

## Polish-Czechoslovak Cross-Border Tourism between 1919 and 1939 in the Light of Polish Legislation

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### **Abstract:**

The article revolves around Polish-Czechoslovak tourism relations between 1919 and 1939. The author analysed the legislation establishing solutions aimed to facilitate tourism on both sides of the border. The Tourism Convention drawn up in Prague on 30th May 1925 was of key importance in this regard. Attention was also paid to selected provisions of the Polish-Czechoslovak commercial conventions relevant to the development of tourism. The following part of the article examines passport and visa regulations governing departure from Poland to Czechoslovakia and arrival to Poland from Czechoslovakia. The author also studies the foreign exchange regulations that individuals entering Czechoslovakia for tourist purposes had to follow.

**Keywords:** tourism; tourism in the Second Polish Republic; Polish and Czechoslovak relations between 1919 and 1939

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The relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia from 1918 to 1939 were characterised by distrust and resentment. This state of affairs was largely a result of the territorial conflict between the two states, which affected relationships throughout the inter-war period.<sup>1</sup>

Cold political relations between the two countries affected economic, military and scientific cooperation. However, relations in the field of tourism were different. This was due to the fact that there was an increase in tourist activity of the population in Poland and Czechoslovakia. State authorities realized that tourism will contribute to overall economic growth as well as social and territorial integration after years of lacking their own statehood. Therefore, they began to create legal conditions for its development. These activities included, among others, creating legal regulations that removed various barriers limiting it. Actions were also undertaken on laws that would establish some regulations concerning the development of tourism. In Czechoslovakia, works on the postulates for the law on supporting the development of tourism began in 1927 at the Ministry of Trade and, after discussions lasting several years, it was finalized in 1936 in the form of a preliminary draft of the law on the promotion of tourism. An alternative bill was submitted by MP Alois Neuman in the parliament. However, until the outbreak of World War II, the act was not passed, primarily due to the lack of broader support. In changed political circumstances, the act was passed in Slovakia on 23rd June 1939.<sup>2</sup> In Poland, in 1928, an inter-ministerial Commission for the Study of Tourism Issues was established. The best specialists in the field of tourism participated in drafting it. The Commission produced a comprehensive report in which it assessed the economic importance of tourism. Considerable attention was paid to the organization of administration in the field of tourism. The report ended with a bill on supporting tourism. After a period of break, the work on the act was resumed in 1931. A new draft was prepared by the Ministry of Public Works. Due to the lack of consent of the stakeholders regarding the individual solutions provided in the draft, the act could not be passed until the outbreak of World War II.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> With regard to the Polish-Czech conflict over Cieszyn Silesia, see especially KAMIŃSKI, M. K. *Konflikt polsko-czeski 1918–1921*. Warsaw: Neriton, 2001; PILARSKI, S. *Zarys stosunków polsko-czechosłowackich 1918–1933*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2008; VALENTA, J. *Česko-polské vztahy v letech 1918–1920 a Těšínské Slezsko*. Ostrava: Krajské nakladatelství, 1961; SZKLARSKA-LOHMANNOWA, A. *Polsko-czechosłowackie stosunki dyplomatyczne w latach 1918–1925*. Wrocław – Warsaw – Kraków: Ossoliński National Institute, Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1967, pp. 13–88; GIZA, A. *Stosunki polsko-czeskie 1795–1920*. Ed. 2. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 1995, pp. 136–175; KOZEŃSKI, J. *Czechosłowacja w polskiej polityce zagranicznej 1932–1938*. Poznań: Institute for Western Affairs, 1964, pp. 20–27; HELLER, M. Spór o Zaolzie po I wojnie światowej. In: KUBERSKI, L. – LIS, M. (eds.). *Rok 1918 w Polsce i w państwach sąsiednich. Osiemdziesiątolecie zakończenia I wojny światowej z perspektywy śląskiej*. Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2002, pp. 137–146; GAWRECKI, D. Československo-polský konflikt o Těšínsko v letech 1918–1920, jeho příčiny a následky. In: KUBERSKI – LIS, *op. cit.*, pp. 129–138; LEWANDOWSKI, K. *Stosunki polsko-czechosłowackie w latach 1918–1939*. In: ŻARNOWSKI, J. (ed.). *Przyjaźnie i antagonizmy. Stosunki Polski z państwami sąsiednimi w latach 1918–1939*. Wrocław: Ossoliński National Institute, 1977, pp. 217–234.

<sup>2</sup> ŠTEMBERK, J. Meziválečná jednání o zákoně o cestovním ruchu. *Studia Turistica*, 2022, No. 1, pp. 40–48; ŠTEMBERK, J. Meziválečné návrhy právní úpravy cestovního ruchu a současnost. *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Iuridica*, 2016, No. 3, pp. 147–154; ŠTEMBERK, J. *Fenomén cestovního ruchu*. Pelhřimov – Praha: 2009, s. 34–41.

