

The effects of the tourism of the Hortobágy National Park on the surrounding settlements – Lessons of a questionnaire survey

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The Puszta in the Hortobágy represents an important, individual natural and historico-cultural value, which has been deservedly possessed the rank of UNESCO World Heritage since 1999. Due to its speciality, in 1973 the first national park in Hungary, the Hortobágy National Park was founded here. Its international importance became more increased as more than one fourth part of its area (23 thousand hectare), in accordance with the Ramsar Agreement, 1971, is a valuable habitat of national importance for waterfowls, furthermore, in the framework of the UNESCO MAB Programme it is a Biosphere Reserve as well.

In the course of the questionnaire survey we investigated to what extent the 19 settlements surrounding the Hortobágy National Park can take the advantage of the status of World Heritage in their tourisms and to what extent they utilize the possibility of ecotourism. What effects does the tourism towards the Hortobágy National Park have on the economy, basis and tourist infrastructure, society of the affected settlements? What characterizes the marketing activity and co-operation of the HNP? With what conflicts do the two sides come into and what kind of development possibilities do they have?

All things considered, this investigation provides good example for development of a less-developed area by ecotourism in Hungary.