistical Office (2022a).

Total consumption by tourists (incoming and domestic travel) was estimated at CZK 308 billion in 2019. Foreign travelers accounted for 27.18 million overnight stays in the Czech Republic in 2019. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a 51% decline in tourist arrivals (Ministry for Regional Development, 2021). The drop in tourism expenditure reached more than 50%, from 308 billion to 136 billion CZK (Table 4). This was caused mainly by the missing foreign tourists, who spent 177 billion CZK in the Czech Republic in 2019 compared to 49 billion CZK in 2020. (Czech Statistical Office, 2022b).

*Table 4. Internal tourism consumption*

Indicator (CZK mil.)	2019	2020
Inbound Tourism consumption	176 890	48 957
Domestic Tourism consumption	131 351	86 856
Internal Tourism consumption	308 242	135 812

Source: Czech Statistical Office (2022b).

Compared with the pre-COVID year (2019), the total tourism traffic in 2021 was 52% of the number of arrivals and 56% of that of overnight stays. In 2021, foreign tourism reached only 24% of the pre-pandemic numbers (Czech Statistical Office, 2022a). After Prague, the biggest drops in tourism consumption were, as expected, in the Karlovy Vary Region and South Moravia Region, which have the highest proportion of foreign overnight stays (ICOT.cz, 2020b).

### **Impact on the hospitality industry**

In 2020, the occupancy rate of four- and five-star hotels in Prague was 26% compared with 77.5% in 2019. The room revenue per night dropped from almost EUR 70 the previous year to EUR 17.50 (Stárek, 2020a). The occupancy rate of available accommodation facilities in Prague from January to April 2021 was 7%. The revenue per available room during the same period was EUR 3.68 (compared with revenue per available room of EUR 24.77 in 2020 and even EUR 55.19 in 2019 (The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants, 2021b)). In 2021, the total occupancy rate of accommodation facilities in Prague reached only 26% (compared with almost 80% in 2019). Other cities in the Czech Republic reported somewhat better results. The annual occupancy rate in mountain hotels for 2021 was between 30 and 35%. The revenue per available room (RevPAR) in the Czech Republic amounted to EUR 18 in 2021. This is a 75% drop in revenues compared to the pre-pandemic period, when hotels had revenues per room per night of EUR 72.45. These results were primarily caused by the government measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic adopted

in the spring and winter of 2021, during which the number of guests fell by up to two-thirds (The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants, 2022).

A similarly devastating situation was also witnessed in the food service segment. During the first 13 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the food service segment generated revenues of CZK 103 billion less than before the crisis (Vacková, 2021). According to the data published by the Czech Tourism Union in April 2021, there was a drop in revenues of more than 70% in food service facilities compared with 2019 (Ulrych, 2021a). In a year-on-year comparison with 2020, the overall hospitality revenues for 2021 were higher; nevertheless, the decrease compared with 2019 exceeded 50%. The most critical periods for restaurants in 2021 were January to April and November and December when the revenues dropped by up to 80% (The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants, 2022). Moreover, people have not returned to restaurants. The levels before the coronavirus pandemic have not been reached. Restaurants experienced almost a 10% decrease in guests (Businessinfo.cz, 2021). COVID-19 has changed guests' behavior and consumer habits. People go to restaurants less often. They started to make their meals at home because of the increased share of home office than before the pandemic, order meals to be delivered, or are forced to save money (Businessinfo.cz, 2021).

### **Impact on business tourism**

Business tourism faced a huge decline. All congresses and conferences originally planned for 2020 in Prague (including the autumn dates) were cancelled without compensation or moved to 2021. Unfortunately, due to new restrictions, 90% of these postponed corporate events and conferences were cancelled (The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants, 2022). The total consumption in the sector is expected to decrease to 27.1–39.3 billion CZK. This is supposed to lead to a decline in multiplier receipts from the original 196.5–260.5 billion CZK to only 52.9–77.2 billion CZK.

This amount also suggests an impact on public budget revenues. A drop of almost 73% to 10.1–14.7 billion CZK is expected. (ICOT.cz, 2020i).