<sup>3</sup> ČWIKŁA, L. *Prawne aspekty rozwoju turystyki w Polsce w latach 1918–1939*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2011, pp. 311–317.

Both neighbouring countries were also interested in the development of cross-border tourism. In this respect, new challenges had to be faced, resulting from the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.<sup>4</sup> After regaining independence in 1918, the Polish-Czechoslovak border was sealed, among others, by introducing compulsory passports. This affected largely extent tourists who wanted to move freely around the borderland area, rich in natural values. Tourist associations – the Polish Tatra Society (Polskie Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie) and the Club of Czechoslovak Tourists (Klub československých turistů) were also interested in the accessibility to attractive tourist areas on both sides of the border. It put pressure on the political authorities to introduce appropriate legal solutions.

The following article aims to analyse Polish legislation regulating cross-border cooperation in the field of tourism after 1918.

### **Tourism Convention**

At the national level, cooperation in the field of tourism began with the signing of the Tourism Convention (the first in the world). The announcement of its preparation was found in point 2 of the minutes of the meeting held in Kraków from 25th April to 6th May 1924 between the Polish and Czechoslovak commissioners to the International Polish-Czechoslovak Delimitation Commission, approved by the Conference of Ambassadors.<sup>5</sup> Both border commissioners undertook to “recommend” that the governments conclude such a convention as soon as possible and that it should facilitate and enable the free movement of tourists in the common border area, above all by “abolishing passport difficulties, facilitating communications, etc.”. Art. 16 of Appendix A to the minutes regulates border crossings in detail, while Art. 17 and 18 declare the improvement of roads and the construction of a railway connection between the two countries. The parties were also to agree on the unification of the construction and significance of the Tatra paths and trails running from one side to the other, as well as the facilitation of their use.

The original text of the Convention was prepared at a conference in Zakopane on 6th–8th September 1924 with the participation of government representatives, experts, and others from both sides. It was subsequently discussed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at inter-ministerial conferences. After the introduction of amendments, it was presented in May 1925 in Prague to representatives of both governments for negotiations.<sup>6</sup> It was signed in Prague on 30th May 1925.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Permanent Court of International Justice. Fourth Extraordinary Session. Delimitation of the Polish-Czechoslovakian Frontier (Question of Jaworzina) [online]. Available at: [http://www.worldcourts.com/pcij/eng/decisions/1923.12.06\\_polish\\_czech.htm](http://www.worldcourts.com/pcij/eng/decisions/1923.12.06_polish_czech.htm). [cit. 10. 3. 2023].

<sup>5</sup> Appendix to the Government Statement of 19th December 1925 on the resolution of the Conference of Ambassadors of 5th September 1924 concerning the minutes signed in Kraków on 6th May 1924, in connection with the establishment of the Polish-Czechoslovak border in the Jaworzyna district (Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ No. 133, item 952).

<sup>6</sup> Konwencja turystyczna z Czechosłowacją i układ P. T. T. z towarzystwami turystycznymi czechosłowackimi i jugosłowiańskimi. *Przegląd Turystyczny*, 1925, No. 2, pp. 3–4; GOETEL, W. Spór o Jaworzynę a Park Narodowy Tatrzański. *Wierchy*, 1925, p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> Tourism Convention between the Republic of Poland and the Czechoslovak Republic signed on 30th May 1925 in Prague (Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ No. 57, item 333). For more on the Convention, see e.g. ORŁOWICZ, M. Turystyczne ułatwienia graniczne na granicy polsko-czechosłowackiej. *Ziemia*, 1928, No. 13, pp. 108–109; idem. Konwencja turystyczna polsko-czechosłowacka. *Wierchy*, 1926, pp. 135–140.

The document, which contained 14 articles, was ratified by the President of the Republic of Poland upon the consent of the Sejm and the Senate 15 days after the exchange of the instruments of ratification and came into force on 12th June 1926.<sup>8</sup> According to Art. 4, the Convention enabled navigating in the defined border area of Czechoslovakia and Poland based on the ID cards of tourist and ski societies, which were to be indicated by the governments of both countries, without the need for a passport. The ID cards were subject to validation by the first instance administrative authorities of the ID card holder's permanent place of residence and the consular office of the other party.

The tourist belt was specified in detail in Art. 2 of the Convention. It covered three areas – one in the Tatra Mountains and two in the Eastern Carpathian region near Lavochna and Vorokhta. Subsequent articles of the Convention provided for the mutual granting of railway discounts to tourists of authorised societies, the establishment of bus connections in the tourist belt by both parties, the installation of telephone connections in the tourist belt, the mutual transmission of meteorological news, as well as access and transport to hostels through the territory of the other state, should this be necessary. The Convention retained the so-called “Beskidówki” [Beskids], under which members of local Silesian tourist societies were allowed to cross the border in Cieszyn Silesia on public holidays and pre-holiday days for tourist purposes (Art. 11).

