

Central Europe: Urban Typology Based on Airport Location and Accessibility

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ABSTRACT

Air transport in Central Europe has been undergoing a dynamic development after 1990. The main causes are the changing organisational framework in connection with deregulations as well as changing political, economic and social context of Central Europe.

Air transport is one of the pillars of the current globalised economy therefore it has important consequences both economic and regional (localisation of some economic activities is strongly connected with easy accessibility of air transport). This leads us to the assumption that the importance of airport location within a city (or an urban region) is growing. It presents one of the factors influencing the relative accessibility of a city (or and urban region) in the context of the European and global settlement system. Generally speaking, an airport location and its accessibility within a city (urban region) presents one of the most important geographical characteristics – a range of authors stresses the need to link airports to a quick and high capacity system of public transport.

The aim of the paper is to develop a typology of cities with comparable size and importance in the region of Central Europe based on the evaluation of airport location and accessibility in its spatial framework. The items analysed will be the airport location itself in connection with the centre of the city (distantial and temporal remoteness), accessibility using individual and public transport (the type of link to the system of public transport, travel time, relative importance of various means of transport, the way of connection to regional and national transport systems). In addition to the current state, the paper will pay attention to the development after 1990 considering the dynamic growth in air transport and the importance of certain Central European airports after the economic and political changes.

The analyses will look at cities in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, Hungary, Austria and Poland. Taking into account the varied historical and economic situations in the mentioned countries, it is expected that there will be certain differences in the overall importance of air transport and also in airport accessibility in individual cities.

Key Words: airport location, urban typology, Central Europe