### **Economic stimulus packages**

The Czech government already tried to mitigate the negative impact on tourism at the end of March 2020. To support employment, the State provided 100 billion CZK in direct support and 900 billion CZK indirectly in the form of guarantees (Government of the Czech Republic, 2022). These included the employment support programme Antivirus, liberation packages and COVID-19 compensation bonus for self-employed persons. Other support programmes, including financial support, followed later, especially in the autumn of 2020 (Table 5). The Czech Government took the following key economic measures to save the tourism sector.

*Table 5. Economic stimulus packages to support tourism in the Czech Republic*

---

- Liberation packages. The state did not impose fines for the late submission of personal and corporate income tax returns, the late payment of a tax claim, or the late submission of control tax reports.
  - All waves of the Electronic Sales Control System (EET) were postponed until the end of 2020 and 2021.
  - Adoption of a company support program called "Antivirus ."This contributed to employers' salaries.
  - Coronavirus compensation bonus. During the first wave, this enabled the reimbursement of 500 CZK per day to self-employed persons until 8 June, when the end of all restrictions was expected.
  - A guarantee program, COVID III. The state-supported companies with up to 500 employees by securing their debts in the total amount of CZK 150 billion in guarantees.
  - A bill to mitigate the impact of the crisis in the tourism sector helped travel agencies threatened with bankruptcy.
  - Reduction of VAT from 15% to 10% in accommodation services, admission fees to cultural events, sporting events, sports grounds, fares on ski lifts, and admission fees to saunas and other similar facilities.
  - Covid Spa Program. Spa facilities offered clients a customer discount on curative sojourns, and preventive spa stays amounting to 4000 CZK. The discount was provided as a voucher supported by the government.
  - Covid Accommodation Program. If an accommodation facility had been in operation for the last two years, accommodation providers received between CZK 100 and 300 per room per night from the government (first wave).
-



- 
- Covid Gastro Program. Establishments closed because of the coronavirus pandemic were entitled to a subsidy of CZK 400 per day per employee (second wave).
  - Covid Rent Subsidy Program. There was CZK 1.2 billion available in the second call.
  - Covid Bus Program. It supported coach travel. The sum of CZK 1 billion was earmarked for this program.
  - Covid Tourism Subsidy Program. It helped travel agencies, tour operators, and tourist guides who had lost customers and orders due to the coronavirus pandemic. There was CZK 425 million to divide.
  - Covid Ski Resorts (December 27, 2020 – April 8, 2021)
  - Covid Travel Agencies (February 20, 2020 – January 4, 2021)
  - Covid Spa (January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021)
  - Covid-21 Support Program. The support was provided per employee and amounted to CZK 500 per day (third wave).
  - Covid Uncovered Costs. The aim of the program was to prevent the deterioration of the capital situation of business entities, increase their liquidity, maintain their business activities, and provide a springboard for recovery. The support amounted to 60% of uncovered costs for the relevant period or 40% of uncovered costs for the relevant period for businesses co-owned by the state or a regional self-governing body of the Czech Republic.

---

Source: Government of the Czech Republic (2022); Ministry of Industry and Commerce (2022).

According to tourism professionals, the government's first steps were insufficient to prevent major devastation that would negatively affect cities, regions, the spa industry, or even domestic tourism in the most vulnerable locations (The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants, 2020). Beyond the urgent situation, the Tourism Forum Czech Republic and the Czech Confederation of Commerce and Tourism already on 30 March 2020 addressed all members of the Government in an open letter the draft of the Emergency Tourism Plan "Save Tourism" with a request to support all tourism entrepreneurs. Some of their requirements were in May 2020, respectively, in June 2020 approved by Government, for example, a reduction of VAT from 15 to 10% for accommodation, ski fares, and other tourism services or state-funded spa vouchers to support domestic travel. Further significant economic stimuli approved by the Government for the autumn period included, for example, the Covid-Accommodation, Covid-Tourism, or Covid-Bus

programs. Through CzechTourism, the state supported domestic tourism by means of a national campaign.