Art. 5 of the Convention provided the possibility to organise school excursions in the Polish-Czechoslovak border area. According to the Article, it was possible to obtain from the competent administrative authorities of the first instance special collective ID cards for school excursions for a period of up to six days in order to travel in the tourist belt, provided that the excursion leader had a list of names of the excursion participants, the certification of the school management and the ID card of the competent society with the approval of the relevant authorities.

In Poland, the implementation of the provisions of the Convention was entrusted to the Minister of the Interior in consultation with other relevant ministries.<sup>9</sup> The Minister of the Interior issued Circular Letter No. 64 on 12th June 1926 to specify that members of the Polish Tatra Society could exercise the rights arising from the Convention throughout the year,<sup>10</sup> while members of the Polish Ski Association (the latter had to move on skis

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<sup>8</sup> The Sejm passed the Act on 30th July 1925. See Act of 30th July 1925 on the ratification of the Tourism Convention between the Republic of Poland and the Czechoslovak Republic of 30th May 1925 (Dz. U. / Journal of Laws/ No. 89, item 626). The Polish President ratified the Convention on 15th September 1925. The instruments of ratification were exchanged in Warsaw on 27th May 1926. See Government Statement of 29th May 1926 on the exchange of instruments of ratification of the Tourism Convention between the Republic of Poland and the Czechoslovak Republic, signed on 30th May 1925 (Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ No. 57, item 334).

<sup>9</sup> For the interpretation of the provisions of the Convention, see Circular Letter No. 49 of 31st March 1931 (AP. 1240/17) on the interpretation of the provisions of the Polish-Czechoslovak tourism and local border traffic agreements (Official Gazette of the Ministry of the Interior No. 3, item 89); Circular Letter of the Minister of the Interior No. 7 of 6th February 1936 on the movement of persons across the Polish-Czechoslovak border (No. 117-cz-21) (Official Gazette of the Ministry of the Interior No. 4, item 17); document No. AP. 117/Cz./2 of 9th March 1933 on tourist ID cards (Official Gazette of the Ministry of the Interior No. 4, item 64).

<sup>10</sup> Circular Letter No. 64 of 12th June 1926 No BO. 6830/26 to all Voivods and the Government Commissioner for the Capital City of Warsaw on the implementing regulations to the Polish-Czechoslovak Tourism Convention of 30th May 1925 (Official Gazette of the Ministry of the Interior No. 4, item 205).

or with skis) – in the winter season, *i.e.*, from 1st December to 30th April. The first instance administrative authority of the permanent residence was responsible for approving the ID card and the consular office was to issue a visa free of charge for one year. After one year, the approval could be extended for a further period if the holder of the ID card did not abuse it and showed that they were still a member of a given society. In turn, pursuant to the implementing regulations to the Polish-Czechoslovak Tourism Convention of 30th May 1925, hikers could cross the customs border in both directions on tourist roads, which were considered to be roads and paths bearing a tourist sign, or roads and paths used by hikers or skiers shown on military maps. The legislation also governed the procedure for carrying out simplified customs clearance.<sup>11</sup>

The Polish-Czechoslovak Convention resulted from the decisions of the Council of Ambassadors, which ruled that the territory of the Tatranská Javorina in the Tatra Mountains belonged to Czechoslovakia.<sup>12</sup> The reason for concluding the Convention was explained in the introduction and stated that the governments of both countries wished to enable their citizens to enjoy the beauty of nature by facilitating and promoting tourism in the Polish-Czechoslovak border area. According to Walery Goetel, the idea behind the Convention was to open the Polish-Czechoslovak border to tourism in the future.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, Zbigniew Kulczycki is right to note that a relevant factor influencing the decision to conclude the Convention was the fact that the entire area to which it applied had previously (until 1918) been part of Austria-Hungary and constituted a unified economic and tourist area. Public pressure regarding the matter, inspired by tourist societies, also contributed to the signing of the Convention.<sup>14</sup>

Holders of Convention documents were initially allowed to cross the border at virtually any point and were not subject to any restrictions or checks. Since the introduction of foreign exchange restrictions in Poland in the mid-1930s, specific crossing points were opened at the border to place tourists under foreign exchange control.<sup>15</sup> Foreign exchange restrictions also prevented the planned extension of the Convention zone to include more areas enabling Polish tourists to visit the Low Tatras and Czechoslovak tourists to visit Kraków.<sup>16</sup>

The granting of the right to move throughout the area covered by the Convention to members of the Polish Tatra Society resulted in a significant increase in the number of members (in 1923, the society comprised 4,373 members while in 1933 – 19,719).<sup>17</sup> Other tourist societies from Poland and Czechoslovakia made efforts to extend the provisions

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<sup>11</sup> Official Gazette of the Ministry of State Treasury of 1927 No. 5, item 65.

<sup>12</sup> GOETEL, W. Szkic przebiegu sprawy Jaworzyny. *Przegląd Turystyczny*, 1925, No. 1, pp. 7–9.

<sup>13</sup> GOETEL, Spór o Jaworzynę a Park Narodowy Tatrzański, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> KULCZYCKI, Z. *Zarys historii turystyki w Polsce*. Warsaw: Sport i Turystyka, 1977, pp. 105–106.

<sup>15</sup> *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny* of 18th December 1936.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, of 12th May 1933. The Polish Convention served as a model for Austria and Italy. These countries have entered into a similar agreement to allow movement in the area of a dozen border alpine passes. *Ibidem*, of 22nd September 1933; Konwencja turystyczna włosko-austriacka. *Przegląd Turystyczny*, 1934, No. 3, p. 10. See also KULCZYCKI, *op. cit.*, pp. 105–106.

<sup>17</sup> Data as in GAJ, J. *Zarys historii turystyki w Polsce*. Warsaw: Wyższa Szkoła Ekonomiczna, 2003, p. 77.

of the Convention to include them, but the governments of both countries did not agree, primarily in fear of the use of ID cards to circumvent passport fee regulations.<sup>18</sup>

In the 1930s, the Polish Tatra Society (*Polskie Towarzystwo Tatrzańskie*) engaged in talks with the Club of Czechoslovak Tourists (*Klub československých turistů*) regarding the amendment of the Convention, particularly the extension of the tourist belt in the Carpathian Mountains, which, however, could not be successfully concluded.<sup>19</sup> This initiative was eventually put to an end by the Polish-Czechoslovak conflict over Trans-Olza, as a result of which the application of the Convention was suspended.<sup>20</sup>

Tourism facilitation also applied to the Jaworzyna area (a 15 km wide area on both sides of the border), where there were no laws relating to restrictions on staying in the border zone. Pursuant to Art. 16 of the Appendix to the minutes of the meeting held in Kraków from 25th April to 6th May 1924 between the Polish and Czechoslovak commissioners to the International Polish-Czechoslovak Delimitation Commission,<sup>21</sup> special “Tatra ID cards” were issued for up to three months to persons who, during the summer or winter season, resided in one of the Tatra climatic locations on the territory of Poland or Czechoslovakia, entitling them to cross the border during the period of their validity. Individuals who stayed in the climatic location for a short period of time or passed through it without stopping were provided with “Tatra ID cards” that remained valid for six days. Members of one of the tourist societies established on the territory of Poland or Czechoslovakia, listed in the Tourism Convention whose conclusion was announced in point 2 of the minutes, could cross the border with a card confirming their membership in the society, issued by the authorities of the society and valid for a period of one year. Polish and Czechoslovak citizens in possession of a valid foreign passport with a visa issued by the competent post of the other country and tourists from other countries with a passport and a visa issued by the competent authority of the country in which territory they wished to reside for holiday purposes could also cross the border on the same terms as holders of the “Tatra ID cards”. The aforementioned persons with a valid “Tatra ID card” or membership card could also cross the border on side roads and carry hand luggage and tourist or skiing equipment without incurring customs duties. “Tatra ID cards” were issued and tourist society cards were confirmed by the competent first instance administrative authority of the country

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<sup>18</sup> Central Archives of Modern Records (hereinafter AAN), Ministry of the Interior, materials concerning the scope of action of the Department of Public Order of the Ministry of the Interior 1931–1932, file ref. 813, pp. 50–51, the issue of tourism facilitation in the Polish-Czechoslovak border area.

<sup>19</sup> See Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw, Polish Tatra Society, file ref. 202, p. 10. Proceedings of the celebrations marking the 60th anniversary of the Polish Tatra Society in Zakopane on 7th May 1933; Sprawozdanie Zarządu Głównego Polskiego Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego z działalności za czas od 1 marca 1930 do 31 marca 1931 [Report of the Management Board of the Polish Tatra Society on its activities from 1st March 1930 to 31st March 1931]. *Wierchy*, 1931, Appendix, pp. 32–33; Sprawozdanie Zarządu Głównego Polskiego Towarzystwa Tatrzańskiego z działalności za czas od 1 kwietnia 1931 do 31 marca 1932 [Report of the Management Board of the Polish Tatra Society on its activities from 1st April 1931 to 31st March 1932]. *Wierchy*, 1932, Appendix, p. 15; Przed rozszerzeniem pasa turystycznego polsko-czechosłowackiego. *Przegląd Turystyczny*, 1933, 2, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Wiadomości Ziem Górskich*, 1939, No. 5, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Appendix to the Government Statement of 19th December 1925 on the resolution of the Conference of Ambassadors of 5th September 1924 concerning the minutes signed in Kraków on 6th May 1924, in connection with the establishment of the Polish-Czechoslovak border in the Jaworzyna district (Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ No. 133, item 952).

within the territory of which the Tatra climatic location, where the tourist wished to stay, the competent tourist society, or a body authorised by it, was located.<sup>22</sup>