The repeated requests to support tourism of the associations in the hospitality sector addressed to the Government of the Czech Republic were not successful enough. The cooperation between the Ministry of Health and tourism representatives did not work. According to the Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants (2021a), the government sought to minimize the expenditure on supporting the affected industries. The support was insufficient. Tourism entities struggled to survive. The government compensation covered just their fixed costs. Already in December 2020, restaurants started to show signs of civil disobedience. They set up an initiative called "Chcíp PES" to combat the restrictive government measures and to urge the reopening of restaurants. Several strikes took place (Vachtl, 2021). The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants dealt with the Government many times concerning a new form of compensation for hospitality industry enterprises. At the beginning of 2021, the government support programs covered less than 30% of the costs of two-thirds of businesses. The government did not respond to the requirements of the representatives of the industries that were affected, who demanded that businesses with up to ten employees be compensated by an amount equivalent to 90% of their losses and 70% for other businesses, even though European rules made this possible. Similarly, the government eventually decided that the program was available only to companies that suffered a decrease in revenues by at least 50%, which disqualified those who tried to minimize their losses and whose decrease in revenues was smaller. As a result, many entrepreneurs in the food service industry were not eligible for compensation (The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants, 2021a). Even at the beginning of 2022, the previously prepared COVID 2021 and COVID Uncovered Costs compensation programs did not work. From January 2022, the new government

stopped the B contribution from the Antivirus employment support program and ordered an analysis of the previous programs aimed at supporting the hospitality industry.

The new government criticized the redistribution of subsidies by the previous government. Large companies benefited the most. On the other hand, small and medium-sized enterprises did not receive any aid (The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants, 2022). According to the Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants, the most effective measures in the first year of the pandemic were the Antivirus employment support program and the reduction of VAT on accommodation services to 10%. The COVID-Accommodation program was used by 85% of entrepreneurs. Financial support from the COVID-Rent program was requested by 12% of owners of hotels. The subsidy program for self-employed persons was utilized by 21% of the entrepreneurs in the field (Stárek, 2020b).

### **Domestic tourism support and initiatives undertaken in Czech regions**

After any crisis or pandemic, supporting domestic tourism is crucial. It must be promoted to start rebuilding national economies. Domestic tourists are expected to be among the first to travel again and reignite the demand (UWTO, 2020). Ministry of Industry and Commerce of the Czech Republic announced already at the end of the first wave of pandemic plans that should facilitate domestic travel and encourage increased lengths of stays (ICOT.cz, 2020k). The state agency CzechTourism launched a 2020 campaign called "#světovéČesko" to support domestic tourism. As a result, the Czechs kept domestic tourism alive in the summer of 2020. During the first month of the summer holidays of 2020, Czech hotels accommodated almost 100 thousand domestic tourists compared with the same period of the previous year. In August 2020, the proportion of domestic tourism achieved 71% compared to 39% in 2019. (ICOT.cz, 2020g). Given the success

of this campaign, “#světovéČesko was extended until 2022. In 2022, CzechTourism supported this campaign with 10 mil. CZK.

Besides that, Czech Government approved on 29 June 2020 the so-called Covid – Spa program that allowed clients a customer discount voucher on spa vacation amounting to 4000 CZK. The Covid-Spa program was beneficial for most spas. According to spa officials, the system of vouchers helped maintain employment and functioning of the spa industry in the Karlovy Vary Region in 2020. The increasing demand for stays increased the occupancy rate. These were especially Czech clients and foreign guests from the Schengen Area who might arrive regularly in the future. Moreover, spa vouchers attracted clients who would have otherwise not arrived or come for a shorter stay. A total of 161,000 spa vouchers were generated by clients, of which 33,000 had been used by mid-September 2020. The remaining vouchers could be utilized before the end of the year 2020. However, their use was much more difficult in the autumn of 2020 due to the new restrictive measures (ICOT.cz, 2020e). Due to new pandemic waves, their validity was extended until the end of 2021. In 2022, the Czech Government supported this campaign with discount vouchers once more. Nevertheless, in cooperation with CzechTourism and spas entities, the Czech Spa Association launched the new initiative. It supported Czech clients to spend spa vacations with a discount 2000 CZK (CzechTourism, 2022). The capital of the Czech Republic, Prague, and some other regions initiated their campaigns to attract domestic tourists.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a chance to improve the image of the capital of the Czech Republic. Until the beginning of the pandemic, Prague had experienced huge problems with over-tourism, including overcrowding in the city center, beer tourism, and Airbnb (Roncak, 2019; Kadar, 2018). Given the new sustainable recovery at the beginning of September 2020, Prague approved a new tourism strategy that should change and restart tourism. The strategy aimed to