### **Other bilateral agreements**

Provisions relevant to the development of tourism were also included in the commercial agreements between Poland and Czechoslovakia. They concerned issues related to the facilitation of railway connections. According to Art. 22 of the Commercial Convention signed in Warsaw on 23rd April 1925,<sup>23</sup> both countries undertook to apply the principle of most-favoured nation (MFN) in railway tariffs and agreed to “apply a mutually benevolent tariff policy” in order to facilitate international railway traffic. Pursuant to Art. 23, direct railway links were to be introduced between the two countries and between one State – Party and third countries through the territory of the other State – Party, while customs and passport formalities were to be simplified. A similar provision was contained in Art. 24 of the Convention of Commerce and Navigation between Czechoslovakia and Poland, signed in Prague on 10th February 1934.<sup>24</sup>

On 30th May 1927, a Convention on the regulation of mutual railway communication between Poland and Czechoslovakia was signed in Prague.<sup>25</sup> In Art. 3, both parties declared that they would endeavour to improve railway communication between their territories. In particular, railway, postal, customs, passport and other services were to be performed in such a way “that the carriage of persons, baggage and goods is carried out as quickly as possible”. In the final protocol attached to the Convention, both parties

<sup>22</sup> According to point a 3 of the Cieszyn Protocol of 28th July 1924, which contained implementing provisions for the Kraków Protocol, a person applying for a “Tatra ID card” had to present a document certifying their nationality (Polish or Czechoslovak) and, if applying for a card valid for three months, proof of enrolment in the population register in a Tatra municipality or proof of enrolment in the population register of another municipality and having an additional place of residence in a particular climatic location. See Circular Letter of the Minister of the Interior No. 7 of 6th February 1936 on the movement of persons across the Polish-Czechoslovak border (No. 117-cz-21) (Official Gazette of the Ministry of the Interior No. 4, item 17). See also ORŁOWICZ, Turystyczne ułatwienia graniczne na granicy Polsko-Czeskosłowackiej, pp. 107–108.

<sup>23</sup> Commercial Convention between Poland and Czechoslovakia, signed in Warsaw on 23rd April 1925 (Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ of 1926, No. 111, item 644). The Convention was ratified in Warsaw on 8th October 1925. The exchange of instruments of ratification also took place in Warsaw on 22nd October 1926. See Government Statement of 28th October 1926 on the exchange of instruments of ratification of the Commercial Convention between the Republic of Poland and the Czechoslovak Republic, signed in Warsaw on 23rd April 1925 with accompanying Appendices A, B, C, D, E, F and the Final Protocol of the same date (Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ No. 111, item 645).

<sup>24</sup> Convention of Commerce and Navigation between Czechoslovakia and Poland, signed in Prague on 10th February 1934 (Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ of 1937, No. 22, item 142). The Convention was adopted, ratified and confirmed by the President of Poland in Warsaw on 25th November 1935. The exchange of instruments of ratification took place in Warsaw on 18th February 1937. See Government Statement of 15th March 1937 on the exchange of instruments of ratification of the Convention of Commerce and Navigation between Czechoslovakia and Poland, signed in Prague on 10th February 1934 (Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ No. 22, item 143).

<sup>25</sup> Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ of 1929, No. 84, item 624. The exchange of instruments of ratification took place in Warsaw on 23rd November 1929. See Government Statement of 27th November 1929 on the exchange of instruments of ratification of the Convention on the regulation of mutual railway communication between Poland and Czechoslovakia, signed with the Final Protocol in Prague on 30th May 1927 (Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ of 1929, No. 84, item 625).

committed themselves to enter into discussions on the conduct of joint passport and customs control “in due time”.

Work on a Polish-Slovak agreement on the regulation of mutual border relations in railway transport was initiated in July 1939. The project was inspired by the Polish-Hungarian agreement.<sup>26</sup> Due to the outbreak of war, the work could not be completed.

In 1930, Czechoslovak railways granted a 50 per cent discount in 2nd or 3rd class in passenger or fast trains to school trips of at least ten people travelling to or passing through Czechoslovakia. The discount could be obtained by means of an application, certified by the school management, stating that it was a school trip for sightseeing purposes. The application had to be sent to the Czechoslovak railways at least three weeks before the beginning of the trip. The application may have been sent through Czechoslovak diplomatic and consular posts or through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague.<sup>27</sup>

### **Passport and visa regulations**

There is no doubt that passport regulations affected the development of Polish-Czechoslovak tourism. Although Poland generally aimed to limit travel abroad,<sup>28</sup> the guidelines regarding this issue did not include all countries. Passports necessary to travel to Czechoslovakia were issued on a general basis, with the only limitation being that no more than 5,000 individuals could participate in such trips in a calendar year. The person applying for a passport was not required to prove the need to leave. They paid a discounted fee for the document, regardless of their financial status. The passport authorities could not condition the issuance of a passport on the approval of the revenue authorities. The only instance when it was necessary to present – in accordance with the applicable regulations – for example, a certificate confirming the medical character of the trip and the approval of the Ministry of the Interior was in the case of applying for a free passport.<sup>29</sup>

Pursuant to Circular Letter No. 30 of 29th May 1937 on travelling abroad (No. AP. 128-27),<sup>30</sup> Czechoslovakia, along with Austria, Finland, Latvia and Sweden, was among the countries to which no passport restrictions applied. Travelling to these countries was not burdened with special currency restrictions. The 15-day period of passport validity was used as the basis for calculating the passport fee. The fee was 40 Polish zlotys and increased proportionally for longer periods.

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<sup>26</sup> See letter of the Director of the General Department of the Ministry of Communications to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 18th July 1939, Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw, Ministry of Communications, T. 3 Polish-Slovak Railway Agreement, file ref. 115, pp. 150–151.

<sup>27</sup> Circular Letter of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment to all authorities, offices and schools subordinate to the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment on railway discounts for school trips in Czechoslovakia (Official Gazette of the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment of 1930 No. 6, item 94).

<sup>28</sup> See Circular Letter No. 58 of 4th May 1932 (AP. 131/1) on restrictions in the issuance of passports (Official Gazette of the Ministry of the Interior No. 8, item 93); Circular Letter No. 41 of 24th April 1933 (AP. 128/60) on passport policy (Official Gazette of the Ministry of the Interior No. 6, item 93); Circular Letter No. 59 of 16th June 1933 (AP. 128/60) on passport policy (Official Gazette of the Ministry of the Interior No. 11, item 143).

<sup>29</sup> Circular Letter No. 3 of 16th January 1935 on travelling to Czechoslovakia (No. AP. 128-133) (Official Gazette of the Ministry of the Interior No. 3, item 8).

<sup>30</sup> Official Gazette of the Ministry of the Interior of 1937 No. 14, item 102.



A Czechoslovak citizen who wished to legally enter Poland for tourist purposes had to be in possession of a valid document entitling them to travel abroad and obtain a visa from the Polish representation in Czechoslovakia. Such a visa was valid for one month from the date of issue and entitled the holder to enter the territory of Poland once. The visa fee was 10 gold francs (for a multiple-entry visa valid for multiple entries and exits with a three-month deadline, the fee was 20 gold francs).<sup>31</sup>

In accordance with item 47 of the general tariff of consular fees attached to the Regulation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 19th May 1925 issued in agreement with the Ministers of State Treasury, Industry and Trade, the Interior, Justice and Labour and Social Welfare on the general tariff of consular fees,<sup>32</sup> a foreigner (and thus also a Czechoslovak citizen) had to pay 20 Polish zlotys for a multiple-entry visa valid for up to 1 year, 1 Polish zloty for a transit visa without the right to stop in the territory of the Republic and 2 Polish zlotys for a return transit visa valid for two passes through Polish territory without the right to stop. The term of validity of the visa was determined by the consul at their own discretion or on a reciprocal basis, subject to a maximum time limit.

Pursuant to Regulation No. E.III.686/5/1 of 1933 on visa fees,<sup>33</sup> Czechoslovak citizens could obtain a visa free of charge if they came to spas in Poland for recreational or therapeutic purposes. This involved spas for the return of which the Ministry of Communications had granted a 50 per cent discount on train tickets.<sup>34</sup> The necessary condition was the possession of a train ticket to one of the 99 locations listed in the Regulation or to a location situated in the Maritime district near the Baltic Sea. The destinations were divided into two groups: one group consisted of locations to which a free visa could be obtained throughout the year and the other group included locations to which a free visa could be obtained between 15th May and 31st October. Furthermore, in line with the concluded agreements, reduced fees under a reciprocal basis were available to participants of trips consisting of at least ten persons and holding individual or collective passports (the discount applied to single-entry visas with the right to stay no longer than one month or return transit visas).

A new tariff of consular fees and procedural costs, attached to the Regulation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 18th April 1934 and issued in agreement with the Ministers of State Treasury, Industry and Trade, the Interior, Justice and Social Welfare on the general tariff of consular fees, came into force on 1st July 1934.<sup>35</sup> The fees for passport visas were not affected.

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<sup>31</sup> Circular Letter [of 2nd November 1923] on the amount of consular fees for visas of Czechoslovak citizens (Official Gazette of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs No. 14, item 167). See also Circular Letter [of 10th October 1924] on fees for visas of foreign citizens (Official Gazette of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs No. 8, item 110).

<sup>32</sup> Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ No. 56, item 402.

<sup>33</sup> Official Gazette of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs No. 13, item 113.

<sup>34</sup> In accordance with Circular Letter No. E.III.686/5/4, the statement that this refers to spas for the return from which the Ministry of Communications has granted a 50 per cent discount on train tickets has been removed from the Regulation. [Circular Letter] visa fees (Official Gazette of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 1934 No. 2, item 3).

<sup>35</sup> Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ No. 42, item 376.