achieve sustainable tourism with an emphasis on Prague residents' cultural heritage and quality of life (ICOT.cz, 2020c). The crisis has taken away key revenues but has also provided the opportunity to turn Prague into a city that is attractive to Czech families (ICOT.cz, 2020f). Prague City Tourism supported a campaign called “At Home in Prague”, focused on domestic tourists and special tourist vouchers. The amount allocated to the tourist voucher project was 121 million CZK, which was spent by means of what are called carriers. Anyone who stayed in Prague overnight received a 400 CZK carrier, but the maximum amount covered four nights spent in Prague (ICOT.cz, 2020j). The vouchers were accepted in more than 60 Prague cultural and tourist sites, primarily in Prague contributory organizations such as the zoo, the botanical garden, the Planetarium, and the Prague Gallery and Museum.

The system became operational from 1 July and finished by 30 September 2020 (ICOT.cz, 2020i). The purpose was to support Prague hotels, cultural institutions, and monuments, but also restaurants and Prague guides. According to Prague City Tourism, the campaign “At Home in Prague”, attracted more than 70,000 tourists (ICOT.cz, 2020o). The economic benefit of the At Home in Prague program in 2020 can be quantified based on the average per-visitor spend (2,737), totalling more than 202 million CZK. The number of domestic tourists increased by 16 % (Prague City Tourism, 2021a). Given the campaign's success, Prague City Hall, in cooperation with Prague City Tourism, repeated this campaign based on the same requirements in 2021. The visitors received a voucher for each night spent in a participating hotel or group accommodation facility (Prague City Tourism, 2021a). According to Prague City Tourism representatives, the second year of the campaign "At Home in Prague" managed to attract to Prague during the summer more than 76,000 visitors, the majority from the Czech Republic. This increased domestic guest numbers by 45,4% compared to July and August 2019. Although the year 2021 was due to many restrictions

with a 71% decline in visitors number a disaster for tourism in the Czech capital city, the campaign helped Prague become an attractive destination for domestic clients (Prague City Tourism, 2021b). In 2021, Prague was visited by 2,4 million visitors, 40% of whom were domestic tourists. The fact that the campaign successfully motivated Czechs to come to the metropolis was evident. Prague City Tourism launched this campaign also in 2022. This year, it is not a voucher program. Prague tries to attract domestic tourists through advert spots and digital advertising (Prague City Tourism, 2022).

Other Czech regions outside Prague also focused on domestic tourists. One of the most affected cities was Karlovy Vary, where 80% of spa guests come from abroad. In the summer of 2020, the city invested 50 million CZK in promoting domestic tourism, of which 10 million was allocated to the voucher system (ICOT.cz, 2020d). Karlovy Vary issued 3,250 discount vouchers worth between one and five thousand CZK, which clients used for accommodation with spa procedures. The project involved 107 of the total 127 hotels in Karlovy Vary. The vouchers had to be used by the end of September, but already in mid-September, 99.4% of the vouchers were already utilised. In addition, the city prepared a project called the Karlovy Vary Cultural Summer which provided daily cultural opportunities for visitors. Moreover, the Karlovy Vary Region Card was discounted from 600 CZK to 100 CZK. The three measures brought significant results. In the summer of 2020, Karlovy Vary, with a 162.1% increase, welcomed the highest number of domestic visitors in history (ICOT.cz, 2020a). However, the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in the autumn of 2020 hit the city hard. Most of the hotels in Karlovy Vary remained closed. The problem was caused by the low demand. Due to the high number of infected people, the Czech Republic appeared on the list of high-risk countries. According to an internal survey by the Karlovy Vary Information Centre, the autumn 2020 lockdown had a worse effect on hotels in

Karlovy Vary than the spring wave (ICOT.cz, 2020a). As a result of the absence of foreign tourists and insufficient State support, many hotels in the West Bohemian triangle did not open until the beginning of 2022. These accommodation facilities were unable to cover their costs. Some other hotels reduced spa care and laid off their employees. Because of the rising energy costs, guest prices have increased by more than 10% (Ulrych, 2022).