In accordance with the Implementing Instruction to the Regulation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 18th April 1934 on the tariff of consular fees,<sup>36</sup> in the case of trips by Czechoslovak citizens, under a reciprocal basis, their participants (if the trip consisted of at least ten persons) should be granted free single-entry visas with the right to stay up to one month, or free return transit visas. Foreigners arriving at Polish spas for recreational or therapeutic purposes were granted free visas as long as they had a ticket to one of the destinations listed in the Instruction. The locations listed in the Instruction were divided into two groups: the first group included 23 destinations that could be visited all year round, while the second group contained 34 places that could be visited between 15th May and 31st October.

In accordance with the notice on visa fees charged to the citizens of certain countries and categories of foreigners,<sup>37</sup> participants in trips consisting of at least ten Czechoslovak citizens holding individual or collective passports were exempted from paying fees for single-entry return transit or residence visas with the right of stay up to one month.

### **Foreign exchange regulations**

In the inter-war period, due to the unfavourable economic situation after the First World War, individual countries introduced limits on the amount of money that a tourist leaving the country could take with them in order to protect themselves against the export of currency. Polish citizens travelling to Czechoslovakia for tourist purposes had to comply with the general foreign exchange legislation. In the second half of the 1930s, the Foreign Exchange Commission slightly eased the regulations for tourist trips to Czechoslovakia.

On 31st July 1936, the Foreign Exchange Commission issued Circular Letter No. 29, in which it authorised foreign exchange banks to sell and grant export permits to persons travelling to Czechoslovakia for tourist or therapeutic purposes, letters of credit in Czech korunas up to the equivalent of 1,000 Polish zlotys per person per month over and above the norm provided for in Art. 12 sec. 1 of the Regulation of the Minister of State Treasury of 24th July 1936. (*i.e.*, 200 Polish zlotys per person).<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, every person departing with a separate foreign passport was allowed to export Polish or Czechoslovak money up to the amount of 30 Polish zlotys.<sup>39</sup>

On 4th June 1937, the aforementioned provision was amended. From that time onwards, a person residing in Poland, who possessed a foreign passport permitting travel to Czechoslovakia and was visiting that country for tourist or spa purposes could purchase letters of credit issued only in Czechoslovak korunas – up to the equivalent of 800 Polish zlotys per month – for the duration of the stay in Czechoslovakia declared in the application at a foreign exchange bank and export them abroad. Moreover, each person was entitled to export Polish money up to an amount of 50 Polish zlotys, but it entailed the loss of the opportunity to exercise the rights contained in Art. 12 sec. 1 of the Regulation of the Minister of State

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<sup>36</sup> Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ No. 10, item 90.

<sup>37</sup> Official Gazette of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 1937 No. 5, item 41.

<sup>38</sup> See Regulation of the Minister of State Treasury of 24th July 1936 on monetary transactions with foreign countries and on the circulation of foreign and domestic means of payment (Dz. U. /Journal of Laws/ No. 57, item 419).

<sup>39</sup> Circular Letter [of the Foreign Exchange Commission] No. 29 of 31st July 1936 on letters of credit for Czechoslovakia (Official Gazette of the Ministry of State Treasury No. 21, item 679).

Treasury of 24th July 1936.<sup>40</sup> Subsequently, the Foreign Exchange Commission extended the above authorisation by allowing the export of the equivalent of 50 Polish zlotys not only in Polish currency but also in Czechoslovak koruna.<sup>41</sup>

Pursuant to the Circular Letter of the Foreign Exchange Commission of 10th January 1938, foreign exchange banks were allowed to make their own allocations of foreign currency for trips to Czechoslovakia only in accordance with the generally applicable rules contained in Art. 12 sec. 1 of the Regulation of the Minister of State Treasury of 24th July 1936. To grant authorisations for higher amounts, the bank was required to obtain the Commission's approval.<sup>42</sup>

On 7th April 1938, the Foreign Exchange Commission issued a Circular Letter,<sup>43</sup> which revoked the validity of Circular Letter No. 29 of 10th January 1938. The Circular Letter of 7th April 1938 regulated the sale of letters of credit for trips to Czechoslovakia in a new way. The Commission authorised foreign exchange banks to sell and grant export permits to Polish citizens holding a foreign passport valid in Czechoslovakia, who would be travelling to that country for tourist or therapeutic purposes, as well as letters of credit in the amount equivalent to 800 Polish zlotys per foreign passport per month for the duration of the stay in Czechoslovakia declared in the application. Letters of credit could only be issued in Czechoslovak korunas to one of the six listed banks in Prague or to their branches and correspondents in Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, a person could export Polish or Czechoslovak money up to the amount of 30 Polish zlotys. Exports of higher sums had to be authorised by the Foreign Exchange Commission. Persons who were granted the right to export means of payment to Czechoslovakia under this Circular Letter could not exercise the rights provided for in the Regulation of the Minister of State Treasury of 24th July 1936 and could not acquire foreign currency up to the equivalent of 200 Polish zlotys.