## **Conclusions**

The present paper provided a brief overview of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry in the Czech Republic. Despite many national economic incentives and intensive regional campaigns that have helped maintain employment and support domestic tourism, the results indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profoundly negative effect on the tourism industry in the Czech Republic. According to tourism professionals, the government's steps were insufficient to prevent major devastation that had a negative effect on cities, regions, the spa industry, or event domestic tourism in the most vulnerable locations. In 2020, tourism in the Czech Republic became one of the industries most affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Its share in the gross domestic product fell from 2.76% to 1.48%, representing 84.3 billion CZK in financial terms. Compared with the pre-COVID year 2019, the total tourism traffic in 2021 was 52% of the number of arrivals and 56% of that of overnight stays. In 2021, foreign tourism reached only 24% of the pre-pandemic numbers. The shutdown policy, and the lower demand during the COVID-19 pandemic, put hotels and restaurants at risk of permanent closure, and many of their employees have lost their jobs. Employment in the sector decreased by 7.3% year on year. Many employees moved to other sectors. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the hospitality industry has incurred huge financial losses. Hotel and food services were extremely limited by government restrictions for a long time. The businesses are now trying to secure their existence

and restore profits, resulting in a gradual price increase. Their costs have increased. This is also due to the Ukraine war, the increase in the prices of raw materials and the energy crisis. Guests have to pay more for their services. Nevertheless, COVID-19 and the current crisis changed consumers' behavior and habits. People go to restaurants less often. More businesses will be in danger. The total impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism in the Czech Republic, which is also the main limitation of the present study, will be clear only when the virus completely disappears and the government compensation is over. Now, around ten % of businesses did not survive the COVID-19 crisis. However, this is not the final number. Tourism experts predict that about one-third of restaurants will remain closed. According to tourism professionals, the return to the pre-pandemic figures will not take months but years.

Declarations of author interest: none.

## References

- Businessinfo.cz. (2021). Tržby v pohostinství vzrostly oproti předchozímu kvartálu o 73 procent a průměrná tržba na podnik o 44 procent. Restaurace ale pocítily téměř desetiprocentní úbytek hostů. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinfo.cz/clanky/trzby-v-pohostinstvi-vzrostly-do-restauraci-ale-chodi-mene-lidi-nez-pred-covidem/> (Accessed 20 November 2021)
- Czech Statistical Office. (2022a). COVID-19 citelně postihl ekonomiku cestovního ruchu. Retrieved from <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/COVID-19-citelne-postihl-ekonomiku-cestovniho-ruchu> (Accessed 1 March 2022)
- Czech Statistical Office. (2022b). Internal tourism consumption in the Czech Republic Retrieved from [https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/tsa\\_t4\\_internal\\_tourism\\_consumption\\_in\\_the\\_czech\\_republic](https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/tsa_t4_internal_tourism_consumption_in_the_czech_republic) (Accessed 5 September 2022)
- CzechTourism (2022). Program lázeňských voucheru propojil stát s podnikateli. Retrieved from <https://www.czechtourism.cz/cs-CZ/f34db313-4f07-4028-9454-b306b71acae1/article/program-lazenskych-voucheru-2022-propojil-stat-s-p> (Accessed 1 March 2022)
- Estrada, M., Park, D., & Lee, M. (2019). How A Massive Contagious Infectious Diseases Can Affect Tourism, International Trade, Air Transportation, and Electricity Consumption. *The Case of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in China* (February 19, 2020). Available at SSRN Retrieved from:



- [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3540667](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3540667) (Accessed 25 November 2020.)
- Government of the Czech Republic. (2022). Measures adopted by the Czech Government against the coronavirus. Retrieved from <https://www.vlada.cz/en/media-centrum/aktualne/measures-adopted-by-the-czech-government-against-coronavirus-180545/> (Accessed 5 September 2022)
- ICOT.cz. (2020a). Karlovy Vary: hotely trpí více než na jaře, některé skončí. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/karlovy-vary-hotely-trpi-vice-nez-na-jare-nektere-skonci/> (Accessed 13 August 2022)
- ICOT.cz. (2020b). Turismus i tržby ve službách v 3. čtvrtletí propadly. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/turismus-i-trzby-ve-sluzbach-v-3-ctvrtleti-propadly/> (Accessed 10 August 2022)
- ICOT.cz. (2020c). Praha má novou strategii cestovního ruchu. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/praha-ma-novou-strategii-cestovniho-ruchu/> (Accessed 20 August 2022)
- ICOT.cz. (2020d). Turismus v Česku: Co nás krize naučila? Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/turismus-v-cesku-co-nas-krize-naucila/> (Accessed 6 August 2022)
- ICOT.cz. (2020e). Vouchery lázním většinou pomohly. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/vouchery-laznim-vetsinou-pomohly/> (Accessed 1 August 2022)
- ICOT.cz. (2020f). Kampaň V Praze jako doma bude prodloužena. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/kampan-v-praze-jako-doma-bude-prodlouzena/> (Accessed 21 August 2022)
- ICOT.cz. (2020g). V červenci se v hotelech ubytovalo více Čechů než vloni. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/v-cervenci-se-v-hotelech-ubytovalo-vice-cechu-nez-vloni/> (Accessed 10 August 2022)
- ICOT.cz. (2020h). Nová koncepce má kultivovat turismus v Praze. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/nova-koncepce-ma-kultivovat-turismus-v-praze/> (Accessed 3 September 2022)
- ICOT.cz. (2020i). Kongresový a veletržní průmysl bije na poplach. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/kongresovy-a-veletrzni-prumysl-bije-na-poplach/> (Accessed 31 August 2022)
- ICOT.cz. (2020j). Metropole spustí kampaň buďte v Praze jako doma. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/metropole-spusti-kampan-budte-v-praze-jako-doma/> (Accessed 14 May 2022)
- ICOT.cz. (2020k). Stát připraví velký balík opatření na podporu domácí turistiky. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/stat-pripravi-velky-balik-opatreni-na-podporu-domaci-turistiky/> (Accessed 30 March 2022)
- ICOT.cz. (2020l). CzechTourism: Dopad epidemie bude drtivý, řeší se jak přežít. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/czechtourism-dopad-epidemie-bude-drtyvy-resi-se-jak-prezit/> (Accessed 17 March 2022)
- Kadar, B. (2018) Hotel development through centralized to liberalized planning procedures: Prague lost in transition. *Tourism Geographies*, 20 (3): 461–480.
- Komenda, M., Bulhart, V., Karolyi, M., Jarkovský, J., Mužík, J., Májek, O., ... & Macková, B. (2020). Complex Reporting of the COVID-19 Epidemic in the Czech Republic: Use of an Interactive Web-Based App in Practice. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22(5), e19367.

- Ministry of Health. (2022). Trendový profil epidemiologické situace. Retrieved from <https://onemocneni-aktualne.mzcr.cz/covid-19/kumulativni-prehledy> (Accessed 5 September 2022)
- Ministry of Industry and Commerce (2022). Covid programy pro firmy a OSVČ. Retrieved from <https://www.mpo.cz/cz/rozcestnik/informace-o-koronavirus/covid-dotacni-rozcestnik--259263/> (Accessed 08 February 2022)
- Ministry for Regional Development (2021) Krizový Akční Plán Cestovního Ruchu v České Republice 2020–2021. Retrieved from <https://www.ahrcr.cz/novinky/krizovy-akcni-plan-cr-v-cr-2020-2021> (accessed on 16 August 2022)
- Prague City Tourism (2021a). More and more tourists are coming to Prague. Retrieved from <https://www.praguecitytourism.cz/en/media/press-releases/more-and-more-domestic-tourists-are-coming-to-prague-18291/> (Accessed 13 April 2022)
- Prague City Tourism (2021b). Prague kicks off the summer season with the At Home in Prague campaign. Retrieved from <https://www.praguecitytourism.cz/en/media/press-releases/prague-kicks-off-the-summer-tourist-season-with-the-at-home-in-prague-v-praze-jako-doma-campaign-17980> (Accessed 13 April 2022)
- Prague City Tourism (2022). Prague City Tourism is launching its summer season with the At Home in Prague campaign. Retrieved from <https://www.praguecitytourism.cz/en/media/press-releases/prague-city-tourism-is-launching-its-summer-campaigns.-in-addition-to-international-travellers-these-will-also-appeal-to-domestic-visitors-to-prague-with-motiva-19027> (Accessed 5 September 2022)
- Roncak, M. (2019), „Prague and the impact of low-cost airlines“, in R. Dodds and R. W. Butler (Eds.), *Overtourism: Issue, Realities, and Solutions*, De Gruyter, Boston, MA, pp. 152–168
- Stárek, V. (2020a). Průzkum AHR ČR zmapoval situaci v ubytovacích a stravovacích službách. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/pruzkum-ahr-cr-zmapoval-situaci-v-ubytovacich-a-stravovacich-sluzbach/> (Accessed 6 October 2021)
- Stárek, V. (2020b). AHR: Až 47 procent hotelů v Praze zvažuje uzavření. Retrieved from <https://www.icot.cz/ahr-az-47-procent-hotelu-v-praze-zvazuje-uzavreni/> (Accessed 2 October 2021)
- The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants (2020). Otevřený dopis vládě. Retrieved from <https://www.ahrcr.cz/en/news/COVID-19-impact-on-tourism/> (Accessed 25 March 2022)
- The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants (2021a). Kompenzační programy nepomohou všem. Retrieved from <https://www.ahrcr.cz/novinky/kompenzacni-programy-nepomohou-vsem/> (Accessed 09 March 2021)
- The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants (2021b). Hotely po půl roce uzávěry otevírají opět pokoje pro své hosty. Retrieved from <https://www.ahrcr.cz/novinky/hotely-po-pulroce-uzavery-oteviraji-opet-pokoje-pro-sve-hosty/> (Accessed 21 August 2022)
- The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants (2021c). Třetinový úbytek hostů restaurací a hotelů za první týden zprůsnění vládních opatření Retrieved from <https://www.ahrcr.cz/novinky/tz-k-novym-opatrenim-vlady/> (Accessed 29 August 2022)
- The Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants (2022). Ke kritickému stavu v ubytovacích a stravovacích službách vláda mlčí. Retrieved from <https://www.ahrcr.cz/novinky/ke-kritickemu-stavu-v-ubytovacich-a-stravovacich-sluzbach-vlada-mlci/> (Accessed 26 January 2022)