On 26th May 1939, the Foreign Exchange Commission issued a Regulation on payment transactions with the Slovak Republic.<sup>44</sup> Pursuant to Art. 8 of the Regulation, any Polish citizen holding a foreign passport valid for travel to the then autonomous Slovakia could purchase, at a foreign exchange bank authorised by the Commission, and export cheques issued by the Polish Settlement Institute up to 700 Slovak koruna for each week of stay in Slovakia declared in the application for a maximum of four weeks. In addition, they could export 30 Polish zlotys or the equivalent in any foreign currency. Individuals who obtained the right to export means of payment to Slovakia based on the aforementioned

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<sup>40</sup> Circular Letter of the Foreign Exchange Commission of 4th June 1937 on the amendment of Circular Letter No. 29 of 30th July 1936 on letters of credit for Czechoslovakia (Official Gazette of the Ministry of State Treasury No. 15, item 501).

<sup>41</sup> Amendment to Circular Letter of the Foreign Exchange Commission No. 29 of 4th June 1937 (Official Gazette of the Ministry of State Treasury of 30th June 1937 No. 16, item 551).

<sup>42</sup> See Circular Letter of the Foreign Exchange Commission of 10th January 1938 on the amendment of Circular Letter No. 29 of 30th July 1936 partially amended by the Circular Letter of 4th June 1937 on letters of credit for Czechoslovakia (Official Gazette of the Ministry of State Treasury No. 2, item 59).

<sup>43</sup> Circular Letter of the Foreign Exchange Commission of 7th April 1938 on the amendment of Circular Letter No. 29 of 30th July 1936 partially amended by the Circular Letters of 4th June 1937 and 10th January 1938 on letters of credit for Czechoslovakia (Official Gazette of the Ministry of State Treasury No. 11, item 298).

<sup>44</sup> Regulation of the Foreign Exchange Commission of 26th May 1939 on payment transactions with the Slovak Republic (Official Gazette of the Ministry of State Treasury of 10th June 1939 No. 15, item 348).

provisions could not exercise the rights contained in Art. 12 sec. 1 and 2 of the Regulation of the Minister of State Treasury of 24th July 1936 in the wording established by the Regulation of the Minister of State Treasury of 20th January 1939, nor the right to acquire foreign currency by means of a foreign passport. Persons who travelled to Slovakia for more than four weeks – as stated in Art. 9 – could additionally receive cheques up to the amount of 1,300 Slovak korunas per month per person from the Polish Settlement Institute at monthly intervals. Such individuals additionally had to be in possession of a passport valid at the time of sending the cheques and provide a certificate confirming their residence in Slovakia and the validity of the passport, issued by the consulate of Poland. Exports of higher sums or for longer periods were authorised by the Foreign Exchange Commission after submitting an appropriate application (Art.10).

The rules for the sale of tourist Slovak cheques were detailed in the Circular Letter issued by the Polish Settlement Institute on 3rd June 1939.<sup>45</sup> The list of banks authorised by the Polish Settlement Institute to sell tourist Slovak cheques and purchase cheques issued by the National Bank of Slovakia (nine banks and their branches) and the list of banking institutions entitled to cash cheques issued by the Polish Settlement Institute in Slovakia and sell cheques issued by the National Bank of Slovakia (seven institutions and their branches) were attached as appendices to the Circular Letter.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, it is important to note that the hallmark of Polish-Czechoslovak political relations in the inter-war period was the lack of their correct alignment, which resulted from mutual antagonism. Measures undertaken to foster these relations have not yielded the expected results. Periods of cooperation were temporary and associated with development of the international affairs, primarily the growing threat from Germany.

Political contacts also negatively affected cooperation between the two countries in the field of tourism, although in this respect, they were warmer. The analysis of regulations allows concluding that the Polish authorities considered Czechoslovakia as one of the most important countries with regard to tourism. Attempts were made to mitigate the passport and visa policy, as well as the foreign exchange restrictions introduced due to global trends (economic crisis) and the necessity to protect the balance of payments, primarily through the facilitation of border crossings, discounted fees for issuing a passport or obtaining a visa, as well as the implementation of special foreign exchange legislation in the second half of the 1930s. The adopted solutions favoured the development of Polish-Czechoslovak tourism, which can be evidenced by the numbers. For example, according to data from 1932–1936, Czechoslovakia ranked third (after Germany and Austria) in terms of the number of tourists visiting Poland.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Circular Letter [of the Polish Settlement Institute] No. 21/BANK [of 3 June 1939] on Polish-Slovak tourist traffic. In: MANTEL, A. – MATECKI, B. – BIELOBRADEK, T. *Polskie ustawodawstwo dewizowe, Supplement No. 9, June 1939*. Warsaw: [s.n.], 1939, pp. 1249–1253.

<sup>46</sup> See FULARSKI, M. *Aktualne problemy turystyki zagranicznej*. Warsaw: [s.n.], 1938, p. 18.