- TTG.cz. (2020). V krizi nás musí být slyšet, tentokrát si sami nepomůžeme. Retrieved from <https://www.ttg.cz/viliam-sivek-v-krizi-nas-musi-byt-slyset-tentokrat-si-sami-nepomuzeme/> (Accessed 27 July 2022)
- Ulrych, P. M. (2021a). Zpřísněná opatření sebrala hotelům a restauracím třetinu hostů Retrieved from <https://celyoturismu.cz/behem-tydne-po-zprisneni-opatreni-ubyla-hotelum-a-restauracim-tretina-hostu/> (Accessed 9 November 2021)
- Ulrych, P. M. (2021b). Miroslav Kubec: Klient bude čím dál náročnější I. Retrieved from <https://celyoturismu.cz/miroslav-kubec-klient-bude-cim-dal-narocnejsi-i/> (Accessed 7 May 2021)
- Ulrych, P. M. (2022). Asociace hotelů a restaurací čeká jasné stanovisko MPO ke kompenzacím. Retrieved from <https://celyoturismu.cz/asociace-hotelu-a-restauraci-ceka-jasne-stanovisko-mpo-ke-kompenzacim/> (Accessed 13 January 2022)
- UNWTO. (2020). Supporting jobs and economies through travel and tourism. A call for action to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and accelerate recovery. Retrieved from: <https://www.unwto.org/supporting-jobs-and-economies-through-travel-and-tourism>. (Accessed 20 November 2020)
- Vacková, H. (2021). Lidé se do restaurací nevrátili. Desetina podniků už zanikla, další krach teprve čeká. Retrieved from <https://ekonom.cz/c1-66953880-lide-se-do-restauraci-nevratili-desetina-podniku-uz-zanikla-dalsi-krach-teprve-ceka> (Accessed 22 July 2021)
- Vachtl, J. (2021). Iniciativa Chcipl PES zakládá hnutí, hospody otevřou jako politické buňky. Retrieved from [https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/koronavirus-v-cesku-chcipl-pes-tiskova-konference-restaurace-rebelie.A210119\\_091102\\_domaci\\_chtl](https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/koronavirus-v-cesku-chcipl-pes-tiskova-konference-restaurace-rebelie.A210119_091102_domaci_chtl) (Accessed 19 January 2021)
- Worldometers. (2020) Coronavirus Worldwide Graphs, Retrieved from: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/worldwide-graphs/> (Accessed 20 July 2022)